



Companion Animal Newsletter - January 2021

TRAVEL WITH YOUR PET ABROAD FROM 1ST JANUARY 2021

To travel with your pet dog, cat or ferret to the EU from 01/01/2021 **you will now need 2 visits** to the surgery.

1. A microchip and rabies vaccination appointment **more than 3 weeks before travel** (unless already done), and a rabies booster **within every 3 years**. The rabies vaccination certificate (e.g. Pet Passport) **must travel with your pet**.
2. An Animal Health Certificate (AHC) appointment **within 10 days of travel**. A new AHC is needed **for each trip** from Great Britain to EU and Northern Ireland. Each AHC can be used for up to 4 months onward travel to other countries within the EU and return to the UK.
3. A tapeworm treatment is needed before travel from Britain to Northern Ireland, Ireland, Finland, Norway, Malta, and will be given at the Animal Health Certificate appointment.
4. Animal Health Certificate's are for **non-commercial movements of no more than 5 pets accompanied by their owner** (or person authorised by the owner in writing) who must also accompany the pets for the Animal Health Certificate appointment within 10 days of travel to sign the form.
5. As the UK is now a 'listed third country' a rabies blood test is now not needed to enter the EU (as long as your pet has not lived outside of the UK or EU).
6. A tapeworm treatment is needed (as before) **between 1 and 5 days before return to the UK** (apart from Northern Ireland, Ireland, Finland, Norway, Malta).
7. **Documents needed to take with your pet:**
 - Rabies Vaccination Card
 - Animal Health Certificate
 - Owner Declaration – part of the Animal Health Certificate
 - Authorisation in writing of nominated person to accompany animal if not the owner.



COVID19 UPDATE

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday evening and the subsequent lockdown the BVA and RCVS have issued a joint statement giving veterinary professionals guidance on how they can continue to provide essential services required for the health of your pets. Whilst it is not 'business as usual', the social distancing measures that we have in place at the surgery allow our staff to work safely and maintain social distancing from you, the client. We **MUST ALL** do our very best to stay safe and with this in mind we would like to politely request the following:

- Clients **MUST wear a FACE MASK** when attending the surgery, both when speaking to the vets/nurses and the reception team at the front doors
- **BRING** your **MOBILE PHONE** with you and when you get to the surgery please telephone our reception to let us know you have arrived, and inform the receptionist of the number you are on. Keep it on your person so that **the vet or nurse can speak to you remotely** when they have examined your pet to discuss treatment options and also so that **the reception team can take your payment over the telephone without having to come to the door where possible**
- **If you or any member of your household have tested positive for Covid19, are displaying symptoms or are self-isolating, PLEASE do not come to the surgery.** Contact us to arrange an alternative appointment when you are well.

WALKING YOUR DOG AT NIGHT

Many of us lead busy lives and during the winter months walking our dogs during the hours of darkness is often the only option. So to keep us all safe we have several dog walking in the dark safety measures.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS WHEN WALKING YOUR DOG AT NIGHT

- Moving vehicles
- Potholes and other trip hazards
- Other dogs
- Other walkers or runners
- Cyclists

When walking your dog in the dark, there are two simple things you can do to make your walks easier and keep yourself safe. These are:

- **Always carry a torch**, or better still, wear a head torch, as this will leave your hands free for lead and poo bag duties.
- **Wear bright reflective clothing**. It's equally important you wear a bright coat, ideally one with reflectors. Remember **SEE AND BE SEEN!**



HOW DO I KEEP MY DOG SAFE WHEN WALKING IN THE DARK?

Obviously when it's dark and we allow our dogs off the lead, we are far more likely to lose them, which could lead to a mishap resulting in a visit to the vets. However, there are lots of products available which allow us to keep an eye on our four legged friends. These include:

- **Reflective Gear**: Reflective collars, leads and coats are advisable for your dog along with a reflective coat or gilet for yourself.
- **LED lights**: These lights are now lighter and brighter than ever and batteries last much longer or can be recharged via a USB. They come in various designs including collars or clip on tags.

