

smalltalk

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

SPRING 2018

Vaccinating your pet

The importance of protecting your pet against a number of infectious diseases

Inside...

Lymes disease

What you need to know about this disease

Moving home

Useful tips to help your pet when moving house

Pet insurance

An owner's responsibility



Training to be a
veterinary nurse





The importance of compliance with long term medication

Kate Lethbridge MRCVS, BVMBVS (Hons), BVMedSci (Hons) St Boniface Veterinary Clinic

While we all hope that our pets are going to be healthy and live a long and happy life, unfortunately some of our four legged friends develop conditions that require long term medication, often life-long.

Diseases such as diabetes, hypothyroidism and epilepsy can develop in young to middle aged dogs and with appropriate medication can live a normal life, while some diseases, such as arthritis or heart disease (which often develop in later life), can be effectively managed to give your pet a good quality of life.

When your pet is diagnosed with a problem that requires long term medication, your vet will discuss with you the various medications and treatments that are available for that particular condition, for example a cat with an overactive thyroid could be treated with tablets, oral liquid, or in some cases a cream applied to the skin of the ear.

We appreciate that medicating pets can be difficult, (giving a cat a pill can be quite challenging at times!) and that medication may need to be 2 or 3 times a day, or given by injection (e.g. insulin). Your practice team will be able to help talk you through this and give you the help and support that you need. Veterinary nurses are often very good with tips and tricks to help you medicate your pet, such as disguising tablets in tasty treats or strong-smelling foods.

When your pet is prescribed with a long term medication it is important that your pet is

checked regularly (your vets will discuss how frequent this needs to be) to make sure that the medication is working or if other medications may be required. We also need to make sure that nothing else has changed with your dog's health. Sometimes blood tests will be required to make sure the level of medication is correct or that it is not having an effect on your pet's kidneys or liver.

By working with your practice team we can achieve the best outcome for your pet and give them the best quality of life we can.



By **Sammy and Grace**
Student Veterinary Nurses
at Willows Veterinary Group



Training

to be a veterinary nurse



“Hi, my name is Sammy. I am a 2nd year veterinary nursing student completing my training at ProCo Wigan. I attend college one day per week, whilst employed by the Willows Veterinary Group as a student nurse. I am gaining the qualification through city and guilds. At the end of the course I will receive a Level 3 diploma. I wanted to be a veterinary nurse ever since being a small child. I have owned lots of small animals over my childhood and I think looking after them is what has made me want to pursue a career in veterinary nursing. The role includes a variety of day to day tasks, including talking to clients, giving them advice etc, preparing, monitoring and recovering animals from

surgery, analysing blood samples in our in-house lab, walking/feeding patients, as well as cleaning and maintaining the practice being a huge part of our role. My favourite part of veterinary nursing is in-patient care, I love keeping up with a patients progress and seeing a patient recover from illness.”

“Hi, my name is Grace. I am a 3rd year student veterinary nurse from Harper Adams University in Shropshire. I am doing a 4 year sandwich course BSc Veterinary Nursing and Practise Management. I did a 6 week placement in year 1 and another 6 week placement at the end of year 1. I then stayed in university until the end of second year, and came to the

Laurels for my year long placement. I wanted to be a veterinary nurse as I have a passion for caring for small animals, such as cats, dogs and exotics, such as rabbits and guinea pigs, and I knew it would be a rewarding job. I have a boxer dog, 3 cats and a pet peacock at home. I enjoy my course and we had weekly practical sessions which have helped me when working in practice. On a daily basis my jobs include, admitting surgical patients, theatre nursing, nurse appointments and general cleaning of the practise. One of my favourite parts of the job is weight clinics, chatting to owners about their pet's diet and identifying how to improve it, and watching the progress of weight loss.”



Pet insurance

By Lisa Phillips CertVR Cert GP (FELP) BVetMed MRCVS Fenton Vets

Owning a pet is a privilege, and part of your responsibility as a pet owner is making sure that you can afford all the necessary bills associated with keeping your pet healthy and taking prompt action when they are unwell.

If your pet is involved in an accident or has a serious lifelong illness, you should be prepared for how you will manage the initial costs and any ongoing costs which may be quite substantial. Veterinary medicine and surgery have now advanced so much that your vet can offer you many of the treatments and tests offered to humans such as CT or MRI scans and spinal or heart surgery - however these

are often carried out at specialist hospitals and costs can easily mount up to thousands of pounds.

Pet insurance covers your veterinary costs should your pet become ill or injured. It is a sensible option so that you have peace of mind that you will be in a position to offer your pet the best available treatment without having to worry about cost at a time that is already stressful.

Other benefits may include:

- Third party liability if your dog injures someone or damages someone's property.
- Covering the cost you paid for your pet should they become lost, stolen or die before a certain age.
- Covering the cost of advertising should your pet be lost or stolen.
- Paying the costs for someone to look after your pet should you need to go into hospital.
- Covering the cost of your holiday should your pet need emergency surgery meaning you have to cancel.
- Emergency treatment should you be on holiday with your pet abroad when they become ill.

