

May we take this opportunity to wish you all
a very Merry Christmas and a Happy
& Healthy New Year!



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COMPANION ANIMAL NEWSLETTER– DECEMBER 2021

SENIOR CATS

Cats are considered to be kittens from birth to 1 year old, young adults from 1 to 6 years old and mature adults from 7 to 10 years old. While young cats and kittens should visit the veterinary clinic at least once a year, older cats should be checked more frequently. They are known to be stoic animals and considering that signs of illness and age-related changes can be subtle it is recommended senior cats should visit us every six months and even more frequently if chronic conditions are present. We see cats at annual vaccinations then offer Well Pet Clinics 6 months after this. If your cat isn't on our vaccination regime we also offer senior feline clinics with one of our qualified nurses. Diagnosing illness in elderly cats can be challenging as some clinical signs can be very similar. If you are concerned about your feline friend then a veterinary appointment may be necessary. Your cat may be displaying signs which when investigated may need veterinary intervention. House soiling can be worsened by osteoarthritis if cats have trouble or feel pain when getting into the litter tray. Weight gain or weight loss can be a common feature of aging, the cause of changes in weight need to be determined, and decreased appetite may be exacerbated by dental disease, diabetes mellitus, hyperthyroidism or kidney disease.



Senior cats can also display a number of age-related behavioural changes that may progress with age. Some of these include; house soiling, reduced grooming, reluctance to eat, increased water intake and a reduced willingness to play, hunt and go outside. While some of these behaviours may result from normal ageing, others may also be associated with underlying diseases. Cognitive decline and dementia can be displayed in elderly cats and changes in social behaviour such as being more affectionate, or more vocal during the day and at night, changes in activity levels and impaired memory. These are all signs and symptoms senior cats are susceptible to and during a consultation it is worth mentioning these to your vet or nurse as they might not be considered as normal ageing changes. Let us know about your cat's change in food and water intake, changes in bodyweight, mobility alterations, production of urine and faeces and behavioural changes so we can identify early signs of disease.

Settle Festive Opening Times

Thursday 23rd December	8.30am-6.30pm
Friday (Christmas Eve)	8.30am-4.30pm
Saturday (Christmas Day)	CLOSED
Sunday (Boxing Day)	CLOSED
Monday 27th December	CLOSED
Tuesday 28th December	CLOSED
Wednesday 29th December	8.30am-6.30pm
Thursday 30th December	8.30am-6.30pm
Friday (New Years Eve)	8.30am-4.30pm
Saturday (New Years Day)	CLOSED
Sunday 2nd January	CLOSED
Monday 3rd January	CLOSED

Bentham Festive Opening Times

Thursday 23rd December	4pm - 6.30pm
Friday (Christmas Eve)	CLOSED
Saturday (Christmas Day)	CLOSED
Sunday (Boxing Day)	CLOSED
Monday 27th December	CLOSED
Tuesday 28th December	CLOSED
Wednesday 29th December	4pm-5.30pm
Thursday 30th December	4pm-6.30pm
Friday (New Years Eve)	CLOSED
Saturday (New Years Day)	CLOSED
Sunday 2nd January	CLOSED
Monday 3rd January	CLOSED

DO YOU NEED REPEAT MEDICATION FOR YOUR PET OVER CHRISTMAS?

For those of you with pets on repeat medication, now is the time to stock check and make sure you have enough to get you through the Christmas period. Although our vets are always here for you providing 24/7 care for any emergencies, our surgeries will be closed for routine work and enquiries over the festive period. When ordering prescriptions we require 24 to 48 hours notice. Only a vet is licensed to prescribe prescription only medication and time is structured into their day for them to review patient records and dispense prescription requests, for this reason we are unable to give out repeat medication without prior notice.

Please note some medications may need to be ordered in for individual patients and require at least a weeks' notice to allow time to be ordered and delivered to the practice, and at this time of year we are also working around our suppliers' Christmas opening hours. Your vet may prescribe prescription only medicines (POM-Vs) only to animals under their care. It is our practice policy that animals on repeat POM-Vs are examined by the vet at least every 4 months. This enables us to ensure your pet's condition is controlled as well as possible and that the most appropriate combination of treatments and dose rates are used.

