



The Wylie Veterinary Centre

NEWS

SUMMER 2010

Penny – We'll Miss You So Much!!!

Thank goodness summer is coming. This is the time of year we start to plan our Open Day – held as usual at Upminster. It's always good fun for all the family, and hopefully we'll be lucky again with the weather! Do come and join us - reception has details. If you haven't seen out 'the back', and the equipment we have, this is your chance. Even if you have come before there is always something new to show you. You may even win one of the many prizes!



This summer is the end of an era for us. Our practice manager, Penny Bredemear is retiring, and it is hard to imagine how we can possibly cope without her calm efficiency and sunny personality. She started working part-time in the office in 1986, and became our practice manager 11 years ago. Replace her? Impossible! But luckily for us, she has taught her team well, and we are sure Fiona will quickly become just as indispensable in her new role - helped by the rest of the office staff, Debbie Baxter, Sarah C, and Sandra. We also know that Penny will still come to see us – after all her daughter works here!

Editor: Kathy Beasley

Wildlife – What Can You Do To Help?



Spring – every year a new generation of wildlife – every year a steady stream of casualties to our door. Wild birds are brought here, either because of injury, or because they are youngsters believed to be 'abandoned'. Should they come here? When should people just observe and when should they intervene? What things can be done at home? Where should casualties be taken?

'Orphaned' birds: if a youngster is fully feathered, capable of flying, uninjured and not in immediate danger – leave it alone! The parents are probably in the vicinity, foraging for food and will eventually return with a meal, but they may not return if there are humans around, or if the young have been handled. Young birds in need of rescue are those found out of the nest before their flight feathers have developed, obviously injured or in potential danger.

Bird casualties: Providing food for fledglings is hard work – parent birds are very preoccupied, even careless. Many hit windows, get hit by cars or get attacked by predators. Cat owners can help the birds by fitting at least 2 bells to their cat's collar.

Window strike victims can be put into a cardboard box, placed somewhere warm, dark and quiet, and left for an hour or two. If just concussed, birds can recover fairly quickly, whereas the distress due to handling and transporting them can actually decrease their chances. However, other injuries, resulting in the bird being unable to escape when approached, probably will require veterinary attention.

Where should I take the casualty?



A veterinary practice is a busy, noisy place full of cats and dogs – a wild bird's worst nightmare!

Obviously any gravely injured bird should be brought to us for euthanasia, but orphans, and birds with lesser injuries, are best sent directly to a specialist wildlife rescue centre, such as The South Essex Wildlife Hospital in Orsett. This centre has facilities for dealing with medical emergencies, and can also provide a suitable environment for recuperation and rehabilitation, which sometimes can take months. It is dedicated to the rescue, treatment and rehabilitation of any wildlife casualty, and has a 24 hour emergency telephone line - 01375 893893. As it is a charity its continued service is dependent upon donations. The address for donations is PO Box 8, Grays, RM17 5FF - or visit the website: www.southessexwildlife.org

By Vet Nurse Sarah F.

Teeth – time for a check-up?



HAVE YOU flipped up your pet's lip recently and had a look at his teeth? Did you know that gum disease is probably the single most common long term disease that our pets will suffer from in their lives?

A healthy mouth usually has pale pink gums, and bright white teeth. However, over time, accumulation of plaque bacteria on the surface of the teeth can lead to *inflammation* of the gums – a condition called **gingivitis**. This is frequently accompanied by the accumulation of calculus (tartar) on the surface of the teeth, and also very bad breath!

If you would like any further information, or a dental check-up for your pet, please contact us to arrange a suitable time.

Progression of dental disease



Healthy mouth with white teeth and healthy pink gums



Unhealthy mouth with gingivitis and calculus

Wildlife photos © iStockphoto.com/Kerikal Linda Yolanda

SURGERY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

HALL LANE, Upminster ☎ 01708 251200 • ABBS CROSS LANE, Hornchurch ☎ 01708 445166



Beat the heat this summer!

AS WE enjoy the warm sunny summer weather it's worth sparing a thought for our four legged friends. Here we look at a few steps you can take to keep them fit and well!