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF WHEN WALKING YOUR DOG AT NIGHT

Familiarity helps, so if you plan on taking your dog on a new walking route you should try to do it in daylight first. Other things to consider are:

- **Cars and other vehicles**: Road traffic accidents are a common cause of emergency admissions, particularly during the hours of darkness.
- **Potholes and other objects**: Be aware of broken glass and other sharp objects which can injure your dog's feet. Lively dogs may also attempt to jump over fences or walls and may be unable to see the depth or the drop on the other side, or other hazards like barbed wire.
- **Other dogs**: Meeting other dogs is more of an issue in the dark, so if your pet is nervous it's probably best to keep them on a lead or within sight.
- **Other people**: Consider joggers on paths and cyclists on bridleways.

Please call at our Settle surgery to enquire about our 'BRIGHT' product selection.



Keeping rabbits warm is important, in the wild they live in underground burrows where the temperature changes only slightly between summer and winter. Keeping rabbits above ground exposes them to extreme temperature changes. Damp and draughts can be fatal at this time of the year for rabbits.

Garden sheds offer a great alternative to a traditional rabbit hutch as they can be well insulated, keep the rabbits nice and dry as well as allowing room to exercise. External runs can still be attached to a shed and covered by a

tarpaulin. Many owners bring their rabbits inside during the colder months either in a shed, garage or into the house. If you decide to bring your rabbits inside it is important to keep them inside until spring or until the weather has warmed up. Rabbits will lose their winter coats and placing them back into the cold can be fatal. If you are unable to bring your rabbit into an indoor space, insulating hutches, supplying a large amount of clean, dry bedding, using heated pads as well as proofing the hutch from drafts will enable your rabbit to keep warm. Your rabbit will develop a winter coat which will also help keep them cosy.

This advice is for rabbits who are in good body condition. Those who are old or thin may need even more care and we advise owners of such bunnies to bring them in for the winter.

WHY DO WEEXAMINE URINE SAMPLES?

Examining a urine sample is not everyone's idea of fun but it can give us a lot of information for such a small non-invasive diagnostic test. It can sometimes seem daunting to try and get a urine sample from your pet but it's not really that bad. A few handy tips include

- A Fresh sample (preferable the first wee of the day). This urine will have sat in the bladder all night so gives a good sample.
- A clean container (nothing that has had fat or sugar in it. Despite being washed out well residues can interfere with the urine results)
- If you do see blood in the urine it is really helpful to note whether it's at the start, the middle or comes at the end of urination. This helps us narrow down where it might be coming from.
- Finally try to note if there's any straining to urinate, needing to go but not producing much, and whether the stream of urine is flowing well.



How do we test the urine and what are we checking for?

- **Dipstick**
Much like you may see the doctors using this is a quick test to check for things such as glucose, ketones, blood (that is often not visible to the human eye). It provides a signpost for the vet to decide whether further testing may be necessary.
- **Specific gravity**
In simple terms this is where we check the strength of the urine against a set range for the species being tested. For example, urine that is very dilute or too strong could mean a urine infection or kidney trouble etc
- **Microscopy**
This is where the urine is spun in a centrifuge to separate the particles from the liquid. It gives a more concentrated sample that can be stained and looked at under a microscope. Here we look for urinary crystals, blood, bacteria and other things such as tumour cells. When bacteria are identified they often fall into ones shaped like little rods and ones shaped like little balls. This narrows down the likely bacteria involved so that we can choose the most appropriate antibiotic.



A bit about crystals.... The mammalian urinary system is incredibly clever and has many checks and balances in place to maintain its health. One of these is to maintain the pH of the urine at a specific level to prevent bacteria from growing and to prevent reactions leading to the formation of crystals. Some crystals can stick together to form bladder stones which can irritate the bladder lining (think gravel rolling around inside a balloon of water) sometimes leading to blood in the urine. Some crystals can be dissolved with a change in diet, but some can't and can lead onto a blocked bladder (especially in cats) which is a true emergency.

