

Summer 2023

# The Belmont Vets Times



## Practice News

### What's been happening at Belmont Vets 🥰

**Welcome** to our new full-time receptionist **Joanna** who started with us in May. Say hello next time you are in as Joanna is looking forward to meeting all our lovely clients and patients.

**Also we welcomed Abi** to our vet team in early May as well. Abi was already working locally in Herefordshire but took the opportunity to join Belmont in a part-time position.

Sadly we are saying goodbye at the end of June to our vet nurse **Becky Dancocks** who is moving on after working at Belmont for 15 years.



**Belmont Vets Ltd**

**94 Belmont Road**

**Hereford**

**HR2 7JS**

**01432 370155**

**info@belmontvets.co.uk**

## Opening Hours

Monday - Friday 8.00am-6.30pm

Saturday 8.30am-12.30pm

Saturday afternoon appointments

available to book 1.00pm-5.00pm

Sunday CLOSED

Phones lines answered from 8.30am

# Summer Hazards

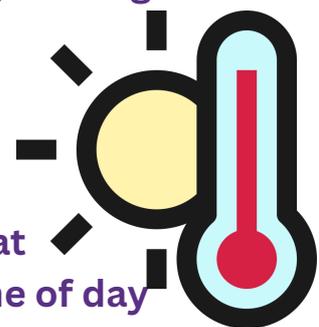


## Heatstroke - Dogs

As temperatures rise, your dog is more at risk of developing heatstroke. Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition that is brought on by a sudden rise in body temperature. Some dogs, such as dogs that are large, energetic, overweight, have a thick coat or are brachycephalic (flat faced) e.g., French Bulldogs, Pugs, are more at risk than others. 1 in 7 dogs treated by vets for heatstroke unfortunately die. Dogs are not good at dealing with high temperatures and can only sweat to cool down on areas not covered by their fur, such as their paws and nose. As body temperature rises it can damage their tissues and organs, making them unwell. In severe cases, heatstroke can cause their organs to fail and can lead to death. Never leave your dog in a hot car, just a two degree increase in a dog's body temperature can cause heatstroke, and fatalities can occur in as little as 15 minutes. In the early stages of heatstroke, your dog is likely to appear restless and distressed. They may also pant heavily and drool. As their condition worsens they will begin to lose coordination and eventually collapse and it is worth noting that normal rectal temperature for dogs is around 38.6, and so anything above this is abnormal. Other signs of heatstroke include: rapid breathing, overheating, unsteady on feet, vomiting, unconsciousness, collapse, seizures and gums turning a bright red colour. If you spot any of these signs or are concerned about heatstroke in your dog contact a vet immediately. Any delay can lower your dog's chance of survival.

To prevent this occurring follow some simple steps:

- Never exercise your dog in the middle of a hot day
- Always provide a cool, shaded area for your dog to relax in
- Make sure your dog has access to fresh drinking water including when out on walks
- Avoid hot pavements
- If travelling with your dog, then make regular stops to check on your dog and ensure they have access to water
- Never, ever leave your dog in a parked car or a hot, stuffy room
- Freeze a dog toy and let them chew on it
- Put damp towels or cool mats down for your dog to lie on
- Ensure regular grooming for dogs that have a long and heavy coat
- Do not overdo exercise during warm spells, regardless of the time of day



# SUMMER



## Hot pavements



Pavements are often much hotter than the air around them. Hot pavements can be dangerous to dogs and can burn their paws. On warm and sunny days remember:

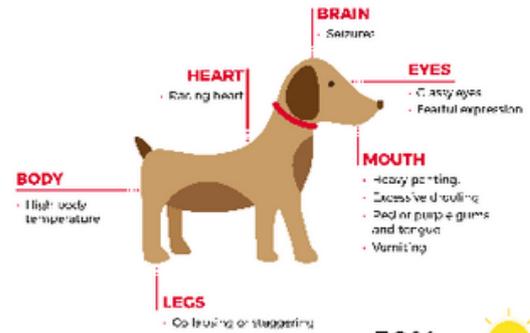
If it's too painful for you to place your hand on a pavement for seven seconds, then it's too painful for your dog to walk on

Only walk your dog in the early morning or evening

Try to stick to walking on cooler natural grass



## Heat Stroke Know The Signs



### How to keep your dog cool on hot days

- Shade/bondage
- Keep head in dog's face or ears draped
- Use swimming, submersible, or other aquatic toys, available
- Walk on grass instead of pavement
- Spray with cool water

