



Companion Animal Newsletter - AUGUST 2019

KEEPING YOUR PET MICROCHIP DETAILS UP TO DATE

In 2016 a new law was introduced making it compulsory to microchip all dogs in the UK before 8 weeks of age. This action was great in theory but unfortunately falls at the first hurdle if the keeper's details are not kept up to date! We at Dalehead Veterinary Group spend many hours trying to reunite lost pets which are brought in to us. This involves searching our data base to try and match breed and descriptions, contacting neighbouring veterinary practices and the dog warden, utilising the power of social media and relying on members of staff's good knowledge of our clients and their pets, as well as good old word of mouth.

We try our very best to locate lost animals' owners but unfortunately we are not able to kennel animals here at the practice. Once all avenues of enquiry have been exhausted we have to hand dogs over to Craven District Council dog warden for shelter as they are more equipped to look after the animal until their owner comes forward. If owners do not come forward within 7 days animals are available for rehoming but in some cases may be put to sleep (source www.cravendc.gov.uk). Cats are taken in by local charity Bentham and District Pet Rescue for rehoming (www.benthampetrescue.org.uk).

That's why we are on a mission!

A mission to ensure you and your pet are re-united quickly and effectively if ever separated!

Firstly, did you know it is a legal requirement for your dog to wear a collar with a identification tag on whilst in a public place? In 1992 it was made a legal requirement that any dog in a public place must wear a collar with the name and address of the owner engraved or written on it, or engraved on a tag. A contact number and postcode may also be added on the tag, allowing any member of public who finds your pet to telephone you directly or return your dog as soon as possible. Although there is no legal requirement for a dog to have a collar and tag on private property, over the past three years approximately 2,800 dogs have gone missing from homes and gardens so we would advise that your dog wear a collar with identification at all times.

You can purchase high quality, durable tags directly from Dalehead using third party business 'Pettags'. The order is placed and paid for in the practice, we order the tag electronically and the tag is then delivered to your door in a matter of days.

Going back to microchips, every year thousands of stray pets are unable to be reunited with their owners due to their tag and/or microchip details not being up to date. A pet's microchip will need to be updated if you:

- Purchase a puppy or kitten which is already microchipped
- Rehome a pet independently
- Move house
- Change your phone number

Make updating the details on your pet's tag and with the microchip database a number one priority. It is a legal requirement to keep these details up to date and if your details are not correct you could face a fine.

Updating your pet's details is simple, they can be updated over the telephone or online. There may be a charge for updating your pet's details which can vary depending on who your pet's microchip details are registered with. If you are unsure please contact the surgery where will do our best to help.



To ensure your pet's details are up to date we shall be incorporating a routine microchip scan into your pet's yearly and 6 monthly checks.

KEEP YOUR PETS SAFE THIS SUMMER!



The summer is upon us and with the sunshine comes picnics, alfresco dining and BBQ's. As a veterinary practice, we often see a rise in injuries and poisonings associated with summertime parties. Here are some of the emergencies we have encountered:

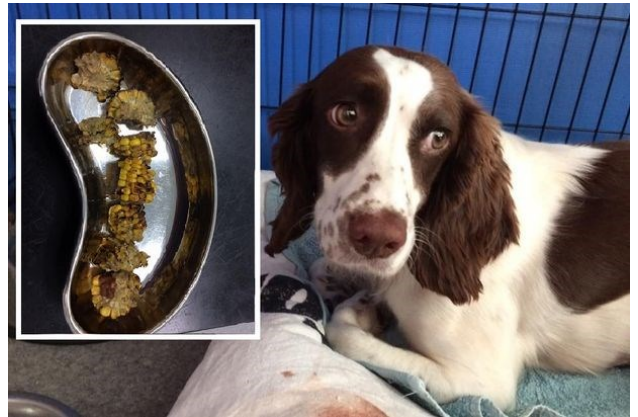
- Swallowing kebab sticks
- Eating small and cooked bones
- Onion poisoning
- Burns

To avoid an unwanted trip to the vets mid party, we've put together a list of tips to keep your pet safe this summer.

