

## Companion Animal Newsletter - October 2018

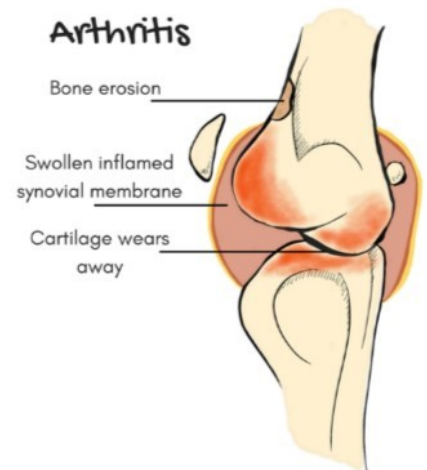
### ARTHRITIS AWARENESS MONTH

As our pets grow older we begin to expect a change in the pace of their lives, but when a dog slows down, takes a while to stand up or get moving in the morning, and when a cat becomes less active and has difficulty grooming, it may actually be a sign of underlying arthritis.

Arthritis, as in people, is a progressive and painful joint condition that results in degeneration of the cartilage in, and a change in the bones of, the affected joints. Once arthritis has developed it cannot be cured, but there are lots of ways to successfully control the pain and inflammation associated with the disease.

There are three main areas to consider regarding the control and management of arthritis:

- **Pain relief:** Arthritis is painful. Lameness, stiffness, difficulty rising, changes in grooming activity and changes in behaviour all occur as a result of joint pain. Using daily anti-inflammatory medication to control the pain within the joints and the pain messages sensed by the brain, is key to effectively managing arthritis.
- **Weight control:** Overweight and obese dogs and cats are more likely to develop arthritis, and at a younger age! Keeping your pets at a healthy, lean bodyweight will improve levels of comfort in arthritic animals and help to reduce ongoing damage.
- **Exercise control:** Ensuring that arthritic animals are kept active through regular exercise is important. The type of exercise is important; controlled lead walking is generally good, whereas stop-start exercise (such as ball chasing) can be more damaging to joints.



There are other treatment options that can be used alongside the control measures above including:



Steven Maney working with a patient at  
Canine Health and Hydrotherapy  
in Rimington

- Maintaining and promoting muscle strength and condition through hydrotherapy and physiotherapy can be very helpful in the management of arthritic animals.
- Joint supplements are available, but they should always be used in conjunction with the appropriate treatment and on veterinary advice.
- Regular veterinary assessment of arthritic dogs is important so that your vet can work with you to choose the right treatment for your dog at that time.



# KEEPING ACTIVE

The days are getting shorter and the weather less favourable for long walks but it is vital at this time of year to ensure that your pet is still getting the mental stimulation and the physical exercise they require. Whilst the majority of us still don the waterproofs and get out on a regular basis, it is fair to say that we do often find ourselves indoors for longer periods!

Bored dogs can get into trouble - chewing, barking and having mad bursts of energy, running around frantically with generally no consideration for floor coverings and furniture! By playing with your dog a few times a day you can decrease the likelihood of them developing these types of destructive behaviour, encourage exercise in a controlled manner and further build the bond between you.

Here are a few reminders and ideas for fun as we enter the winter months...

- Walks are still important! It can be so easy to look out of the window on a rainy day and not bother to walk your dog but no - get up and get out! Now is the best time to make sure your Hi - Vis clothing, pet coats, lights and torches are all in good working order. Whether daytime, dawn, dusk, foul weather or at night you need to be seen by others. Remember, just because you can see a driver doesn't mean the driver can see you!



- Indoor games are a great way to keep your pet mentally stimulated and a lovely way to spend quality time with your pet. We often see increase in weight in pets during the winter months, make sure your pet has plenty of indoor toys and games to play with to encourage play and mental stimulation. Cat ticklers, ping pong balls and cat nip toys are great indoor activities to break up your cats prolonged winter sleeping sessions.

- Dogs love a good indoor game! Nose work games are a great way to tire out your dog, playing find the treat hide and seek with chopped up carrots or Hills Metabolic treats is easy to set up and time well spent. Making them wait in a different room whilst you're hiding them can make it a bit more challenging, always make sure they get plenty of praise when they find one.

- Master the basics - Does your dog know all the basic commands? Do they have reliable recall? Sit, stay, down, drop and come here are all useful basic commands your dog should know and understand. Use this extra indoor time to teach them or as a refresher course to fine tune the commands.

- It's a great time of year for regular grooming sessions with your pet. These sessions can include tooth brushing, nail trim and a nose to tail examination. Check your pet's coat for parasites, examine the skin for any lumps or bumps and check their body condition. Can you easily feel their ribs? Can you see your pet's waistline? They may have gained a few extra pounds, or if you find something you are unsure about then please contact us. Grooming sessions are a super way to spend some time with your pet and are a great bonding session, no better way to spend a cold night in front of the fire with your loved one!