### Steps to take if you're worried your dog has heat stroke

- Take your dog to a vet
- Offer small amounts of cool water
- Do not use ice packs or cold water
- Place in the shade if you can
- Do not leave your dog in a car, even with the windows cracked



Be prepared this summer. See your pet emergency service number now: [vets-now.com/summer](http://vets-now.com/summer)

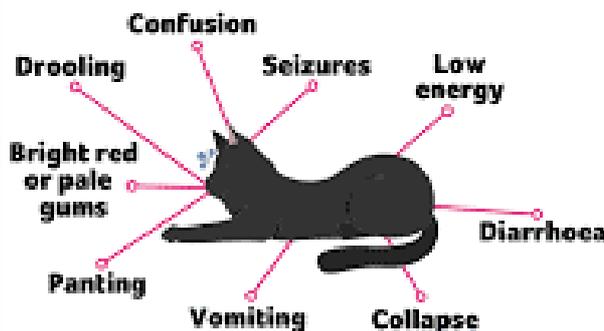


## Heatstroke - Cats

Cats, as we all know, love to sunbathe, and will often choose an inappropriate spot. Try to ensure your cat does not get locked in a greenhouse, conservatory or even a car, by accident. Never leave a cat in it's carrying basket in a car, even with a window open. Cats will often love to sunbathe in a living room window/ in a sunny spot in the house, try to move them every once in a while, and provide them with other places to sit and ways to cool them down. You can freeze lick-e-licks, use tuna water or chicken broth to make ice cubes to place in a cat's water bowl to help keep the water cool and use water fountains to help encourage cats to drink more. Heatstroke can kill rapidly. The signs are obvious – your cat will be restless, pant excessively and drool. If your cat is not treated quickly they can collapse and fall into a coma. If you suspect your cat is suffering from heatstroke, lower it's temperature by bathing it in cool – NOT COLD – water and seek veterinary attention immediately. Heat stroke is an emergency.



## Signs of heatstroke

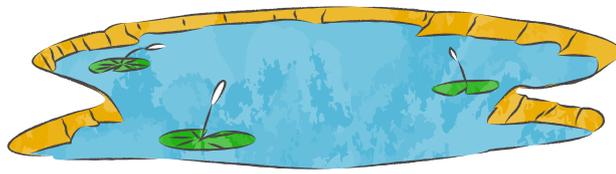


### Prevention

- If you suspect any signs of heatstroke, call your vet immediately
- Always check sheds, greenhouses or summerhouses for cats before shutting them
- Provide plenty of access to clean, fresh water
- Create shaded/cool areas for your cat to snuggle

For more information visit our Pet Health Hub: [www.pdsa.org.uk/phh](http://www.pdsa.org.uk/phh)

# Blue-Green Algae



Blue-green algae are not technically algae, but then name is used to describe a group of bacteria called cyanobacteria. These bacteria cannot be seen by the naked eye but when they clump together on the water surface they can look like blue-green algae. They are really abundant during periods of hot and sunny weather and associated with low rainfall. Not all types of blue-green algae are dangerous but some can produce toxins which are very harmful to a dog's liver. These algae are also poisonous to other animals too, including humans, when swallowed. Signs to watch out for; vomiting, diarrhoea, excessive drooling, confusion, weakness, muscle tremors or difficulty breathing. If you think your dog may have had contact with blue-green algae, contact your vet immediately, as if left untreated, blue-green algae can cause liver failure and quickly be fatal. There is no specific antidote for the poisoning and depending on the signs, a vet will use supportive treatments such as oxygen therapy and a fluid drop. More intensive care may be required if your dog seizures or presents collapsed. If recently ingested, we may induce vomiting to remove algae from the stomach or give activated charcoal to absorb the toxins.

To prevent this occurrence, never ignore the warning signs in place, do not let your dog drink or swim in water you suspect may be contaminated and always rinse your dog thoroughly every time they have been swimming.

**THE KENNEL CLUB**

## Blue-green algae

Blue-green algae produces toxins that can be deadly to dogs.

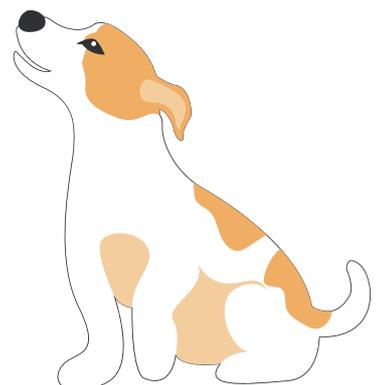
It can be found in some streams, lakes and estuaries, especially in late summer after hot sunny periods.

