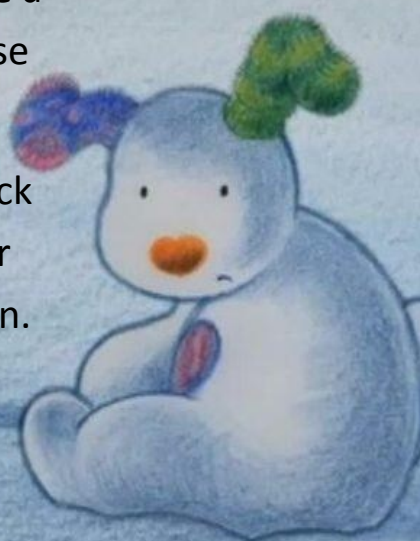




If you wish to purchase a gift for your pet, please contact the surgery.

We can organise a click and collect service or COVID safe transaction.

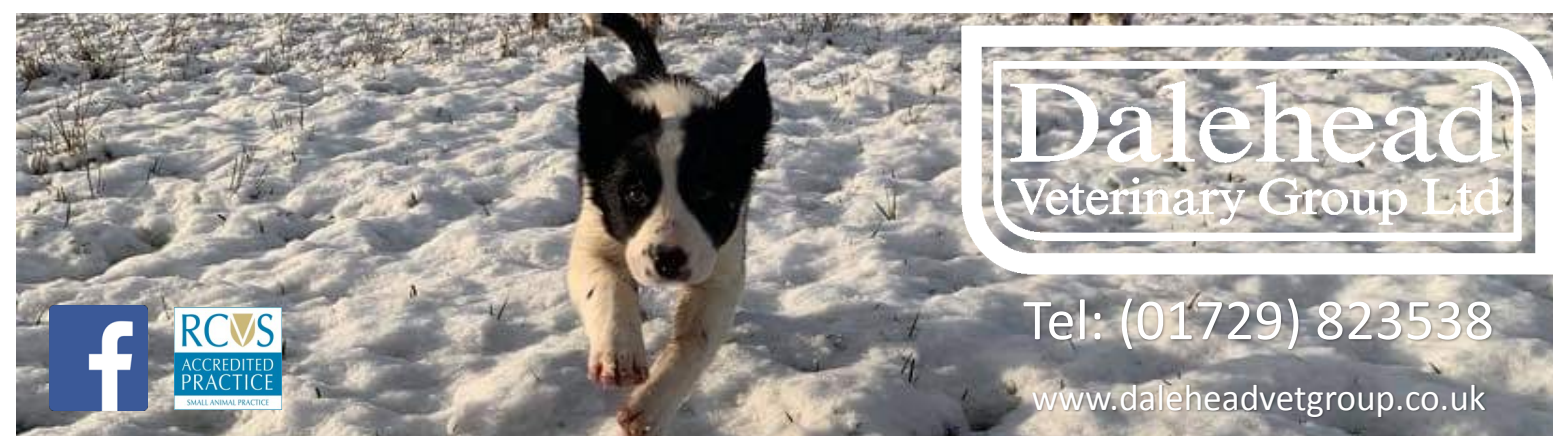
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## Companion Animal Newsletter - December 2020

### A BIG THANK YOU!



As we approach the end of this unprecedented year, we start to reflect on the changes we have had to make in our lives and the way that we work. Lockdowns, social distancing and evenings with Boris will not be forgotten quickly, nor will everyone's compliance, co-operation, understanding and kindness during COVID-19.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has visited the surgery since changes began back in March and have helped to make the situation a little bit easier for all of us. Our team have commented on numerous occasions on just how supportive our clients have all been during the pandemic, enabling us to continue to give the best possible service to your pets under difficult circumstances.

We would also like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy COVID-19 free New Year! We look forward to seeing you all in 2021 when hopefully some level of normality will return. Until then, thanks again to you all and stay safe!

