

## Old Cats.

How old is your cat? Did you know that cats over the age of 8 are classed as “geriatric” in veterinary medicine? From this age, it is common to see some of the common “old cat diseases” developing. The four most common diseases are Hyperthyroidism, Kidney Disease, Diabetes Mellitus, and Cancer.

**Hyperthyroidism** is a growth in the thyroid gland which results in excessive production of thyroid hormone. This speeds up the cat’s metabolism resulting in many medical issues.

**Kidney disease** is very common in older cats and results in a build-up of toxins in the blood. Cats often don’t show any signs of illness until the kidneys have lost 75% of their function!

**Diabetes** in older cats is typically similar to Type II diabetes, caused by insulin resistance. It is most common in overweight cats – making the weight loss seen with diabetes seem even more dramatic. Cats with Diabetes Mellitus and Hyperthyroidism typically eat voraciously but still lose weight. Diabetic cats can go off their food if they become ketotic, in the advanced stages of the disease. Hyperthyroid cats can become highly strung and have personality changes.

Cats with kidney disease or **cancer** usually go off their food and lose weight, and may vomit or develop diarrhoea.

Cats with any of the main four diseases tend to drink and urinate more, their coats may become dry and lose their gloss. We can slow or sometimes stop the progression of these diseases using diet, medication and environmental management, if they are detected early. The best way to detect these diseases early is to monitor your pet for warning signs such as drinking and urinating more, changes in appetite, weight loss, personality changes and poor coat condition. Cats over 8 years old should have a health check every 6-12 months – blood tests every 6-12 months give us valuable information and can help us to detect these diseases early, so that actions can be taken to slow the progression of the disease and increase the longevity of your furred friend.

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Don’t forget, fireworks night will soon be upon us. We will be doing a bigger feature in next months newsletter but here a few tips for you to think about.

1. Build a den! For your pet, not yourself.
2. Prior to the fireworks, take your dog for a long walk and feed your pet a larger than normal meal to encourage relaxation at home.
3. During the display, close the curtains and turn the TV or radio on to block out the noise.
4. Consider supplement to help them such as Zylkene®, Nutracalm® or Adaptil®.

Visit us for more details. Also check our website for more advice on how to help your pet deal with the Firework Season.

[www.ikinoxenhamsidmouth.co.uk/advice](http://www.ikinoxenhamsidmouth.co.uk/advice)



## Ticks

### What are Ticks?

Ticks are Arachnids, they have 8 legs so are not insects! They are related to spiders, mites and scorpions. Ticks have 4 stages in their life cycle.

- Egg
- Larva
- Nymph
- Adult male/female

### Where are ticks found?

Ticks can be found in woodlands, moors and parks and gardens. They like to live in places with deep vegetation and lots of small animals and birds so they can feed off them.

### How do Ticks feed?

A tick has to feed to be able to grow from one stage to the next. It climbs up a leaf or stalk then waits for an animal to brush past. The tick's front legs have hooks on them so they can hang on for dear life! The mouth of the tick is a hypostome – like a hollow needle. It sticks into the animal's skin and slowly drinks its blood, like drinking through a straw. It will stay attached for several days then will drop off when it has finished feeding. When fully engorged the adults body will become stretched and full of blood, then they are about the size of a pea. It will then burrow into the ground to change into the next stage of its life.

### How do you remove a tick?

The best way is to use a tick removing tool called an O'tom tick remover. Do not try to remove a tick with your fingers, you may squeeze the contents of the tick back into your pet which is more likely to make them ill.

### Dos and Don'ts

**DO NOT** – try to pull a tick out with your fingers! You may squeeze the contents of the tick back into your pet which is more likely to make him ill.

**DO NOT** – try to burn the tick or cover it with Vaseline or any other creams or chemicals.

**DO** – Clean the area around the bite after you remove the tick.

There are many products available to treat against ticks. They come in the form of tablets, spot-ons and collars. Nexgard® is a tablet for dogs only that treats for fleas and ticks. Broadline® is a spot-on for cats only and covers them against fleas, ticks, roundworm, tapeworm and heartworm. Seresto collars® are available for cats and dogs and covers them against ticks and fleas.

Ask a member of staff for more details.

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### Contact Sidmouth.

Ikin & Oxenham Sidmouth Veterinary Centre  
Chandlers Lane  
Sidmouth  
Devon, EX10 9BX

Telephone 01395 512611

Website [ikinoxenhamsidmouth.co.uk](http://ikinoxenhamsidmouth.co.uk)

Email [sidmouthvets@ikox.co.uk](mailto:sidmouthvets@ikox.co.uk)

Facebook [facebook.com/ikinoxenhamsidmouth](https://facebook.com/ikinoxenhamsidmouth)

### Contact Ottery St. Mary.

Otter Veterinary Clinic  
64 Mill Street  
Ottery St. Mary  
Devon, EX11 1AF

Telephone 01404 814322

Website [ottervets.co.uk](http://ottervets.co.uk)

Email [ottervetclinic@ikox.co.uk](mailto:ottervetclinic@ikox.co.uk)

Facebook [facebook.com/ikinoxenhamottery](https://facebook.com/ikinoxenhamottery)