ITS THAT TIME OF YEAR... OBESITY IN OUR PETS

Obesity can be defined as an excess of body fat that is enough to impair health, welfare, and quality of life. Studies show that in the UK alone 65% of all dogs, 37% of juvenile dogs and 39% of cats are overweight or obese and this is only going to keep rising.

Obesity can occur by:

- * Overfeeding both diet and giving your pet extra treats.
- * Reduced exercise due to either pet injury or an owner's reduced activity.
- * Neutering can have an impact on your pet's metabolism and can cause weight gain. This should not be a reason to not neuter your pets. It should be noted that if you are afraid of your pet becoming overweight for this reason, that correct diet management following the procedure can prevent this and that neutering your pet has many future health benefits.
- * In the last couple of years due to the Covid-19 pandemic our lifestyle has changed with less time socialising and repeated lockdowns resulting in less time out of the house doing exercise. These changes may have affected how we treat our pets. The PDSA reported that there was an increase in treats and human food given to our pets due to being at home with them more often.

So how do we determine if our pets are obese or overweight? Body Condition Scoring!

The body condition score on the right is scored out of 5 and there are different criteria to meet each scale rating from 1 – very thin to 5 – obese as the picture demonstrates. There is also another scale which rates the pet's body condition score out of 9, again with criteria to meet each number on the scale. Both scales are used in veterinary practice as they are good tools to help indicate if your pet is overweight or obese. During most of 2020 the pandemic meant we could only provide emergency treatment according to our governing body, and so broaching this conversation at our health check consults became a little bit trickier! With the veterinary industry only just starting to get back to some sort of normality we are able to help our clients achieve a good healthy weight for their pets.



So, what effects does obesity have on our pets?

As the diagram shows pet obesity can have a major effect on our pet's health. Other things that are not mentioned are:

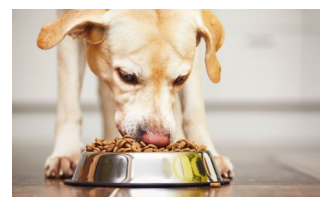
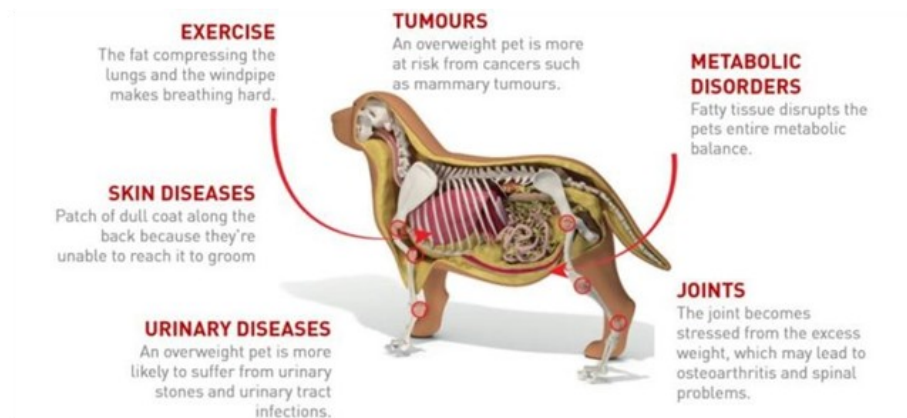
- * Heart and respiratory diseases
- * High blood pressure
- * Increased anaesthetic risk

What makes my pet more likely to be obese?

- * Breed - certain breeds have a higher risk
- * Age - the risk increases with age
- * Sex - apart from older dogs, obesity is reported to be more common in females.

What can we do to help reduce obesity and aid weight loss?

- * Reduce calorie intake - cut out all unnecessary treats and titbits, we have specially formulated diets which whilst low in calories, make your pet feel fuller so they are less likely to ask for more food
- * Weigh out food – less likely to give more than your pet requires
- * Pick the correct diet for their age or breed – some foods are formulated for this
- * Attend a Weight Clinic with your pet – seek advice from your vet or registered veterinary nurse
- * Increase exercise



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!

