



**Dalehead**  
Veterinary Group Ltd

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## COMPANION ANIMAL NEWSLETTER—FEBRUARY 2021

### PREVENTATIVE DENTAL CARE AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Bad breath is a common clinical sign in veterinary practice and there are many reasons that can cause it however dental disease is the most diagnosed.

There are often different severities of dental disease but the main cause is plaque which is a sticky substance that can form very quickly and contains over 300 types of bacteria! A build up can cause a thick tartar on the teeth which can often completely cover the tooth if dental hygiene is not carried out sufficiently and can result in the tooth underneath becoming severely diseased. This can cause pain in the mouth and your pet may find it difficult to eat. If the plaque was to migrate up the gum line it can cause severe inflammation if not treated and gingivitis may occur. Bacteria can get under the gum line and start affecting the teeth from beneath.

Severe dental disease is often only resolved by carrying out dental cleaning in the form of a scale and polish, with potential extractions for severely effected teeth. This can only be carried out under a general anaesthetic as the sensation can often be uncomfortable for your pet and all areas of the teeth cannot be examined fully whilst your pet is conscious. Dental treatment can reduce the amount of bacteria in the mouth for a short period of time however, if dental hygiene is not maintained, plaque can reform on the teeth and your pet may require repeat dental procedures.



#### How do you prevent dental disease?

By implementing a teeth cleaning routine into your pet's everyday life. At home, dental hygiene can play a massive part in the reduction of plaque, improve overall tooth and gum health and may also help improve their breath. Both dogs and cats can benefit from simply brushing their teeth daily but you must introduce brushing slowly to get them used to it as pets can become agitated and may bite if rushed into daily cleaning. There are other methods that can be used if your pet does not tolerate brushing such as a mouthwash water additive which can also help tartar reduction or a powder for food.

#### What is the best toothpaste and how do I introduce my pet to daily cleaning?

There are different types of toothpaste for pets on the market and the best all depends on what suits your pet best. The two types that are most commonly used are an enzymatic which helps break down plaque and tartar easily and antibacterial toothpaste which also breaks down plaque but also helps with the reduction of bacteria circulating the mouth. Both types of these products have a tasty flavouring and are available from the surgery.

#### **Human toothpaste should NEVER be used to brush your pet's teeth as it is toxic to pets!**

When getting your pet used to a daily cleaning regime, it is important to not rush in straight away with the toothbrush. You can try putting some toothpaste on your finger and letting your pet taste it while applying to the tooth and slowly introduce the toothbrush for couple of seconds without the toothpaste. Make sure you give them plenty of praise so that they find it a positive experience and hopefully tolerate it for longer next time. Also make sure you are paying attention to the gum line too and not just the teeth. Eventually your pet should come to enjoy teeth cleaning time and see it as a treat.



# LAMBING TIME AND THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE



The Countryside Code advises you to keep your dog on a lead when walking in rural areas. This is equally as important for you and your pet's safety as well as the welfare of the livestock and wildlife. In recent years there has been an increase in incidents of sheep worrying, some of which have been local. The National Sheep Association 2020 survey can be found at: <https://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/dog-owners/survey-results/>. We have outlined some of the major factors to consider when you are enjoying the countryside with your canine companions.

## Keep your dog on a lead when walking near sheep fields and avoid walking in fields with newly lambed sheep

Most sheep are herded by trained working sheep dogs so will naturally run away when they see a dog. All dogs have the instinct to run after another moving animal, in our pet dogs this will usually be in a playful way. The excitement in this play mode is heightened when the animal keeps running, the mouthing play that most dogs show at this point can cause considerable damage in sheep. Chasing behaviour is great fun for your dog and highly addictive. When repeated, this behaviour will always turn into either herding or hunting instincts depending on the make up of the dog.

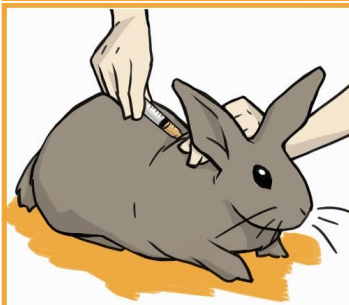
### Responsible dog owners will consider the following:

- Heavily pregnant sheep stressed by being moved too fast or too far will abort their lambs
- Ewes with young lambs that are moved by a dog can lose contact with their lambs. If they are not reunited within hours the lamb will not feed, get cold and can die
- Most dogs if not under control will chase sheep. Straying dogs, even the most gentle family pet, can develop the hunting instinct when chasing sheep and playful chasing can quickly turn into worrying.

### Dog mess, bag it and bin it!

Dog faeces from healthy dogs can spread disease to people, wildlife and livestock as well as between other dogs. There are 3 main diseases that dogs showing no symptoms can pass to other animals in their faeces which can cause paralysis and even death. Bag your dog faeces and take it home with you or dispose of it in a bin provided—not a hedgerow!

## RABBIT VACCINATIONS



In the last decade a new strain of Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) has become prevalent in the UK. This variant strain, also known as RHD-2, has quickly become the predominant cause of this fatal disease.

All breeds of rabbit, including both pet and wild rabbits, can be affected by RHD (caused by either RHDV-1 or RHDV-2), as well as myxomatosis. Both fatal diseases are endemic to the UK.

Most rabbits affected by RHD die rapidly often without showing obvious clinical signs apart from a short period of dullness and lethargy. If the rabbit does show symptoms, these can include widespread haemorrhages, fever and organ dysfunction before they die.