Do not let your dog drink or swim in water known to be contaminated with blue-green algae.

Dogs can become ill very quickly and it can kill in minutes.

If your dog becomes unwell contact your vet immediately.

The infographic features a central illustration of a dog's head and neck, surrounded by green grass. To the right is a circular inset showing a close-up of green, slimy algae. The top right corner has the Kennel Club logo.



# Grass Seeds

Grass seed injuries are a common problem for dogs during summer months. Breeds with hairy ears and hairy feet are more at risk especially if walked in meadows or woodlands. It is mainly the feet and the ears that are the areas on a dog most at risk. Grass seeds commonly get in between the toes of the dogs' foot, referred to as the interdigital space. The grass seed can then make its way towards the foot itself, easily penetrating the thin skin before starting to burrow deep into highly sensitive tissues of the foot which can result in extreme pain, discomfort, infection and sudden lameness.

The uni-directional nature and shape allows grass seeds to work their way from the fur around the ears down into the ear canal and it can come to rest against the delicate ear drum. They can easily brush off the tops of long grass onto a cat's body whilst they explore outdoors. The seeds have pointed ends and are very sharp and can become trapped in their fur and due to their shape, only move in one direction. Clinical signs you may see include: shaking their head, licking paws, looking uncomfortable and may be lethargic. If you see any of these signs then consult a vet immediately. Treatment normally involved removal of the grass seed using a specially designed pair of tweezers called 'forceps', they are invisible on an x-ray so sometimes we may need to enlarge the hole to find the grass seed (not relevant for grass seeds in ears) Sometimes your vet may need to sedate your dog as they may be in too much pain to allow your vet to examine and safely remove the grass seed. Your cat can experience different symptoms depending on where on the body is affected. Look for swelling, hair matting and irritation, however can include scratching, head shaking or discharge from eyes or nose. Prevention is the best cure, so try and keep them away from long grassy areas (easier for dogs than for cats) so still necessary to check your cats when they come home to ensure no grass seeds can be found.



**Grass seeds** THE KENNEL CLUB

In summer months, small pointed grass seeds can cause your dog a lot of pain and discomfort. If a grass seed becomes lodged in your dog's skin, contact your vet for advice; your dog could require surgery.

<p><b>Paws</b></p> <p>Seeds can dig into the flesh between their toes. Watch out for lameness and paw licking.</p>		<p><b>Ears</b></p> <p>Seeds can burrow deep inside the ear. Watch out for head shaking and scratching.</p>
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Always check your dog for grass seeds after walks, especially if you've been in meadows or woodlands.

# Insect stings

Wasp and bee stings are very common, especially in inquisitive dogs. They are typically stung on their paws or around the face and usually only develop minor pain, irritation or swelling. Most stings can be managed at home, but some cases can be more serious. Stings inside the mouth or throat, allergic reactions or being stung multiple times, are all emergencies and require urgent veterinary treatment. Dogs may show many different signs: agitation, swelling, lumpy skin, biting or nibbling at sting location or drooling. Signs of an allergic reaction can include: being sick or having diarrhoea, large amounts of swelling, weakness or collapse, wheezing or breathing difficulty. If any of these signs are present, contact a vet immediately. First aid advice for stings at home include the following: hold a cool damp towel against the affected area to help reduce the swelling and will also feel soothing to the dog. Applying ice can help but just remember to not apply directly to the skin, wrap the ice cubes/ frozen peas in a towel and use for only 5-10 minutes at a time. If your cat has been stung in the mouth or throat, the airway can swell and restrict breathing. Some cats, similar to humans, may also be allergic to bee and wasp stings. If you think your cat has been stung, then contact your vet for advice.

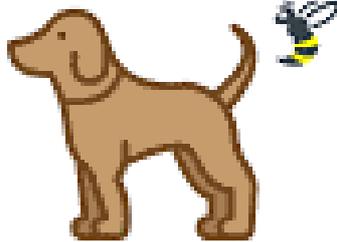


Pet First Aid Series:

## What to do if your pet is stung by a wasp...

Signs that your dog or cat has been stung:

1. Whining
2. Biting or nibbling at the site of a sting
3. Drooling
4. Pawing at mouth and/or face
5. Swelling and tenderness
6. Hives



What should you do?

- Apply ice to soothe the sting. Or a mixture of water and baking soda for bee stings and vinegar to wasp stings.
- Wrap the area with a cool washcloth to soothe.
- If the sting is on the mouth or throat ring the vet immediately.