Thank you to everyone who attended our Macmillan coffee morning on Friday 28th September



We Raised

# £130.00!



# WELL PET CHECK CLINICS

Well Pet Checks are a **complimentary** clinic offered to all our patients who are on an annual vaccination programme. You will receive an invitation through the post 6 months after your pet's vaccination and the clinics are available by appointment at our Settle and Bentham branches.

These 15 minute health checks are run by our qualified veterinary nurses and include all the treatments listed below. They are a great chance to chat about any concerns you may have about your pet's general wellbeing, diet and behaviour and also for them to receive a full nose to tail examination in a stress free environment. The clinics are offered throughout your pet's life and the nurses can advise you at each life stage of your animal, what to check for and how to keep your pet in tip top condition. We can also keep you up to date with all our latest offers and promotions.

## Included in the Well Pet Clinic:

- Dental hygiene check of gums and teeth and tips on how to make your pets smile a lasting one.
- Nail trim and pedicure.
- Weight check and great tips on feeding advice and how to keep your pet at their peak condition.
- Ear examination and clean.
- Eye examination.
- Basic heart check .
- Neutering and advice on your pet's needs throughout their life stages.
- Urine test to check for early signs of kidney disease or diabetes (please bring a fresh urine sample if possible - helpful kits are available to make this a little easier!)
- Referral for vet consultation (if needed) \*may incur a fee.



**If you have received your invitation and would like to make an appointment for your pets complimentary check please contact the surgery.**



# SCARY TIMES

It's coming round to that time of year again - Bonfire Night starts the fireworks season which now seems to stretch into the New Year! Whilst many people love the fireworks with their bright lights, flashes and bangs, they can pose a problem to pet owners whose companions are not as keen on the festivities. Preparation is the key to minimising stress for our furry friends over this explosive period and should begin **at least 2 weeks** before.

## Calming Products

There are a number of non prescription calming products available for your pet, both for the environment and to be given orally. Please contact the surgery for further details and a chat about what might be the best solution for you. Some of these products achieve better results if used for a period of time before the firework activity commences. In some extreme cases of anxiety in pets, prescription products may be required. Your pet will need to be examined by a veterinary surgeon to ensure he or she is in good health and that the medication is suitable for its prescribed use.

## Hides

At other times of the year our canine/feline friends are quite happy to sleep in their usual beds but during these stressful periods, converting these into hides can help them feel more secure. Provide plenty of blankets so they can burrow, using old jumpers which smell of you is a good idea as this can help to create a reassuring atmosphere as if you are present and make your pet feel safer. The hide does not need to be expensive; old cardboard boxes, dog crates, cat baskets will do the job. Remember to put in a bowl of water whilst the hide is being used.



In the run up to the firework season, assemble your pet's hide and take them to it regularly. Play with them and give them some food/treats here so that they begin to understand it is a safe, happy place to go to. Make the hide accessible at all times so they can go there when they feel the need and if possible ensure it is placed in a room with no windows or with thick curtains so your pet cannot see the flashes when fireworks go off outside.

## Remember

- During firework activity keep all windows and doors closed, fear can cause animals to look for escape routes and they may find themselves outside becoming lost and very scared! Ensure your pet is micro-chipped, should they become lost this will ensure a more speedy reunion.
- Whilst out walking with your dog keep them on the lead, no matter how much you trust them and even if your dog is used to being off the lead, a loud firework could startle or scare them and could result in them running away or into immediate danger, such as a busy road. Walk earlier than usual if possible, before it goes dark and fireworks are likely to be used.
- Keep cats indoors and don't forget to provide them with a litter tray if they don't already have one.
- Provide your pets with new chews/toys to distract them from what is going on around them and feed a large meal rich in carbohydrates as this will make your pet sleepy.
- Play music or have the volume on the TV at a louder level than usual as this can help to mask the noise from outside. Playing with your pet may also help to distract them.
- Do not get cross with your pet as this will only raise their anxiety levels (as can over fussing them)! Try to ignore any bad behaviour until they begin to relax and then reward the good behaviour.



We mustn't forget our furry friends that live outside! If your rabbits, ferrets and guinea pigs have not already been moved indoors for winter, start bringing them indoors at night to get them use to it before the firework season starts. Cages can be covered with blankets to muffle loud noise and keep out the flashes but you must ensure that there is adequate airflow. If you have aviaries consider covering them over or providing extra places for the birds to take cover.

Come and see us for our Firework Fix clinics! These are complimentary clinics held by our qualified nurses to help you and your pet during the firework season. We offer hints and tips for your phobic friends that may help your pet during this stressful season.



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!

