

Lost without it!



As life gradually returns to normal after two years of Covid, pets will be getting out and about more, enjoying the warmer summer weather.

However, it's all too easy for our pets to go missing, and without a reliable way to identify them, many are never reunited with their owners.

Happily, microchip implants offer a far more reliable method of identifying your pet than the traditional collar and tag.

Many pets can be microchipped including dogs, cats, rabbits and horses. It is a legal requirement to have any dog over the age of eight weeks microchipped and also to keep your contact details up-to-date.



There are also plans to make microchipping compulsory in cats by the time they are 20 weeks old.

Cats can easily go missing as a result of road traffic accidents and, when found, are often taken to a local charity or veterinary practice. Currently 8 out of 10 stray cats are not microchipped. As a result, a huge number are never reunited with their owners.

Veterinary practices, the police and animal charities have microchip scanners and routinely scan strays. Should your pet go missing and be handed in as a stray, if they are microchipped, this will give you the best chance of them being reliably identified and returned to you.

Microchips are easy to implant and only need a routine appointment. If you need your pet microchipped or have any questions please don't hesitate to ask a member of staff.

Looking after your new arrival!



The arrival of a new pet is an exciting time for the whole family. There are lots of things to consider alongside leads, collars, bedding and toys and we've put together a short check-list of essential things to do:

Vaccinations: Dogs, cats and rabbits all require vaccinations, protecting them against potentially fatal infectious diseases. Our team will be able to talk you through the exact schedule of vaccines required. Pets will, in addition, receive a full health check, plus we can answer any questions you may have.

Wriggly worms: It is very important to treat puppies and kittens for roundworms since they can acquire these from their mothers early in life. As they grow up, they are susceptible to infection with both roundworms and tapeworms and will require regular worming. Additionally, lungworm is a problem for many dogs. You can see examples of roundworms and tapeworms in the right hand box.



Fleas: Puppies and kittens often arrive complete with a small army of fleas, so it is a good idea for us to give them a check over on arrival! We can recommend the most appropriate treatment for your pet, whilst household sprays are ideal for your home.

Neutering: Cats should be ideally neutered by six months of age, if they are not to be bred from. The situation for dogs is more complex and the timing of neutering, and whether it is required, is very dependent on your dog and your situation. Our team will be very happy to discuss this with you.

Socialisation is another very important topic. The early experiences a puppy or kitten has of people and their surroundings has a huge impact on their behaviour and personality for the rest of their life. Please ask us for further information on socialising your pets. Also – please let us advise on a range of other topics such as dental care, pet insurance and nutrition to name just a few!

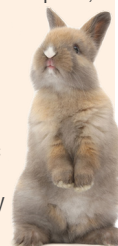
Annual Vaccinations...

We recommend you regularly vaccinate your pets against the following, potentially fatal, infectious diseases:

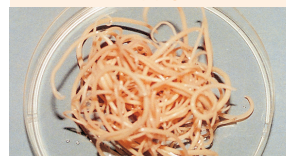
Dogs are routinely vaccinated against: parvovirus, leptospirosis, hepatitis and distemper.

Cats are usually vaccinated against cat flu, panleukopenia, and feline leukemia virus.

Rabbits should be vaccinated against: Myxomatosis and Viral Haemorrhagic Disease. Both diseases are rapidly fatal in rabbits.



...and wriggly worms!



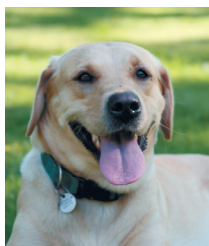
Roundworms are long, white and spaghetti like.



Tapeworms are long segmented worms which shed segments.

Puppy and rabbit photo: Warren Photographic

Kennel Cough – is your dog vaccinated?



Did you know that kennel cough is a highly infectious, but rarely life-threatening, respiratory infection that can spread from dog to dog wherever they socialise – in kennels, at dog training, dog shows or just out on walks?

Affected pets usually develop a harsh “honking” cough, which often sounds as if they have got something stuck in their throats (but don't worry – this is very rare!). Other symptoms include loss of appetite and breathlessness. In the worst cases, dogs may cough for weeks and some may get more serious complications such as pneumonia.

The condition is caused by a mixture of viruses and a bacterium – *Bordetella Bronchiseptica*. Prevention is much better than cure, because without vaccination, treatment of kennel cough can be a costly and lengthy process. Only an annual vaccination with a specific kennel cough vaccine can offer protection against *Bordetella*. So – don't take any chances with this distressing cough – make sure your pet is vaccinated. Kennel cough vaccination is also a key requirement of most boarding kennels. Please contact us today for further information or to book an appointment!



Guinea pigs are great!



Guinea pigs can make excellent pets since they are easy to handle, are very inquisitive, rarely bite and can be very 'chatty', communicating with a range of sounds.

They are sociable animals and should be kept in groups or pairs; males reach sexual maturity at 9-10 weeks, females even earlier at 4-6 weeks so it is essential that the male, at least, is neutered to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Housing guinea pigs with rabbits is not recommended due to different nutritional requirements between the species, the risk of disease transmission and the risk of rabbits bullying guinea pigs.