Myxomatosis causes puffy swellings around the head, face and genitals as well as a high fever. These swellings can be so severe that they can cause blindness. Affected rabbits typically cease eating and drinking and death typically follows within 12 days.

Ultimately, both diseases are typically fatal. The diseases are spread by insects, meaning contact with other rabbits isn't necessary for disease transmission.

These diseases cannot be cured, only prevented. Make sure your rabbit is protected by booking a vaccination appointment. These diseases can now be vaccinated against in just one visit to practice, which also provides opportunity for a general health assessment to keep your rabbit happy and healthy.



## THINGS TO CHECK WHEN BUYING A PUPPY

During 2020, and the COVID-19 lockdowns, thousands of homes have welcomed new family members in the form of puppies. The changes we have had to make during lockdown, such as working from home, has allowed many more people to enjoy the privilege of becoming a dog owner. Below we have put together a checklist which may help if you are thinking of purchasing a new addition.

ACTIONS TO TAKE BEFORE BUYING A PUPPY	Research breeds. What personality or breed trait would suit you? Small/Large breed?
	Research breeders. Have they a good reputation? Visit the Kennel Club website.
	Look into financial costs. Can you afford a puppy? Not just the initial cost; vaccination, neutering, parasite control, food, sundries such as toys, lead and collar, bed and bedding, insurance or unexpected veterinary fees ?
	Considered alternatives. Rescue and rehoming centres will always have dogs craving a loving home.
THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN VISITING A LITTER OF PUPPIES	Meet at the puppy's home. Does it look like the dog lives there?
	Is the breeder asking you questions? A responsible breeder will ask question to ensure you are the right person for their puppy.
	Is the mother of the puppies present? Are they interacting?
	Are there littermates? Are the puppy and littermates interacting?
	How old are the puppies? A puppy should not leave its mother until 8 weeks of age by law.
	Has the puppy been weaned (if not, they could be younger than the breeder is claiming)?
	What is the puppy eating? Is the breeder providing enough food for the puppy to continue, allowing for transitioning if not being fed the same diet?
	Confirm mum's age (she should be over 1 year but not very old)
	Confirm how many litters has Mum had (should be fewer than six)
	Has the puppy had any health issues? Is he/she up to date with worming treatments? Date of when the puppy was last wormed? Ask about vaccinations, Have they had any, if so, which one? Ask to see the vaccination record card.
	Confirm if puppy is Kennel Club registered? Confirm if puppy is microchipped? All dogs should be microchipped before leaving the breeder by law.



## ARE YOUR PETS MICROCHIP DETAILS UP TO DATE?

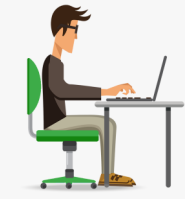
Many of you will have seen an increasing number of dog and puppies being reported as stolen. It is therefore essential that your pet's microchip details are kept up to date. If your pet escapes from home, wanders a little too far on a walk, becomes lost or is stolen, an up to date microchip will improve the chances of you being reunited.

Did you also know by informing the microchipping database company that your pet may have been stolen allows them to set a pre-alert, so if someone does contact them to change the details on the microchip, they will be alerted that this is a stolen pet.

For more information please contact the surgery on 01729 823538.



# Emailing Invoices



We are hoping to start emailing invoices and newsletters to clients at the beginning of March rather than posting them out. This is something which many of you have been requesting for some time, so we are gradually getting there! In order for us to email your invoice to you **we need the email address that you want the invoice to be sent to** – this seems like an obvious thing to say but on some accounts we hold several email addresses so please let us know which one you would like us to use for this purpose. **Also, you MUST have signed a GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) form which we hold on file to say that you are happy for us to send emails to you.**

If you would like to receive your invoice by email, please contact the office to ensure that we have the correct details and a signed GDPR form for you. Please remember to check your junk mail folder for your invoice until you have added us to your contacts. Some inboxes do not allow submissions from email addresses with generic names such as 'info@' so you may need to change your preferences in settings to receive our emails.

If we do not hold an email address for you or the GDPR information we hold on your account does not allow us to send an email you will receive your invoice by post as usual.



## MEET HOLLIE

Hollie joined the practice in November 2020 having relocated from a busy mixed practice in Derbyshire where she worked after graduating from Bristol in 2016. She has a keen interest in all aspects of veterinary work, particularly small animal surgery.

Outside of work Hollie is kept busy by her Labrador and two naughty cats!

## Improving Your Cat's Environment

It's important to provide cats with a home environment to support their natural needs, especially in a multi-cat household. Normal cat behaviours are often regarded by owners as unwanted, for example scratching, nocturnal activity and predatory behavior. If a cat's environment is not balanced to enhance their normal behavior, cats can become stressed. Stress in cats is often hard to spot as they can become quiet and withdrawn.

### Litter Trays

Providing the right number of litter trays in the right location can help to prevent marking and defecation. One litter tray per cat plus a spare is the general rule. They should be located in a quiet secluded place.

### Scratch Posts

Access to scratch posts and poles are essential for cats to exhibit normal behavior. If cats have clawing posts close to resting places, near doors and windows they can use these instead of your upholstered furniture and door frames!

### Resting Places

Resting places need to be private so your cat can relax and sleep. Often cats like to be up high so as not overlooked. An igloo type bed is also a good option.

### Feeding

Food and water bowls should be separate. Cats prefer not to drink at the same site that they eat in, so the position of your cats bowls can be key to a cat's happiness!

By understanding your cat's natural behavior and needs, you can make a few simple changes within your home to help relax your cat, and in turn strengthen your bond together.



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!