- Make sure fresh clean water is always available to all pets – you may even need to take some on walks and avoid exercise in the heat of the day – particularly with old, overweight dogs with heart problems; stick to early mornings and evenings.
- Cats are natural sun bathers, but cats with white noses and ear tips are particularly vulnerable to sun burn and subsequent skin cancer. This risk can be reduced by keeping them out of the sun, or by applying sunblock to these areas during the summer months.
- Watch out also for grass seeds (awns) of the meadow grasses. They commonly become trapped in dogs ears – causing violent head shaking, or may become embedded in the feet or other areas.
- Bee and wasp stings are another seasonal problem. Some pets are allergic to their stings and may need prompt veterinary attention.
- If your pet is going into kennels this summer, don't forget to make sure they are up to date with their vaccinations!
- Don't forget to keep treating your pets regularly against fleas, ticks and worms and **never ever leave a pet in a car on a hot day.**



Ear tip of a cat showing cancerous changes



Grass awns of the summer grasses



Paw of a dog with an inter-digital cyst caused by a grass seed



Bees and wasps can be a summer hazard for inquisitive pets

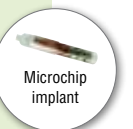


Help me – I'm lost....

HAVE YOU ever wondered how you would cope if your pet went missing? Regardless of how much you care for them you can't be in control all the time; cats roam very widely and dogs may stray. If your pet does become lost or is injured, it is essential that he or she can be reliably identified. Sadly, many pets are never reunited with their owners due to lack of identification.

The good news is that in addition to the traditional collar and tag (which can unfortunately become detached and lost), modern technology has come to our aid – giving us a far more reliable form of pet identification – the microchip implant.

A tiny microchip (about the size of a grain of rice) is quickly and easily implanted under the skin, permanently identifying your pet. Each microchip contains a unique code which identifies your pet and these details are stored on a central computer database. Should your pet go missing, when found, the chip can be read using special hand held scanners (see photo right). Veterinary practices, the police and animal welfare organisations routinely scan strays, hopefully ensuring that if the unthinkable happens, you can be speedily reunited. For further information or to have your pet microchipped, please contact us today!



Microchip implant



Thyroid disease – is your pet affected?

MOST of us have heard of the thyroid gland, but did you know that thyroid problems are surprisingly common in pets?

The thyroid gland consists of two lobes, located on either side of the trachea (windpipe) in the neck – see diagram. The thyroid gland produces thyroid hormone which regulates your pet's metabolic rate. Too much thyroid hormone speeds up the body's metabolism, whilst too little slows it down.

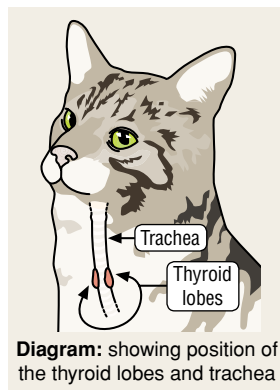
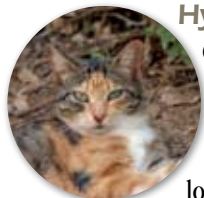


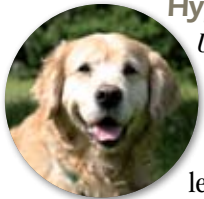
Diagram: showing position of the thyroid lobes and trachea

Hyperthyroidism in cats



Over production of thyroid hormone is called *hyper*-thyroidism and is a relatively common condition in cats over eight years of age. In the majority of cases this is caused by benign (non-cancerous) enlargement of one or both thyroid lobes. Hyperthyroid cats typically have an increased appetite, but *despite* this show signs of weight loss, and often become quite unkempt in appearance. In addition, excess thyroid hormone usually increases the heart rate, frequently causing cardiac problems. As well as the above, a variety of other signs may be seen including hyperactivity, vomiting and diarrhoea. However the good news is that in the majority of cases, hyperthyroidism can be successfully treated. If you are concerned your cat may be hyperthyroid, come and see us for a check-up.

Hypothyroidism in dogs



Under production of thyroid hormone is called *hypo*thyroidism, and is a relatively common condition in the older dog. Lowered production of thyroid hormone leads to a decrease in the metabolic rate, usually leading to weight gain (with no increased appetite) and generalised lethargy. Other signs often include coat problems, and recurrent skin and ear infections.

Diagnosis of hypothyroidism can be more tricky, but in confirmed cases, daily treatment with oral thyroid supplements can be very successful in treating this condition.

As you can see, thyroid conditions are relatively common in pets, but the really good news is that with an appropriate diagnosis, *both* conditions are very treatable. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you are concerned that your pet is showing any of the signs described above!