Also, ring the vet if your animal is showing signs of an allergic reaction, this may not develop immediately so be sure to keep an eye on your pet for a few days after.

pet drugs online +

# Parasites

Parasites such as fleas and ticks are more prevalent in the warmer months. Regular treatment should help keep things under control but remember to check your pets' fur frequently for any signs of fleas or flea dirt. If you are struggling to keep an infestation under control then always remember to treat your pets bedding, the carpet and the house. Young animals especially can become severely anaemia with a heavy flea infestation which can be life threatening, if you see multiple fleas on a small/young pet or if they become pale or lethargic then contact your vet immediately.

Ticks can carry serious bacterial and viral disease e.g., Lyme disease, and whilst uncommon in cats can be common in dogs, and if a tick has already fed from an animal that is infected with a disease then it will pass these microorganisms on to your dog or cat. Ticks are typically found in grassland and shrubs. Ticks can vary in size from 1mm to 1cm long, the smaller ticks can be difficult to spot. Ticks on dogs typically have a cream colour, oval body that turns darker as it fills with blood. If you find a tick on your pet, it is really important to seek an appointment with a vet if you do not feel confident removing the tick yourself, because it is crucial all of the tick is removed and the head isn't left behind in the animal. There are many products on the market that you can use to remove ticks but the best idea is to prevent them by treating your pets with a preventative treatment.



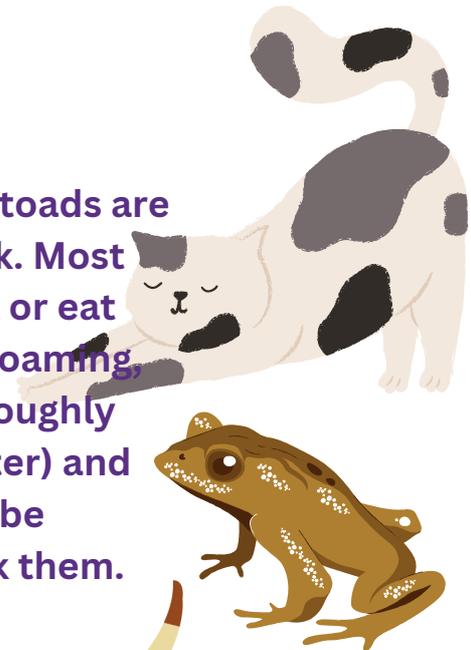
# Harvest Mites

Harvest mites are little orange mites that are commonly found in forests and grasslands. They are a relative of spiders and they only measure about 0.4mm in size so they are barely visible to the naked eye! Harvest mites feed on the skin surface and inject powerful enzymes that digest skin cells, these are irritating to the skin and result in intense itching. This itching can cause a cat to chew or scratch itself, causing self-inflicted wounds and resulting skin lesions vary from crusted spots to areas of hair loss to raw and moist areas. Harvest mites are most commonly found around the ears and between the toes but can be found anywhere on the body. Harvest mites are easily preventable if you choose an appropriate treatment that kills mites.



# Toad toxicity

Exposure to toads occurs between June and August when toads are spawning and toads are most active around dawn and dusk. Most toad related incidents occur in the evening when dogs lick or eat them. This can lead to signs including dribbling, frothing, foaming, vomiting, shaking, oral pain and collapse. You should thoroughly rinse your dogs mouth out (don't let them swallow the water) and then contact your vet for any further advice. Cats too can be affected as they are often curious about toads and can lick them.



# Garden Dangers

## Slug and snail pellets

Metaldehyde-based slug pellets are among the most dangerous and common poisonings we see in dogs. Even small amounts of pellets can cause significant poisoning and severe signs can occur within an hour of consumption. If you think your dog has ingested slug pellets they need to be seen ASAP as rapid intervention can save their life. Signs of poisoning can include; muscle tremors, twitching, sickness, diarrhoea, convulsions and incoordination. Intensive treatment often involves heavy sedation and control of convulsions.



## Ant powders

Ingestion of ant powders or gels rarely results in significant poisoning as the active ingredients tend to be at a low concentration and are often housed in containers. However, ingestion of some of these products can cause serious problems and you should always contact your vet for advice. Symptoms you may see include constricted pupils, salivation, wobbliness, tremors and an increased body temperature. Severe cases may produce respiratory depression (slowed breathing), convulsions and coma.

