

## Companion Animal Newsletter - APRIL 2018

### PET TRAVEL SCHEME

With spring fast approaching and the night's drawing out, our thoughts turn to the summer months and many of us start to plan our holidays for the year ahead. The Pet Travel Scheme has made taking your pet on abroad holiday with you an increasingly popular option. Below we have listed some guidelines

**You need to plan ahead because you will need to allow approximately one month (minimum 21 days) before your pet can return to the U.K.**

- Pet travel rules changed on 1 January 2012 when the UK brought its procedures into line with the European Union. Under the new rules pet dogs and cats returning from other EU Member States and listed non-EU countries will not need a blood test and can return to the UK 21 days after their rabies vaccination (rather than having to wait 6 months after their blood test).
- **Veterinary tapeworm treatment for dogs is required between 1 and 5 days before returning to the U.K.** This treatment must be given by a vet and the pet's passport completed to say that this has been done to comply with regulations before re-entry into the UK. For more information, contact DEFRA. Under the new rules there is no requirement for pets to be treated for ticks before their arrival in the UK but we would recommend that a flea and tick treatment is given to your pet at least 24 hours before re entry into the UK to help prevent the spread of different tick species which carry different disease threats.
- Under the new rules pets from unlisted Third countries will be allowed to enter the UK through approved routes (or approved airport for assistance dogs) without quarantine as long as they meet the EU entry requirements (microchip, rabies vaccination, blood sample at least 30 days after vaccination), and then wait a further 3 months after the blood sample was taken for the test before being able to enter the UK.
- To obtain a Pet Passport for your animal, you will need one visit to Dalehead Veterinary Group; this will include; microchipping, rabies vaccination and for the Pet Passport certification to be issued. We book a half hour appointment for this to be completed but please be aware it may take longer. It is important to remember that certification allows your pet to enter the UK **no earlier than 21 days after being vaccinated against rabies.**
- Whilst you are abroad your pet may be at risk of diseases spread by biting ticks/mosquitos/flyes. We recommend you protect your pet against ticks whilst you are abroad (We can supply a chewable tablet to be given every 12 weeks). If travelling to Mediterranean countries treat against Heartworm (once a month with a chewable wormer), and take precautions against sandflies (collars available). Please discuss these with the vet at the PETS appointment.
- The PETS Pet Passport does not necessarily guarantee animals entry into the country of destination. Import requirements vary between countries and may involve blood testing and Export Health Certification by a local Veterinary Inspector (Dalehead Veterinary Group), so check with DEFRA well in advance.



For more information visit the 'Travelling with Pets' section of the DEFRA website [www.gov.uk/pet-travel-information-for-pet-owners](http://www.gov.uk/pet-travel-information-for-pet-owners) or call the DEFRA Pet Travel Scheme Helpline on 0370 2411710.

# DANGERS OF HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS TO OUR PETS

The veterinary press reminded us recently of the dangers that some household products pose to our pets. With a vast array of cleaning products in our homes today, we thought it well worth advising you of the potential risks to your pet. Many of us are aware about storing products out of the way of children and 'child proofing' our cupboards with special catches and locks but what about our pets? Is your home 'pet proofed' to the same potential hazards?!

Pets are curious creatures, poking their sensitive noses into all sorts of places to sniff out 'goodies' or something to play with. They are not always able to differentiate between what is safe and what is harmful to them; anti freeze for example has a sweet taste which dogs and cats are drawn to but ingestion can be lethal if not treated immediately. It's up to us to ensure our homes are 'pet proofed' with products stored out of animal's reach and securely locked away.

*Here are some of the most common ingredients which can cause harm to our pets:*

## Benzalkonium Chloride

**Found in:** Patio cleaners, hand sanitiser and general disinfectant.

The main effect is gum irritation, excessive saliva and drooling. Blistering and ulcers on the tongue and in the mouth lead to inappetence. Animals can vomit and appear lethargic and depressed.

**Due to their extensive grooming habits, cats can be particularly at risk to this poison as they walk over treated surfaces or are petted with hands freshly doused with sanitiser.**



## Sodium Hydroxide

**Found in:** Drain cleaner, oven cleaner, dishwasher products and paint stripper.

As an alkali there is not always initial pain with skin contact, and its full effect can take as long as 12 hours to be seen fully however, the poison can penetrate the skin deeply and have an extremely dehydrating effect. This is due to the chemical reaction between the alkali and the fats in the skin which then absorb water from surrounding tissues. There can also be extensive damage to the animals oesophagus with endoscopy needed to diagnose the severity of the damage and treatment needed.



## Laundry Pods, Shampoo, Shower Gel



Laundry pods can fascinate our pets as an improvised toy, which they then play with until they can burst the pod. Not only can their contents be a skin irritant, along with shampoos and soap gels their ingestion is of most concern. The foaming effect can cause aspiration pneumonia, vomiting, retching and coughing. As vets as well as other support and treatment we may need to administer an anti-foaming agent to limit the effect.

## Bleaches

The most likely effect is a moderate mucosal irritation and damage to the animals stomach. The amount of damage and extent will depend of the amount ingested and the concentration of the product. Fluid therapy is usually needed and again endoscopy can be needed to assess the extent of the internal damage.

### In summary:

- Prevention is better than cure. It is important to keep household cleaning products stored safely away from our curious pets.
- If you think your pet has come into contact with cleaning product seek immediate veterinary advice.
- If you are advised to bring your pet to the vets, then also bring the product so we can identify the active ingredient, seek advice ourselves from the Veterinary Poisons Information Service and respond promptly giving the animal the best chance of recovery.