### FESTIVE OPENING TIMES

#### Settle Festive Opening Times

Wednesday 23rd December	8.30am-6.30pm
Thursday (Christmas Eve)	8.30am-4.30pm
Friday (Christmas Day)	CLOSED
Saturday (Boxing Day)	CLOSED
Sunday 27th December	CLOSED
Monday 28th December	CLOSED
Tuesday 29th December	8.30am-6.30pm
Wednesday 30th December	8.30am-6.30pm
Thursday (New Years Eve)	8.30am-4.30pm
Friday (New Years Day)	CLOSED
Saturday 2nd January	9.00am-12.00pm

#### Bentham Festive Opening Times

Wednesday 23rd December	9am-12pm 2pm-6.30pm
Thursday (Christmas Eve)	2.30pm-4.30pm
Friday (Christmas Day)	CLOSED
Saturday (Boxing Day)	CLOSED
Sunday 27th December	CLOSED
Monday 28th December	CLOSED
Tuesday 29th December	3.30pm-5.30pm
Wednesday 30th December	9am-12pm 2pm-6.30pm
Thursday (New Years Eve)	2.30pm-4.30pm
Friday (New Years Day)	CLOSED
Saturday 2nd January	CLOSED

**24 HOUR EMERGENCY CARE 01729 823538**



## HAS YOUR PET HAD A HEALTH ASSESSMENT RECENTLY?



The bond we share with our animals is a very special one and we all have a big responsibility to make sure we are doing everything we can to keep them healthy and happy for as long as is possible! For our practice, keeping pets well goes very much beyond treating them when they're sick or injured. Many owners don't realise that their pet's regular health assessment is considered by veterinary professionals to play an essential role in maintaining their wellbeing. Through a regular visit, at least every 6-12 months, we not only provide essential advice on your pet's specific care and health needs at each stage of its life, but we can also detect many underlying issues and risks so they can be addressed before they become significant, painful or more costly to treat.

During a health assessment, we ask in-depth questions about your pet's lifestyle and habits and your pet gets a full medical check-up from nose to tail (plus all the parts in between!). You may not even notice that the vet is doing this as they run their hands over your pet's body, seemingly stroking or petting, they are actually looking for irregularities, lump and bumps, heat in a joint or reaction to movement. The point is to keep the examination subtle so that your pet is as relaxed as possible and displaying their usual behaviour.

If required following the initial examination, further tests can be recommended, and we are able to discuss and advise on any concerns you may have. This not only gives you peace of mind around your pet's current health and wellbeing, but also ensures you minimise the risks of future health problems such as obesity, dental disease and diabetes.

### Why do our pets need a regular "check-up"?

Here are 5 of the top reasons why regular visits to the practice are a vital part of your pet healthcare that you may not realise!

#### 1—Our Pets age more quickly than us!

Sadly, our dogs and cats have a far shorter life span than their owners and age more rapidly. In one calendar year, a dog or cat may age the equivalent of five to fifteen years in a human's life, which is why an annual health visit is so important for your cats and dogs. Not many of us would go 5 – 15 years without a check over from a doctor or dentist!

#### 2—Our Pets can't tell you that they are poorly!

Some health conditions can affect cats and dogs with symptoms that are difficult to spot. That doesn't mean they aren't causing pain or distress though! Our vets are trained to spot changes or abnormalities and detect problems before they advance or become more difficult to treat.

#### 3—Obesity is a problem for more and more pets.

It has been shown that 1 out of 2 pets are overweight; as in humans, surplus weight can adversely affect quality of life and puts our pets at increased risk of a range of serious health problems including diabetes, arthritis, and respiratory disease.

#### 4— Teeth and gum problems.

Chronic infections in the mouth cause bad breath, pain, gum disease, tooth loss and can also cause or relate to disease elsewhere in the body.

#### 5—Preventative care is better than reactive care.

In addition to other health issues that can be detected, annual health visits ensure your cat or dog's vaccines and parasite control are appropriate to the lifestyle of your pet, and significant infectious and parasitic health risks that your pet and family are likely to face are avoided.



#### How often should my pet have a health assessment?

This depends on the pet's age and current health status. For adult dogs and cats, health assessments should be undertaken at least once a year. For rapidly growing puppies and kittens and for the older pet, every 6 months or more may be advisable.