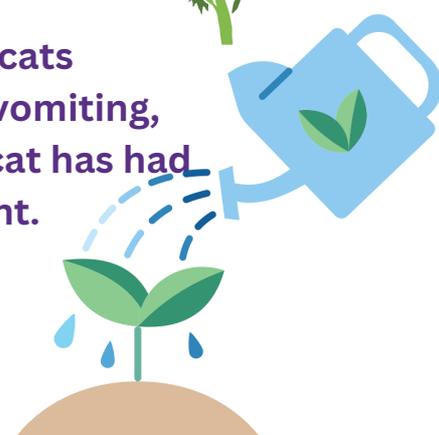
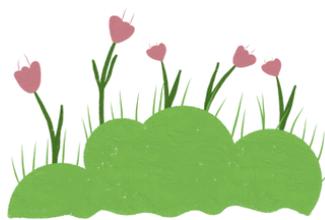
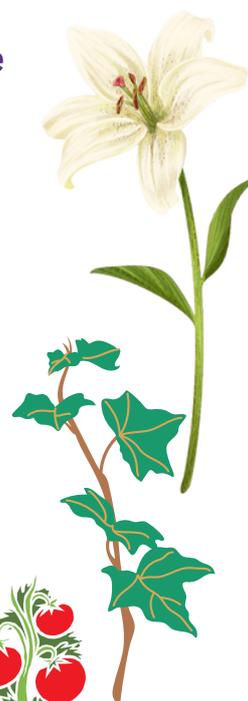


## Poisonous plants

There are many poisonous plants that can cause issues for cats in the Summer. Many of our gardens are in full bloom during the summer and although some of these are safe for pets, many can be very dangerous. Allium species, such as onions and garlic, are dangerous at all stages, and tomato and potato plants can be toxic to your pet. The main plants that can cause major issues for your cat are Lilies and Ivy.

All parts of the lily plant are toxic to cats. If you cat ears or even licks a Lily plant, they are likely to develop some form of kidney damage which, if left untreated, can result in kidney failure and death. Never wait for any symptoms (vomiting, not eating, drooling, twitching, seizures) to develop – always contact your vet immediately for an emergency appointment, if you think your cat may have eaten or licked part of a Lily.

Many popular Ivy plants e.g., English Ivy, are poisonous to cats because it has many toxic compounds which can result in vomiting, drooling, diarrhoea and abdominal pain. If you think your cat has had access to Ivy then contact your vet to make an appointment.



# Sunburn

During the summer months it is not uncommon for light coloured cats & dogs and those with thin fur, to suffer from sunburn. This can lead to cancer of the nose and ears. Animal safe sunscreens are widely available and it is worth applying some to your pet's ears and nose.



# On the beach

## Snake bites

The European adder is the only venomous snake native to the UK. Adults are characterised by having a black/brown zigzag pattern along their back and a V shaped marking on the back of the head. They are commonly found on dry, sandy heaths, sand dunes, rocky hillsides and moorland. They generally only bite when provoked and rarely occur in winter when they are hibernating. The bites result in local swelling and this can spread and be severe. Other signs can include pale mucous membranes, bruising, salivation, vomiting, diarrhoea, drowsiness and lethargy. Eventually, bitten animals can collapse, have blood clotting issues, tremors or convulsions. Seek veterinary attention rapidly if your dog has been bitten. Anti-venom is used if available (although can be very difficult to obtain) and if considered appropriate.



## Beach Safety Tips

- Make sure the beach is dog friendly
- Don't forget to pack plenty of water, toys & poo bags
- Watch out for wasps
- Beware of discarded food
- Watch out for jellyfish
- Ensure your dog stays cool and has access to plenty of water



# Barbecues

Be aware which human foods can be dangerous to dogs and make sure all of your guests know the rules too. Alcohol, corn on the cob and bones are particularly dangerous. Foods high in fat can cause inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis) which can be very serious and sometimes even fatal. Meat on a BBQ can be hard for a dog to resist. But when swallowed whole they can cause ulcers and dehydration. Keep all rubbish out of reach, if covered in grease or other food leftovers, aluminium foil, plastic wrapping, matches and kebab skewers can all be very dangerous if your dog gets hold of them. Also, BBQs with hot coals and ash can cause burns to your dogs' sensitive skin.



# Cats & microchipping

Hot summer weather makes it more likely for cats to roam further and for longer, and this also then makes it more likely for them to get trapped somewhere or be involved in an RTA. Which is another reason microchipping is essential to ensure they can get returned to you. Microchipping costs less than £30 can be done at any time and if your pet is a member of our healthcare plan the Lifetime Care Club it is included.