Housing should ideally be indoors and away from draughts and kept out of direct sunlight. Guinea pigs can be housed outside during the summer months in the UK but must have

access to shade. Housing should be as large as possible, with the enclosure being at least 4ft x 2ft, preferably larger (for each pair of guinea pigs), with permanent access to a 6ft x 4ft run.

Regular opportunities to graze and exercise are essential, the run must be secure and prevent predators (domestic dogs/cats, birds of prey and foxes) from entering the enclosure, shelters must be provided to allow areas to hide, provide enrichment and feel secure (boxes or pipes), and provide branches from untreated apple or pear trees, or willow to gnaw on. Please note that branches from cherry, plum, cedar, walnut and oleander are poisonous and must be avoided.

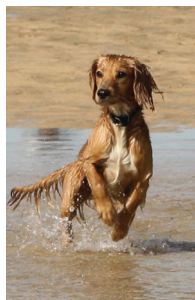


Guinea pigs require a high fibre diet, and grass or hay must be available at all times. Guinea pigs also need approximately a tablespoon per adult guinea pig of a commercial pelleted

diet, plus approximately 50g (half a cup) leafy green foods or safe edible weeds to provide vitamin C and other nutrients once a day.

Guinea pigs instinctively hide any signs of pain and illness; therefore, it is important to check them at least once a day and weigh them on a weekly basis. If their appetite decreases and/or droppings become smaller and less frequent, or are not produced, then this is deemed as an emergency. Guinea pigs can suffer from dental disease (overgrowth of incisors and/or cheek teeth) and gastrointestinal stasis as a result of an inappropriate diet or as a sequel to pain or an underlying illness. Guinea pigs are also prone to mites and fungal skin infections which can cause intense itching, crusting and scaling of the skin.

We are here to help, so if you have any questions regarding your guinea pigs, give us a call today!



Summertime survival guide!

Summer is here at last! But when the heat turns up, the dangers to pets increase too. To keep your dog, cat and other furry friends safe, make sure you are prepared. To help you with this, we've put together some top summer survival tips:

Keep it cool! It is vital to ensure your pet keeps cool in hot weather. Dogs should be walked early or late in the day to avoid heat stroke. Paddling pools may help keep dogs cool and they should have free access to water at all times. Heat stroke is a common, and serious, problem and over-weight or heavily coated dogs are most at risk.

Guinea pigs and rabbits also need to be able to keep cool and it is vitally important that they have access to shade at all times, plus cool water – preferably in a bowl. Also consider moving their accommodation to somewhere cooler in hot weather.

Slip slap slop! Cats generally enjoy sunbathing but they can be at risk of overheating. The other concern for cats with pale coloured ears or noses is the risk of sun burn. Repeated exposure to UV light has been shown to be a risk factor for them developing a type of tumour called a squamous cell carcinoma. High factor **special sunblock for pets** applied to the at risk (white) areas helps to minimise this risk.



Flystrike: Sadly with summer comes flies. Most healthy rabbits on an appropriate fibre rich diet will have a clean bottom. However some rabbits, for various reasons, can be prone to a dirty bottom. This then attracts flies which lay eggs

on the skin with the resulting maggots eating away at the delicate tissue – a so called fly strike. Fly strike is best avoided by keeping bottoms clean at all times, checking the area twice a day for eggs and if needed applying a product that inhibits the eggs from hatching.

Grass awns are another summer problem – the grass awns of the meadow grasses are easily trapped in the coats of pets. They then migrate and become lodged in a variety of places including the ears and between the toes. It is always a good idea to groom your pets regularly to keep a close eye out for grass awns.

So – enjoy the summer months, have fun and keep your pets safe. We are here to help, so if you would like any further information on summer hazards, please just ask!



Paddling pools are a great way for dogs to stay cool in the summer!



Ear tip of a cat showing cancerous changes with skin reddening.



Grass awns of the summer grasses are a perennial hazard

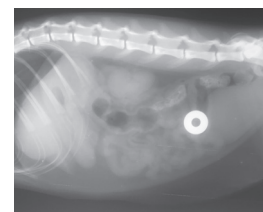
Pet insurance for peace of mind!



Pet insurance is something that we advise all our owners consider for their animals. We know that vet bills are often unexpected and can mount up over time, so having a good policy will really combat the worry of being able to afford their care.

There are several different types of cover to choose from: The top cover is a **lifetime policy** where your pet is covered for a condition for life, usually up to a certain amount of money per year. A **time-restricted policy** means that you can claim per condition, usually for 12 months only. If your pet has an on-going condition such as diabetes or arthritis, the cover expires after the time period. A **condition-restricted policy** means that you can claim up to a certain amount per condition.

So – if you would like further information on the benefits of insuring your pet, please don't hesitate to contact a member of our team.



Washer alert!

Pets commonly swallow items which require surgery to remove them, however it's not every day that a kitten swallows a washer! Happily, surgery resolved the issue.