*(Ref: Veterinary Practice Today, volume VI, Issue II, 2018 - Jane Ellison BSc(hons) veterinary poisonsinformationservice).*



# Rabbit Review - Home Sweet Home!

So, you've done your research (see last month's news letter) and made the decision that there is enough time in your life, space in your home/garden, commitment and love in your heart, and money in the bank to make pet rabbits the way forward for you. Time to start preparing for your new additions! First things first - where will your rabbits live? Inside or out? Rabbits can live equally happily outdoors in the garden or indoors as 'house rabbits' as long as their surroundings allow them to behave naturally.

Rabbits are active animals and if kept caged can develop painful skeletal problems. They are also 'crepuscular' meaning they are most active at dawn and dusk. A hutch or indoor crate should only ever be thought of as a shelter or bedroom area, your rabbits should have free access to a secure exercise run. The **minimum** recommended size requirement for a hutch is '3 hops' which equates to a minimum of 6ft long x 2ft wide x 2ft high to allow the rabbit to stand on it's hind legs. This is **in addition** to an exercise run measuring 8ft long x 6ft wide x 2ft high which ideally should be covered and **accessible to the rabbits at all times**. If your rabbits only have access to the run for 2 hours a day, they are not able to exercise for 22 hours of that day, and remember that the same recommendations apply for rabbits kept inside the home as for those kept outside.

Rabbits are more active at dawn and dusk



Use hanging baskets for hay



Make it fun! There are all kinds of toys and tunnels available now to keep your rabbits levels of interest high, stimulate play and exercise. It is vitally important that your rabbit can display all natural behaviours such as running, jumping, hiding, digging and foraging. If runs are placed on a hard surface or indoors, provide a 'digging pit' such as a large planter filled with earth which should be changed regularly. Use hanging baskets such as the type used for plants from your garden centre, hang them from the ceiling of the run filled with hay. This will encourage the rabbits to stretch and forage whilst keeping the hay dry off the ground.

Bowls of clean fresh water are a must and some form of cover (tarpaulin is ideal) to protect the run from extremes of weather, keeping the rain and wind at bay but also protecting rabbits from the heat of the sun. Rabbits are adept at using a litter tray so placing one in the run gives them a designated toilet area which can be easily cleaned.

So far we have looked at options for keeping your rabbits in either outside or indoor hutch and runs but some people opt to have 'free range' rabbits, giving them the run of their house (pardon the pun) or keeping them confined to one room. As stated above the minimum requirements for space are the same whether your rabbit lives indoors or out and they must be able to display their natural behaviours like digging and chewing, so think carefully before you allow your rabbits access to your home. Is it rabbit proof?



Points to consider:

- Are rabbits safe from other pets?
- Can they chew on electric cables/wires which could cause electrocution and death?
- Do they have access to house plants (many of which are poisonous to rabbits)?
- Rabbits will chew almost anything; door frames, carpets, furniture, shoes and clothing
- Rabbits are escape artists! They can fit through very small gaps and jump high, is your home secure?
- Companionship. Unless you are with your rabbit 24 hours a day he will still crave the company of his own species!



Homes fully prepared, you are almost ready to collect your bunnies. Next month we will look at feeding, vaccination and neutering, all aspects to be prepared for as soon as your rabbits come home with you.

If you have any questions regarding rabbit welfare, please speak with one of our vets or qualified nurses on 01729 823538.

## IS YOUR DOG ITCHY?

We will shortly be coming into that time of year when grass pollens are out and we see higher than normal levels of allergies in our pets. Unlike hay fever in humans, this usually manifests as itching of the skin in dogs and cats or atopic dermatitis. Having an itchy pet is distressing for both pet and owner, can lead to secondary infection through scratching and the management to keep your pet comfortable is not always easy. Has your dog been diagnosed with atopic dermatitis?

### Common symptoms of atopic dermatitis include:

- Itching
- Scratching
- Biting at the skin
- Licking
- Chewing
- Rubbing
- Scooting
- Gnawing
- Paw chewing
- Inflamed skin
- Flaky skin
- Foul odour
- Skin Infections
- Ear irritation
- Ear infections

### Common allergens being:

- Pollen
- Tree, weed and grass
- Dander
- Grass
- Dust mites
- Mould



Atopic dermatitis is a life long condition that can worsen over time. Atopic dogs have it ruff! Now we have a therapy that can help stop that itch fast. We are pleased to announce that a new veterinary treatment is now available. Safe and effective this treatment in a monthly injection that lasts for 4 - 8 weeks. For more information please speak to one of our companion animal vets.

## And the winner is ....

As part of our February cat month, and to celebrate our Cat Friendly Clinic status we entered any feline patients visiting our Cat Only Clinics or clients purchasing Hills Veterinary Essential Feline range for their pets, into a free raffle to win this fabulous hamper below.



### Congratulations to our lucky winner

**Kitty Croll**

*We hope this was the puuurrfect prize!*

Cat only clinic appointments are available:

**Wednesday from 10.45am**

**Thursdays from 5pm**



So whether your feline friend is a morning or evening visitor we can accommodate their needs.

Dalehead Veterinary Group is a trading name of Dalehead Veterinary Group Ltd, a limited company, registered in England and Wales with the number 09445397.  
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Check out our website [www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk](http://www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk) for more information about caring for your pet, special offers, vet and staff profiles and much more!