For animals with chronic conditions requiring long term medication, in order to continue to prescribe repeat medication, **legally** our vets need to have checked the animal **regularly** for



the condition being treated. These pets are given a repeat medication health check at least every 4 months as per our Practice policy.

Seeing your pets when they seem well is just as important in order to assess their general health as when they are sick or injured, and we're committed to your pet's wellbeing at every stage of their life. Taking the steps to ensure your pet stays in good health is a vital part of caring for the pet you love. The best way to keep your pet on top form is with the support and advice from our Practice team, so if we haven't seen your pet recently make sure you schedule a check-up with us now!

## WHY DO WE....TAKE BLOOD SAMPLES?

Blood tests can give us a large quantity of information regarding the health of your pet. They allow us to discover the health of many organs, detect disease and can confirm if your pet is safe to undergo anaesthesia prior to a surgical procedure.

A blood test informs us if your pet is dehydrated, has underlying kidney disease or liver changes, and measures your pet's red and white blood cells. Whilst blood tests do not always give us a definitive answer, they can be critical when treating unwell pets as they will often help us determine the next step and what areas require further investigation.

A large range of blood tests are carried out at Settle at our in-house laboratory. This allows a speedy turn around resulting in a high level of care.

### So, what actually happens when we take blood from your pet?

Most blood samples are taken from the jugular vein in the neck. This vein is large in size and provides an ample quantity of blood which can be collected quickly. We favour this site as if the blood is not collected quickly, it can start to clot which can then lead to inaccurate results.

Once the blood has been collected we place pressure over the vein to prevent any bruising. Your pet should not require a dressing, but does receive a treat and a cuddle! The blood is placed into tubes appropriate for required tests. Blood tests are an essential part of good veterinary medicine and can be a critical diagnostic tool when managing or monitoring illness.



<https://vetnurse.com.au/2018/03/07/jugular-venepuncture/>

## KEEPING YOUR RABBITS WARM IN WINTER

As the temperature starts to drop, it's time to take action and to make sure your rabbit's housing is all set up to ensure a warm, dry, and safe environment. Rabbits in the wild live underground in burrows, where temperatures don't vary as much as they do above ground. Pet rabbits need to be protected from winds, rain and extreme cold and depend on their owners to help keep them warm and dry. When the winter weather starts coming in, if possible, move the hutch and rabbit run into a light, well-ventilated garage or shed that's not used for cars or storing chemicals. Ensure their hutch is free from rot, cracks and draughts and check it is in waterproof condition. The legs that keep the hutch off the ground need to be stable, as any direct contact with the ground will make the base become sodden and your rabbits' living quarters damp.

When it comes to additional insulation, a good-quality waterproof cover that fits snugly over the hutch and has a transparent plastic roll-down front section is ideal. This allows good ventilation and means you can roll it up on cold but sunny days. Alternatively, practical home-made insulation methods include Perspex sheets to the front of the hutch and sections of the run to give some protection from the weather, leaving plenty of gaps for ventilation. Cover the outside of the hutch with silver-backed mats to add an extra layer, and if the weather drops below zero, wrap an old blanket or duvet around the hutch. Invest in a good-quality tarpaulin with eyelets that you can put right over the hutch and run and secure when it's very cold, wet or windy. If your rabbits' living quarters are in a shed, you can insulate the inside walls with commercial wall-insulation boards.

Your rabbits need deep bedding. Straw is warmer than hay because it's hollow and provides more insulation. Buy good-quality soft straw that's not spiky or dusty, such as barley straw.

When the temperature looks set to drop below zero, your rabbits may need the equivalent of a hot-water bottle for rabbits to help keep them warm at night. A small chew-proof heat pad (e.g. SnuggleSafe) is ideal for them to sit on, and simple to use. If the temperature drops below zero, heat the pad in a microwave exactly as instructed, slip into the little custom-sized pad case to ensure your rabbits don't get too hot, and the pads will stay warm for up to 12 hours.

You can also try putting a heat pad under the water dish to prevent the water freezing.

Thinking ahead about the condition of your hutch and run can ensure you have them all set in good time for the colder weather to come.

If you would like more information, please contact the surgery.