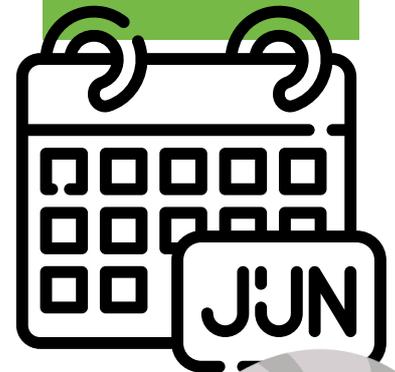
During June we are also offering microchipping for the discounted price of just £20.

## Road traffic accidents (RTAs)

Sadly, this is one of the most common reasons for cats to be seen at the clinic especially over the summer months when the light evenings and good weather means cats like to roam further and also more people are out and about later on in the evenings and so there is more chance for cats to be hit by cars. There are pros and cons to allowing your cat outdoors but if you choose to let them out, there are lots of ways to help ensure they come home safe and well. These include neutering, keeping them indoors at night and using a quick-release reflective collar. Also, microchipping for cats is soon to become law by June 2024, this is a good way to ensure that any cat that does get brought into our care can have its owners traced and contacted. It's also crucial to keep those contact details on the microchip up to date e.g., if you change mobile number or home address

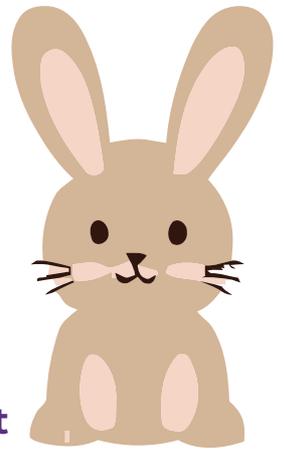
# Cat fights & bites

This can be a big reason for cat emergency admissions during the summer. If you notice your cat has been bitten by a dog then you must contact the vet immediately as there is a high risk of severe trauma and damage to their body even if it is not visible. If your cat has been bitten by another cat, or has any unusual swellings that appear, it is always worth getting them checked out by a vet straight away as the likelihood of infection is high and cats can get very poorly if left untreated.

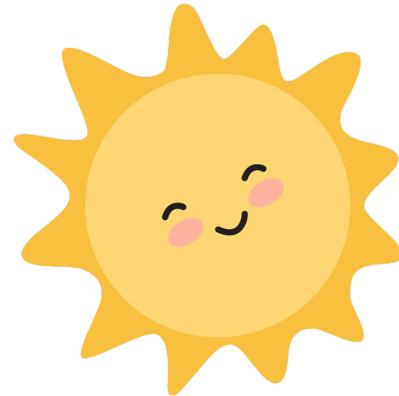
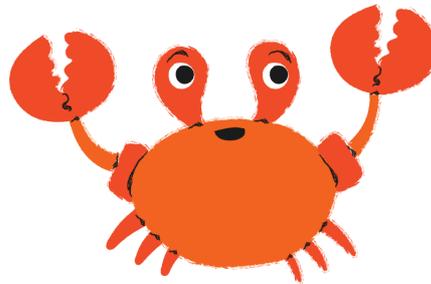


# Small furries

And not forgetting our small furries. Rabbits in particular can suffer from flystrike in the warmer months anytime from March onwards. This is when rabbits can't or don't clean around their bottom area properly and flies lay eggs in the faeces which then turn into maggots that can start eating away at your rabbits flesh. Check rabbits at least twice a day to ensure they are clean and dry as soon as the weather starts to warm up and think about using a flystrike prevention product. If the weather is too warm think about moving hutches and cages to cooler, shaded areas. You can also freeze bottles of water, wrap them in towels and put them inside for your small furries to lie up against to help cool them down.



# Summer



## And finally.....

We've covered a lot of topics in our Summer newsletter. And although there are many things to be aware of, that shouldn't stop us enjoying the lovely warm weather with our furry friends. If you have any questions or would like further information on the areas covered please do ask at the surgery.

The best advice we can give is if travelling with your pet ensure you plan ahead and make sure you have the contact details for your vet or a vet in the local area. You'll probably never need to ring but just in case.

If the weather becomes too warm then your dog can miss the odd walk.

Ensure your pets have as much protection as possible by vaccinating them, treating regularly for common parasites and microchipping.

If it feels too hot for us imagine what our pets feel like wearing their fur coats.

Ensure they have shaded places to escape too, plenty of fresh water and if they do go out about apply some pet safe sunscreen,