The cover varies considerably so it is important to choose a policy to meet your needs. Some policies only cover accidents and emergencies. The best cover covers your pet for all conditions for their lifetime and will cover accidents and illnesses. It is important to understand that once your pet has suffered

from a condition, any new insurance company will see this as 'pre-existing' and therefore will exclude it from your policy meaning you will no longer be covered. If your pet has suffered from illnesses whilst it is insured it is therefore best to stay with the same insurance company rather than to swap and change, unless that company does not meet your needs for other reasons.

When you take out a policy you will be asked for any pre-existing conditions which you have a duty to declare. It is therefore best to take out a policy early in your pets lifetime such as when they are puppies or kittens so that they do not have any pre-existing

conditions and will therefore be fully covered for everything.

Many practices work closely with insurance companies and can offer a free month for puppies and kittens if they have been checked by a vet and certified healthy. Some practices also have trained insurance advisors who will be on hand to guide you through choosing a suitable policy.

If you have any questions about insurance your veterinary practice is the best place to ask before you make any decisions. They will have extensive experience in working with insurance claims and will be able to guide you as to the best policy to suit your needs.



Moving Home

By Anna King MRCVS Calweton Veterinary Group

Useful tips to help your pet

Moving house can be a stressful time for all involved, especially our pets. It is important to plan ahead for this big occasion. There are a few steps that can be taken to reduce anxiety as much as possible.

Before the move:

- Consider moving your animal to a relative or kennels/cattery during the moving transition time to prevent escape and upset whilst furniture is being moved. Remember if your pet is going to a boarding kennels then vaccinations must be up to date.
- Pack the animal's bedding, bowls and toys last so that he is surrounded by his belongings for as long as possible.



- If you are travelling a long distance and your pet is prone to travel sickness or anxiety, visit the vet practice to discuss medications that can help with the journey.
- Consider using calming products for example Adaptil, Feliway, Pet Remedy and Zylkene before, during and after the moving process.
- If your pet is prone to travel sickness then withhold food for 3-4 hours before the journey.
- Travel your animal safely in the car. Remember to give your dog a toilet break on a long journey.
- Never leave an animal inside the car on a hot day.
- Unpack your pet's belongings before introducing them to the new house. Provide a secure, quiet room in the new house with a blanket or item of clothing that has a familiar smell. If possible place furniture in a similar place to the old house.

During the move:

- If your pet is staying with you during the move, put your pet in one room with all doors and windows closed.
- Inform the removal staff where the animal is to prevent accidental escape.
- Ensure the garden is well fenced. Accompany your dog during the first exploration.
- For cats, keep in a safe room for the first week with their belongings.

After the move:

- Stick to a normal routine to help your pet settle in.
- Be patient with your animal if toilet accidents happen. It can take a while for your pet to settle fully. Reward good behaviour and don't punish your pet.
- Prior to letting your pet outside, ensure they are microchipped. Update the microchip details and update any collar tags with the new contact details.
- Register your pet at a new vet practice or update your current practice with your new details.
- Keep your cat indoors for the first couple of weeks so they know the new house is a safe place. For the first time, let them out before a meal time and leave the door open so they can run back inside. Start with short periods then increase the time outside gradually.



The importance of vaccinating your pet

There are a number of infectious diseases that can affect our pets. These diseases can cause severe illness and many can be fatal. A number of these can be prevented by vaccinating our pets, which when done regularly can give them lifelong immunity.

A vaccination is a version of the disease that has been manufactured to be safe and is then used to stimulate your pet's immune system. This stimulation causes your pets' immune system to make antibodies to the disease which means if they were to meet the disease in the future they would be able to fight it off.

Many of the diseases we routinely vaccinate for are now rarely seen by vets. This does not mean they have disappeared.

By Eilidh Casby BVMS MRCVS Armour Vet Group

Prevention is better than cure!

By regularly vaccinating our pets we have massively reduced the level of these diseases in the UK. If we were to stop vaccinating then we would almost certainly start to see these diseases starting to appear again and we would have more pets at risk of becoming seriously ill.

In most cases young animals are born with some protection that they have gained from their mothers at birth. However, as they grow this protection fades and they will be left vulnerable to infection. Therefore it is important that we protect our pets early. This is their 'primary' vaccination course and regularly consists of 2 injections given 2-4 weeks apart. Your vet will be able to advise you on the correct timing for these and tell you which diseases they will be protected against.

As your pet grows it is important that they also receive regular booster vaccinations. This allows them to maintain their immunity and continues to protect them against disease. In many cases this will be a yearly 'booster' vaccination but it is best to check with your vet exactly how often your pet is due.

If your pet goes over the recommended timing for their vaccinations, they may need to re-start their 'primary' course again in order to be fully protected.