- **Culture and sensitivity**
Following the microscopy results we may suggest the sample is sent to the external pathology lab for culture and sensitivity testing. This is done to further identify the actual bacteria right down to individual strains present and which antibiotics they are resistant or sensitive to. This helps guide our choice and use of antibiotics to treat your pet and get them back to being happy



INTRODUCING ... HARRIET!



We are very pleased to announce the arrival of Harriet Robinson who joins our Companion Animal Team! Harriet comes to us from a background of customer relations roles within the hotel sector where she has worked for several years.

Harriet grew up locally on a dairy and sheep farm so has been used to dealing with animals from an early age. Outside work she enjoys all forms of exercise, particularly going to the gym and spending time with her horse and competing. She has a miniature Dachshund called Minnie (aptly enough) who thinks she is a sheepdog and spends most of her time herding sheep!

We are sure you will get to know her soon enough and join us in welcoming her to Dalehead.

CAN YOU PINCH MORE THAN AN INCH?

January, and to be honest for many of us those skinny jeans are feeling a little snugger! Our New Year diets have started, but how many of us have cast that same critical eye over our pets? Scary statistic time; just like the human epidemic, almost 50% of the pet population are overweight or obese. Even just a little extra weight can impact on the quality of life and the lifelong general health of your pet. Overweight pets are at risk of joint issues, diabetes, arthritis, hip dysplasia, breathing problems and heart disease. It is common for overweight dogs to be prone to ruptured knee ligaments, and in overweight cats we see more cases of liver disease, urinary stones and feline lower urinary tract disease.



HOW DOES YOUR PET WEIGH UP?

Now for the good news! With dietary management and exercise, we can work as a team for your pet to achieve and maintain their ideal weight, keeping them happy and healthy. Our team of nurses run complimentary weight clinics where they will condition score your pet, and offer advice and support so you can work to plan achievable targets and track your pet's weight loss. You are not alone and with the correct advice and support along with your hard work and commitment we will get there.

TOP TIPS TO GET STARTED

The first step is to think about the fuel you put in. Diet is key and to make life easier there are excellent nutritionally balanced, calorie controlled diets available. For advice on feeding a weight loss diet, please contact us.



STOP THE TREATS!

Feeding your pet a weight management calorie controlled feed is vital but it is the snacking between meals that can cause the most harm. We all love to reward our pets, but STOP and THINK - could we be killing them with kindness? The best form of treats are those that are calories free; a walk or playtime with your pet can be just as rewarding as giving an edible treat, if not more so. However, if you are going to treat with food it is essential to think about the calories involved.

Scary time again! Pet nutrition studies illustrate the 'real calories' impact of the titbits we give our pets by equating them into human terms. For an average dog just 28g of cheese is equivalent to a hamburger, 2 slices of salami would equate to 4 chocolate chip cookies, and the grocery store strip dog treats can be the same as giving your dog the human equivalent of a chocolate bar! For cats, just 14g of cheese is the equivalent to a hamburger

and fries, 1 slice of salami would be the same as a bag of crisps and 28g of cheese, and one grocery store cat treat can represent as much as one whole chocolate chip cookie! Seen this way it becomes clear that just giving your pet a few seemingly innocuous treats throughout the day will really add to their calories count.

The whole family is going to need to be on board, so maybe look at this as an opportunity for you all to get more active. Try and fit in extra walks in addition to the regular ones, and for local chores think can I walk and take my dog along? Maximise exercise whilst out with a game of fetch, or get creative and play a game of hide of seek for their favourite toy or person! Swimming is also great for those with joint or back problems.

Exercise for cats can be more of a challenge, again if you would like advice please contact us. Also check out our next newsletter where we will feature an article dedicated to exercising your cat.

The take home point is that these exercise and dietary changes are changes for life, do not fall back into old habits once you have reached your goal and undo all that hard work! When your pet achieves their target weight, congratulate everyone involved, and reward your pet with a long walk or a new toy!



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!

