

COMPANION ANIMAL NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2024

IDENTIFYING YOUR PETS

There are a couple of ways that our pets can be identified if lost; microchips or collars with tags, and many of you will be familiar with this already. Recently, new legislation has been introduced to make it easier for lost or stray pets to be reunited with their owners. From 10th June 2024, all cats must be microchipped. For kittens, the new rule means that a microchip must be implanted before they reach 20 weeks of age and all contact details must be kept up to date in a pet microchip database. Owners found not to have complied with the new legislation may be subject to a fine of up to £500.

The process of microchipping your cat involves the insertion of a chip approximately the size of a grain of rice under the skin at the back of the neck. The microchip has a unique serial number which is registered to a database with your details. If your pet is found, this can be read with a scanner and you, as the registered keeper can be identified, and contacted facilitating a swift reunion with your companion.

The exemption to this recent guidance is for free living cats such as farm or feral cats that live with little/no human interaction or dependency. These cats do not require a microchip.



Important Notice—Parasite Control Update

Due to recent changes in the guidelines from our professional body the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, from 12th January 2024 our vets have to have examined your pet and annotated an exact prescription on their clinical record for you to collect prescription only parasite control such as those given as part of the Dalehead Healthy Pet Club. The vet now needs to see your animal and prescribe their parasite control medication at least every 12 months in order for us to continue to dispense these products.

Most pets, particularly those who are already members of the Dalehead Healthy Pet Club, will be seen annually by the vet for their vaccination booster and health check so this can be done at the same time but, due to the change in the college guidelines, there are some pets who have either not been seen in this timeframe or have not had the exact prescription details noted on their clinical record.

With this in mind, we are therefore asking for 24-48hrs notice to be able to dispense parasite control for your pet. This will enable us to check your pet's clinical history, and if the prescription note has not been made during the past 12 months, invite you to bring your pet in for a brief parasite control check with the vet in order for us to dispense this medication going forward. Please note that there will not be any charge for this appointment. If your pet is ill or needs to see a vet for any other reason, a normal consultation appointment should be made and a charge for this will apply as usual.

If you have received a reminder or know your pet is due their parasite control, please contact the surgery prior to collection.

Thank you

CARING FOR YOUR CAT'S KIDNEYS

Kidney disease can be one of the most common medical conditions to affect cats and can significantly impact a cat's health and happiness. Kidney disease develops in many adult cats and unfortunately, is a progressive condition. Spotting the symptoms early and getting a diagnosis and treatment from the veterinary surgeon can reduce the risk of serious kidney damage and potentially increase the healthy lifespan of your pet.

Symptoms of Kidney Disease in Cats

Clinical signs are often related to the severity of the kidney disease and underlying cause. Most cats will exhibit symptoms including:

- Increased thirst and urination
- Intermittent vomiting
- Dehydration
- Sores in the mouth
- Foul breath
- Weight loss
- Decreased appetite
- Fever and decreased activity
- Urinary accidents, incontinence, or inability to urinate
- Lower back pain



How can I protect my cat's kidneys?

Keeping your cat's kidneys healthy throughout their life may minimise the likelihood of chronic kidney disease development and can slow down its progression. Although you may not be able to completely eliminate the risk, you can take steps to encourage good kidney health. It is highly recommended that you keep up with your cat's annual check with a veterinary surgeon as these visits help with early diagnosis of medical conditions and the general health of your pet.

1. Encourage your cat's water consumption. Your cat's kidneys thrive on water, this helps flush out any toxins in their body. You can help keep your cat's kidneys healthy by encouraging your cat to drink as much water as possible. Here are some ways of making water more appealing for your cat:

- Using a water fountain, as cats love running water.
- Letting your tap drip for them to drink from.
- Wet food holds a lot of water – just be aware that feeding soft/wet food as a sole diet can cause a build up of tartar creating bacteria and ending in a result of bad teeth. Having biscuits in their diet helps break up tartar on the teeth.
- Adding a few ice cubes to encourage your cat to play in the water.
- Placing water bowls in different places in the house – not near to food bowls.
- Changing the water daily.
- Adding water to your cat's food.



2. Keeping your cat at a healthy weight & choosing the correct diet

- Make sure you're feeding the correct amount of food, if you are unsure you can always speak to one of our nurses and they will help calculate the right amount for you. Attend our free of charge Well Pet Checks with a nurse who can then weigh the cat and calculate a feeding plan.
- During our nurse clinics or a veterinary consultation is a good opportunity to discuss different kidney care diets for your companion.

3. Ensuring the litter box is a stress-free experience for your cat

- Urinating removes toxins from your cat's body and keeps the waste-removal process flowing well. Holding in urine, if using their box is stressful, can impair the kidneys' filtering system. Make your cat's litter box a stress-free environment, and encourage them to urinate regularly, with the following tips:
- Ensure you have the correct number of litter boxes in your home (one for each cat, plus an extra one.)
- Place a litter box in quiet locations on every level of your house, providing privacy.
- Avoid putting litter boxes near loud appliances such as a washing machine or near doorways.
- Make sure they are clean.
- Changing brands of litter can upset your cat, so do this gradually to help reduce stress as they don't particularly like changes in their routine.



Check out our website www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk for more information about caring for your pet, special offers, vet and staff profiles and much more!

