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## COMPANION ANIMAL NEWSLETTER– AUGUST 2023



**Dalehead Veterinary Group Ltd**

**Client Education Talk**

**5th September**

**6.30pm arrival**  
**7pm start time**

### DERMATOLOGY IN VETERINARY PRACTICE

An owner's guide to understanding and managing ear and skin problems in your pet.

Ear and skin disease are amongst the most common reasons for pet owners to visit the vet. Dalehead Veterinary Group is pleased to invite clients to an educational talk by specialist allergy and dermatology company Nextmune UK.

The aim of the talk is to help owners of pets with allergies to understand their ear and skin issues and provide valuable tips on how best to manage their pets in the long term.

We will answer key questions often asked by clients such as:

- Why does my pet get ear and skin disease?
- What will my vet do to diagnose and treat it?
- Can my pet's skin or ear problem be cured?
- What should I be doing on a long term basis to manage it?

The talk will cover key topics such as:

- Identifying the symptoms of skin and ear disease
- Understanding allergy and how to manage it at home
- The importance of ear cleaning and how to do it
- Shampoo therapy and alternatives to shampooing
- Food trials
- Allergy testing and immunotherapy

To register for a place at the meeting please email: [info@daleheadvetgroup.co.uk](mailto:info@daleheadvetgroup.co.uk) or speak to a member of our reception team on 01729 823538.



**Fly Strike** - Now we are into the warmer weather there are a few additional heat related conditions to be vigilant for when caring for our rabbits. An unfortunate threat to watch for is fly strike, also known as myiasis. This is a severe condition that can affect rabbits, especially during the warmer months. It occurs when flies, attracted to the scent of urine or faeces, lay their eggs on the rabbit's fur, usually around the hindquarters. The eggs then hatch into maggots, which then feed on the rabbit's flesh, causing extensive damage with potentially life-threatening consequences.

- **Causes and Prevention** - Fly strike is more common in rabbits that have dirty living conditions or suffer from health issues like diarrhoea or urine scald. To prevent this condition, it's crucial to keep your rabbit's living area clean and dry. Regularly check and clean the hutch or enclosure, removing any soiled bedding promptly. Additionally, ensure that your rabbit's fur is clean and free from faeces or urine stains, paying particular attention to the hindquarters.
- **Symptoms** - If your rabbit is affected by fly strike, you may notice signs of distress, such as restlessness, excessive grooming or scratching, or a foul smell coming from their fur. In severe cases, you might see open wounds or maggots on the rabbit's body. Immediate action is essential if you suspect fly strike.
- **Treatment** - If you suspect fly strike, do not hesitate to seek emergency veterinary care. Time is of the essence in treating this condition. Your vet will carefully remove the maggots, clean and disinfect the affected areas, and provide appropriate pain relief and antibiotics. In some cases, surgery may be necessary to repair tissue damage.



**Heatstroke** - Rabbits are highly sensitive to heat and can quickly succumb to heatstroke in hot weather. Unlike other animals, they cannot sweat, making it challenging for them to regulate their body temperature.

- **Causes and Prevention** - Heatstroke can occur when a rabbit is exposed to high temperatures, especially if they are kept in an environment with limited airflow and inadequate shade. It's crucial to keep your rabbit's living area cool and well-ventilated during hot weather. Avoid placing their enclosure in direct sunlight, and provide ample shade to protect them from the scorching sun.
- **Symptoms** - Signs of heatstroke in rabbits include excessive panting, lethargy, drooling, reddened ears, and a rapid increase in body temperature. If left untreated, heatstroke can lead to organ failure and death.
- **Treatment** - If you suspect your rabbit is suffering from heatstroke, take immediate action to cool them down. Move the rabbit to a cool, shaded area, and gently wet their ears and fur with cool (not cold) water. You can also use a fan or air conditioning to help lower their body temperature. However, it's crucial to avoid sudden temperature changes, as this can be harmful. In both cases of fly strike and heatstroke, remember that swift action and veterinary assistance can significantly increase the chances of a positive outcome.



### Vaccinating your Rabbit

Right now, is an especially good time to be thinking about rabbit vaccinations as the summer months are upon us and we are trying to get our rabbits out into the garden to enjoy the sunshine and enjoy some fresh air. Some things to consider when vaccinating: are they an indoor or outdoor rabbit, what is their background, what group size are they in and what is their health status?

All of these play a role in the decision making around vaccinations. Our native, resident wild rabbits harbour a reservoir of infection with fatal diseases such as Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (RVHD) and Myxomatosis and these should be considered when vaccinating your rabbit. Myxomatosis is endemic in the UK with a seasonal incidence occurring most commonly in the summer and autumn, especially in wetter years. We are seeing local "hotspots" in the area with members of the public seeing rabbits with sore swollen eyes, or rabbits acting slow and lethargic. These are all signs wild rabbits have been infected with Myxomatosis. The disease is spread by a range of arthropods, including rabbit fleas as well as flying and biting insects, so indoor rabbits are still very much at risk, especially if cats or dogs with outside access bring rabbit parasites into the home.

Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (RVHD) was first detected in China in 1984 and spread rapidly across the world, including the UK. It is near 100% fatal, only affecting rabbits over about 8-10 weeks of age. RVHD2 was detected in France in 2010 and again spread widely following that initial discovery. It has lower mortality and affects all ages. It is less present in low levels in the wild population but is less seasonal than Myxomatosis and can be considered an all year-round disease.

Fortunately, we are able to vaccinate our rabbits against these fatal diseases and can keep our pets safe. We stock all the vaccinations and can fit your rabbit in for a full health check and examination. Contact the surgery today on 01729 823538.



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!