There is an ever increasing mind set that vaccinations may be unsafe for our pets. Whilst any medicine has the potential to cause an unwanted side-effect, the benefits of vaccination massively outweigh the risks.

Vaccines are developed and manufactured under very strict safety rules and requirements and it is very rare for a pet to have an adverse reaction.

It is much more common for unvaccinated pets to become seriously ill or even die from diseases they have not been vaccinated against.



Canine Ticks

Lymes disease

By **Charlotte Matthews BVet Med MRCVS**
Belmont Vets Ltd



Lymes disease or Lyme borreliosis is caused by bacteria from the *Borrelia* species, and it is transmitted by some ticks.



This article aims to inform the reader about canine borreliosis, but lymes disease in humans is a current and important topic.

The disease exists in many parts of Europe, including the UK. Much research has been done over the last few years, into the prevalence of the disease, and it has been thought, and even demonstrated, that up to 2.3% of dogs that were found to have ticks had ticks infected with the borrelia bacteria. This reflects the possible prevalence in dogs but also demonstrates the huge risk to pet owners and people in general.

Ticks are not the only reservoir of the bacteria - rodents and other animals such as deer will also carry the bacteria, which the ticks will feed on and then become infected themselves. The bacteria will spread to the salivary gland of the tick, and be spread once the tick bites a host animal, such as a dog.

Cats do not get Lymes disease as they are thought to be more resistant. Signs that dogs will exhibit are as a result of the disease spreading to the lymphatic system and causing an immune response. Signs that may be noticed by owners include lethargy, a high temperature and a lameness which seems to shift between limbs which is due to a polyarthritis.

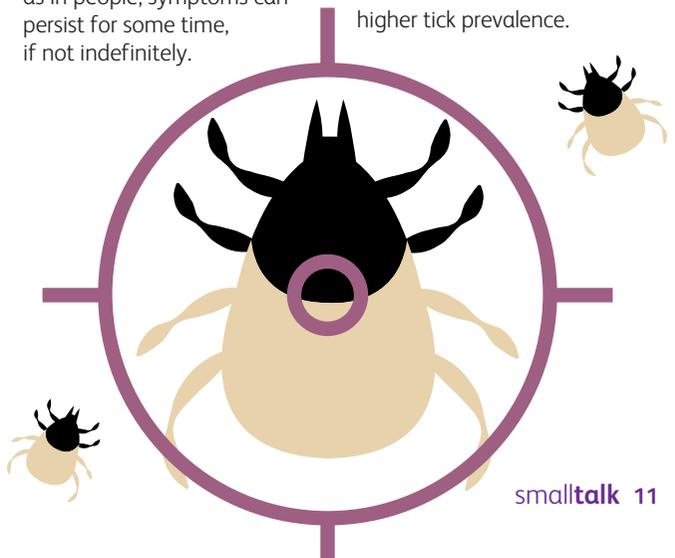
Vets will diagnose the disease based on clinical examination and blood testing. Blood testing alone will often only show that an animal has been exposed to the disease and does not necessarily have it at the time of testing. It must be pointed out that it only takes 48 hours for an infected tick to transmit the disease.

Treatment of the disease is possible, with at least a 4 week course of antibiotics, but this is not always successful, and as in people, symptoms can persist for some time, if not indefinitely.

Prevention is surely the best option, and prophylactics that repel the tick may be better than those that just kill the ticks, because it must be remembered that it only takes 48 hours for a tick to potentially spread the disease, and many products may not kill the tick within 48 hours.

There many different preventative preparations available, so discuss with your vet what product is most appropriate for your pet.

It is always recommended that tick prophylaxis is instigated in areas where there is a high deer population, but especially where animals are travelling abroad where there is a much higher tick prevalence.



Charity helps UK cats

Veterinary Times 26th February 2018. Taken from an article by David Woodmansey

A three-year programme offering free neutering, microchipping and quality of life assessments has helped improve the lives of more than 100,000 cats.

Vets and VNs at PDSA's 48 pet hospitals across the UK have been able to neuter more than 72,000 cats, microchip more than 92,000, and give health and well-being advice based around their five welfare needs to more than 100,000 - all completely free to eligible

clients thanks to £2.6 million funding from The Marchig Animal Welfare Trust.

Feline overpopulation

An estimated one million cats in the UK have not been neutered, contributing to the problem of feline overpopulation. The 2017 PDSA Animal Wellbeing Report found 70% of litters were unplanned.

Be a responsible owner and have your cat neutered. Ask your veterinary practice for advice.



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TERRIER

GERBIL

GROOMING

TOYS

P T R L D G H K X W
N K E A N E S H M Z
K J E R P R Q Y S F
H D O Y R B K R O M
G R O O M I N G F T
B E T Q T L E S Z K
O H C T U H N R R U
Q H E R Q V O A T L
D N E E T P B Q L G
H H U Q D Z E I Z D

BARK

KITTEN

BONE

HUTCH