

## Spring tick alert!

As the weather warms up and we head towards the Spring and Summer months, ticks become more active, posing a risk to both pets and their owners.



Ticks can be found in long grasses and wooded areas, especially where there is wildlife such as deer and hedgehogs. Here, they wait for a human or animal to brush past them, so that they can jump on and feed. They attach using their mouthparts and will feed on blood from their host for several days before dropping off.

Although pets rarely seem troubled by them, ticks can spread diseases that pose serious health risks:

**Lyme disease** is the most well known disease spread by ticks. Affected pets (and also humans) can develop swollen joints and stiffness. They can also develop a fever, anorexia and lethargy.

**Babesiosis** is an emerging tick-borne disease, destroying red blood cells and causing acute signs of anaemia in affected dogs (but not humans). It is mainly found in mainland Europe, but there is a risk of spread into the UK and Ireland.

*What about prevention?* Current evidence suggests that tick-borne diseases take many hours after tick attachment to be transmitted.

Veterinary prescription medications for the prevention of ticks often kill these pesky parasites quicker than their non-prescription counterparts, which is very important in the prevention of tick borne diseases and they are available as spot-ons, tablets or collars.

We are here to help, so please get in touch for further information!



## Looking after your new pet

Thinking of adding a new pet to your family this Spring? We've put together a check-list of things to do! Once you have your new arrival, please arrange to let us check them over and ensure they are fit and well.

**Vaccinations:** In the early weeks of life, puppies and kittens gain immunity against disease from their mother's milk. This fades over time and they will need a course of vaccines to ensure they are protected against infectious diseases (see box right).



**Worming:** It is very important to treat puppies and kittens for roundworms (see photo left) 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 treatment. Additionally, lungworm is a problem for many dogs (see overleaf for further information).

**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 great for treating your home.

**Pet insurance** is also highly recommended, giving you *peace of mind* should unplanned for veterinary treatment be required.

We can also advise you on other topics such as **diets and feeding**, **dental care** (see box right), and much more! We are here to help,



so please ask a member of our team for further information on any aspect of caring for your new arrival!

### Annual Vaccinations

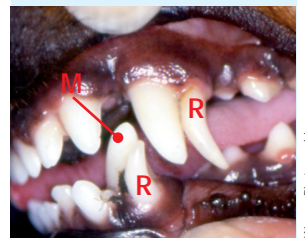
We recommend you regularly vaccinate your pets against the following, potentially fatal, infectious diseases:

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

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

### Early Dental Care

Pets have two sets of teeth, and their "milk" teeth progressively fall out from about 12 weeks of age to make way for their adult teeth. If this doesn't happen the corresponding adult tooth may erupt in the *wrong* direction. This is usually only a problem in **dogs** and is treated by extracting the retained teeth.



R = retained "milk" canine teeth  
M = mal-aligned adult canine tooth

Kitten photo: Warren Photographic

## Covid-19 and early socialisation



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. When considering a new pet, it's really important to make sure the breeder or rescue centre has fully socialised them – it could save you a lot of problems in the future.

Unfortunately the current Covid pandemic has made it much harder to socialise young pets, but it is important breeders and owners do what they can within the current rules to give young pets the best chance of becoming well-adjusted adults. It is vital puppies and kittens stay with the litter and mother until at least eight weeks old, to learn good dog or cat manners and behaviour. After their first few weeks, the aim should be for puppies and kittens to have regular contact with all kinds of people – adults, children and the elderly. They should ideally be reared in a home environment, so they get used to the sights, sounds and smells of family life. Once puppies are fully vaccinated it's a good idea to get them out and about – introducing them to a range of sounds and experiences, in a controlled and gradual manner. As mentioned above – the current Covid pandemic has made all this much harder, however as restrictions hopefully ease, this should get easier. Please get in touch for further information on socialising your young pet.