Party food is not for pets: Make sure you keep food and drink out of reach. Be aware which human foods are dangerous and make sure guests are aware too. Alcohol, corn on the cob and bones are particularly dangerous. Some foods which are high in fat can cause inflammation to the pancreas (pancreatitis) or a sudden change to your pet's diet can cause gastroenteritis (tummy upset).

Ribs and other bones

Ribs, chicken bones and other cooked bones are a choking hazard. In addition they may also cause injury should the bone splinter and puncture areas of the mouth or digestive tract. If swallowed, bones can also cause intestinal obstruction.



Onion

Big plate of sliced onions awaiting burgers? All close members of the onion family (shallots, onions, garlic, scallions) contain compounds that can harm your dogs red blood cells if sufficiently ingested. Symptoms may include; weakness, reluctance to move, easy fatigue, and darkly-coloured urine. If you suspect your dog has ingested the above please contact the surgery as soon as possible, this is a serious cause of poisoning.

Establish boundaries: Sizzling sausages can be hard for your pet to resist but hot food when swallowed can cause burns and stomach ulcers. Grease dripping onto gravel can also be alluring but this combination can get stuck in the digestive tract. Keep your pets at bay when cooking, it is also good practice for health and safety too!



Know your plants: If you're sprucing up your garden or attending another party make sure you know which plants are poisonous to your pet. For example lilies are particularly poisonous to cats, laburnum is poisonous to dogs, and daffodils, rhododendron and yew are poisonous to both cats and dogs.

Keep rubbish out of reach: We all know how skilled our pets can be when it comes to sniffing out tasty leftovers. If covered in grease or other food leftovers, aluminium foil, plastic wrap, matches and kebab skewers can be very dangerous if your pet gets hold of them – bag it all and bin it straight away!

Keep a watch: Parties can be a busy time with visiting friends, so make sure your pet doesn't make an escape in the commotion. It may be worth making sure there's an unoccupied room for them to relax in but be careful they don't get shut into a conservatory or hot room as they can over heat easily in summer and this can cause heat stroke.

Heat: Make sure that your pets have access to fresh water at all times. It's easy to forget if you're all out in the garden, that your pet needs a drink too, so make sure that water bowls are strategically positioned outdoors and ensure the water is always clean and fresh. Dogs (and some cats strangely enough!) love to bathe and pet paddling pools are all the rage for helping to keep them cool in the warm weather. As ever, if you have small children, be vigilant that they are not left alone near sources of water.

CREEPY CRAWLIES – THINGS THAT BITE AND STING

It's getting towards the hottest part of the year and also a time when things that bite and sting are at their peak.

Fleas will be out in force and able to reproduce rapidly with the heat so ensure your pet is up to date with the appropriate veterinary recommended control.



Bees and wasps are also flying around and it is possible your pet may get stung. Most of the time your pet will just experience pain and swelling from a sting. Danger can occur if your pet gets stung multiple times and/or has an allergic reaction where the body over-reacts. This called anaphylaxis and can be life threatening. It can lead to weakness, difficulty breathing and death if it is not treated. It is also a problem if your pet gets stung in the mouth or throat where swelling can obstruct breathing. Such cases are unusual and normally stings are self-limiting and locally painful. Applying an ice pack may ease pain and swelling initially.

Harvest mites or 'Chiggers' generally cause problems in late summer (Latin name *Trombicula autumnalis*). These little creatures hide in grass or dense foliage and then crawl on to an animal to feed. They are generally active during the day. They can affect all domestic mammals and humans. You may see them as tiny orange dots on your pet, usually between the toes, but sometimes on other extremities. We had a poor cat last year that had them all over its face, ears and paws.

They feed by thrusting their small fangs in to the skin of their host, breaking down the skin with their digestive enzymes. They will feed for 2-3 days and then drop off. This feeding activity can cause intense pain and itching. This can require veterinary treatment for the affected animal.

Prevention can be difficult, but the mites tend to be quite localised with local 'hotspots', even down to being in one garden and not the one next door! Local knowledge may be useful. Keeping out of affected areas during the day, when harvest mites are most active, can also help. Affected animals may require treatment with a fipronil spray and occasionally steroids for the irritation. Please seek veterinary advice if you are at all worried.

