



Dalehead

Veterinary Group Ltd



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Companion Animal Newsletter - October 2017

NEW FACES



Having previously worked at the Practice in 2003 Ally is thrilled to rejoin Dalehead Veterinary Group as Companion Animal Coordinator, assisting in managing our small animal department. With a background in retail, pet nutrition and customer service, Ally now joins us having spent the past 13 years as Practice Manager at an equine vets in Lancashire.

Ally is a real people person and is especially looking forward to meeting all our lovely clients and their pets, organising pet owner events and working as part of the team with our vets, nurses and support staff to provide you and your animals with the highest level of service and veterinary care.

Born and bred in the Dales and coming from a sheep hill farming family, Ally feels like she is coming home and back to the right side of the border! The queen of hobbies outside of work she enjoys, dance, music, reading, sewing, walking, swimming, and is passionate about all things 'foodie' and loves to cook. Ally feels that life is about spending time with family and friends, as well as doting on her beloved house bunny Spuggs.

Owners Urged To Update Microchip Details

Owners are being urged to make sure their pets are microchipped and **details are up to date** as a new report reveals only 65% of strays have a microchip fitted.

The report, '*Microchipping where it matters most - one year on*' is the first study carried out by Battersea Dogs and Cats Home since compulsory dog microchipping came into effect.

We at Dalehead have also experienced the effects of details not being kept up to date and the difficulties involved when trying to reunite a stray pet with their owner, particularly for people on holiday in the area. To change your details check out www.petlog.org.uk.

Your Autumn Guide - What To Avoid Giving To Your Pet

A number of specific hazards emerge at this time of year, so it is wise to be aware of them so that you can protect your pet.

Fireworks: Unused or spent, can cause oral or gastric irritation and breathing issues. Wash out the mouth and consult your vet.

Luminous necklaces/bracelets: Low toxicity if ingested so just give water to drink. If squirted into the eye, rinse the eye and contact your vet.

Blackberries: Large quantities may cause stomach upsets, but no serious consequences.

Fungi: Take a photo of the fungi and contact your vet. Many species are harmless but identification is difficult. Some cause gastric signs, muscle spasms or behavioural issues. Be vigilant for any late-presenting signs which could indicate a serious poisoning.

Horse chestnuts (conkers): Can cause lethargy and vomiting, which is not usually serious, but the conkers can get lodged in the throat or gastrointestinal tract, so a phone call to your vet would be a good idea.

Antifreeze: Always very serious, irrespective of the quantity. **Rush your pet to the vets.**





PUPPY TROUBLES

How To Resolve Problem Behaviour



A new puppy is such a joy, and can be very exciting after all the planning. However, it is usually not as simple as welcoming a baby animal into your home. Common puppy problems can take a bit of time, but are easily resolved and deserving of your patience.

Who Trains The Puppy?

Often the children want to play and get involved, and this is great for the puppy to learn about the smaller members of our community. However, an adult must always be present to coach and monitor both puppy and child carefully, to ensure that all lessons learned are good ones. It can be easy for children to overstimulate a puppy, and as puppy grows he may grab and jump up at excitable kids!

Jumping Up

Everyone loves a puppy greeting. The cascade of licks and wagging tail, happily panting mouth coupled with a cute furry face is hard to resist. However, it is often accompanied with sharp puppy teeth and tiny claws. If we do not teach the puppy early on, this becomes more powerful physical contact from the dog in their delight as they jump up to greet us. A great help is the motto 'all four paws on the floor' for greetings. As your pup comes towards you, hold some food in one hand and let him sniff it, keeping your hand low enough that his feet remain on the ground. Give the piece of food and be ready with another. Pet him gently whilst his feet stay down on the ground. You can gently hold your pup's collar to guide him if you like, but make sure he also only gets greeted with paws on the floor.

Following these early stages, as soon as you can, begin teaching your puppy to sit for everything he wants to do. This includes all meetings with people and other dogs, mealtimes, playtimes and so on. 'Sit' becomes a puppy 'please'. Keep teaching him, and put his puppy lead on to ensure he can be gently guided away from problems. Never yank or hurt him. It is a bad idea to shout, or smack the puppy if he jumps up. Dogs are social creatures and we want them to learn that people are kind and safe to interact with. Never attempt to scare your puppy when he comes happily over to say hello. Teach him, instead. You will have a better relationship with a much calmer and happier dog as he grows.

Mouthing, Chewing and Grabbing

Puppies like to explore, like all baby animals do (including us humans). However, unlike small children who use their hands to pick things up and play, pups use their mouths. If you watch pups playing with other dogs, they can be seen mouthing one another in a form of gentle 'jaw wrestling', chasing one another around, sometimes yipping excitedly. It is hardly surprising that they try out the same behaviour on the human family too. Pups also follow and pounce on their toys, especially when they are excited. They cannot easily tell the difference between their cuddly toys and your slippers, or a chew toy and a child's plastic one.

Firstly, accept that your puppy's mouthing and grabbing is a perfectly normal, natural behaviour. Never attempt to punish your puppy by shouting or smacking him, no matter who advises it. Puppies must learn that hands are kind, because throughout his life people will use their hands to stroke him, put his lead on, groom him and examine him at the vet's. If your puppy develops a fear of this, including your shouting, you are setting him up for serious behaviour problems in the future. Instead, the following easy steps can be taken:

Provide Chew Items

Provide several chew toys that are designed to hold food. Rubber toys suitable for dogs need to have something edible that is strongly scented inside to make them attractive, as dogs are very keen on smells! We are trying to make these items more interesting than your shoes, or nearby cushions. Ideally, sticky spreads rather than dry biscuits are the best. Meat pastes are available, or other flavours but

check that they are suitable for your dog and do not contain sweeteners which are poisonous to canines. You only need to smear some inside rather than fill up the chew; we don't want your puppy to get sick. Avoid letting your pup mouth and tug on fabric items, since these are similar to human clothing. They can also be torn into pieces and contents swallowed, so can be dangerous.

Teach The Family How To Interact

Children tend to move excitedly, making high pitched noises which encourage pups to join in and leads to grabbing hands, arms and clothing, particularly trousers, as children run by. This is natural social behaviour, but rough play with humans can lead to accidents, so it must not be encouraged. Teach children to play calmly with your puppy and spend time coaching them (and the puppy) on how best to interact. This can include getting puppy to fetch or to sit, before he is petted. This is valuable learning for puppy, and for your family when they meet other dogs. Puppies need a lot of rest over short periods throughout the day. They often mouth and grab more intensely when tired or over excited. Place your pup into their bed or crate with a chew toy, and allow them to rest. You will often find that they settle, have a good sleep and wake up refreshed and calm. Rather than focus on the problem, design an activity your pup can use their mouths on (all puppies need to chew). Each time your pup begins to chewing and mouthing on something you find unacceptable, offer the chew toy. You should soon see him settle down and gnaw on this instead, so everyone is calm and happy.

For more information on behaviour, please speak with one of the vets or our qualified nurses on 01729 823538.