Green bottle flies can complete their life-cycle very rapidly in the summer months. Once eggs are laid on a surface they can hatch within 8-24 hours at this time of year, becoming hungry feeding maggots. This can cause 'flystrike' or 'myiasis' (the scientific term), where an animal is devoured by maggots whilst still alive.

The adult green bottle flies are drawn to wounds and other dirty areas such as those that have been soiled by urine or faeces. They will lay their eggs in any such area. Any mammal can be affected, and whilst we most commonly associate this with sheep and rabbits, we have seen cases in cats and dogs with untreated wounds or incontinent older animals.



In rabbits, flies are commonly drawn to faeces matted around their back end. If your rabbit is at risk then be vigilant and check twice daily for fly eggs – look for small, white, elongated, pin-head-sized eggs stuck to fur. Keep your animal as clean as possible to reduce the draw. Ask us about applying a product to prevent the fly eggs from hatching.

Ticks may not be quite so active on the hottest days, but will still be a risk in our cooler, damper westerly climate. They are most active March-June and then late August to October, although can be found at any time of year.

Ticks attach on to their mammalian host and feed for 3-14 days, depending on which stage is feeding. Larvae, nymphs or adults may be found on different mammalian hosts. They all need to take a blood meal from their host, which will cause them to swell up and eventually drop off when they are full. You may find a swelling in the skin at the site where a tick has dropped off.

As ticks can carry disease and we are in an area where lots of ticks are found, then using an appropriate veterinary tick treatment product is advisable. We have some very effective products now to prevent tick bites so please ask us when you are next in.

REPEAT PRESCRIPTION ORDERS



Certain medications that are prescribed for your pet may be for long-term treatment. Most of the medicines used are 'prescription only medications' or 'POMs' and therefore need to be dispensed by one of our companion animal veterinary surgeons for 'an animal under their care'. This means the vet is meeting both legal and ethical obligations for the correct use of these medicines and as such, we are under some legal constraints.

Repeat prescription requests can be placed at reception either over the telephone or face to face, at least 24 hours before collection is required from your chosen surgery. Please be aware that if you email a prescription request to us, either directly or via our website, this may not be picked up immediately and may lead to a delay in your request being processed. We require at least 24 hours notice because the following procedures have to be adhered to:

- Your pet's medical record must be checked by the dispensing vet to ensure that the medication is still correct and appropriate for your animal or whether there is an alternative product and to see if your animal requires a further examination. It is our practice policy to re-examine animals on long term medication at least every four months.
- It also gives the vet and dispensary staff time to ensure that the medication is in stock, issue and dispense the prescription.

This will ensure in most cases that your prescription will be ready for you to collect when you attend the surgery.

REGULAR CHECK-UPS AND REPEAT EXAMINATION POLICY

As stated above, for certain medications your pet will need to be assessed by one of our companion animal vets at least every 4 months, however this may be more often if they have started on a new medication or dose. This policy is for the health of your pet to ensure that:

- Your pet is not suffering from any side-effects.
- The medication is appropriate and to discuss possible new treatment regimes that may have become available.
- Allows us to weigh your animal and ensure the dose rate is still correct.
- Is a legal requirement for ourselves to ensure that your pet is still 'under our care' for this treatment.

There is a reduced rate consultation fee which applies for any repeat medication check and includes a standard urine sample screening test. Charges will apply if any further tests are needed.

An exception to the '4-month rule' is for preventive treatments for fleas, ticks and worms. Although these are still prescription medications and far more advanced than products which can be purchased in pet shops and supermarkets, we only need to have examined your pet within the last 12 months to dispense them.

Please note: We do not routinely authorise repeat prescriptions for antibiotics, ear-drops and most eye drops. Animals must see the vet for assessment due to the nature of the medical conditions involved.



Macmillan Coffee Morning Friday September 27th 2019

One to put in your diary! We are once again supporting The Macmillan Coffee Morning. We have some very talented bakers on our team and their delicious creations will be available **11am – 2pm**. We hope to see as many of you as possible to raise



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!

