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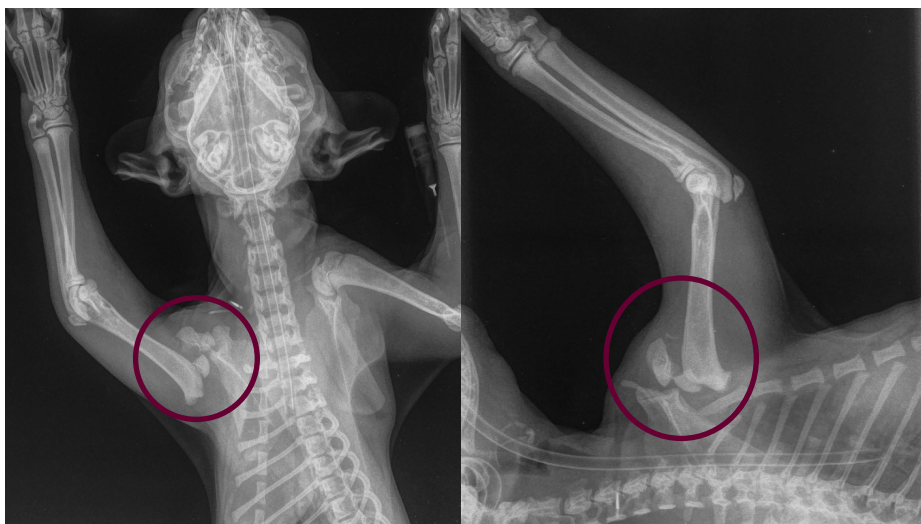
**Dalehead**  
Veterinary Group Ltd

## COMPANION ANIMAL NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2025

### CHAD'S ROAD TO RECOVERY

At just 4 months old poor Chad had a nasty altercation with a car and unfortunately managed to fracture (break) one of his front legs.

His owner brought him to see our vet..... and once he was made comfortable and stable we had to decide what the best course of action would be to treat his injury. Most fractures can be put back together using plates, screws, pins... or a combination of these. Some repairs are relatively simple but some can require very complex surgeries. Younger patients like Chad often heal quickly but have softer bones which can limit the options for repair. The circle on the x-ray image of Chad's leg shows the location of the fracture; in the humerus at the top of his leg right up near the shoulder joint. As the fracture was so close to the shoulder joint, a surgical repair was going to be far from straightforward which then meant his owner needed to consider options like amputation of his leg, or to have him put to sleep.



Chad's owner was keen to do all they could.

Even though they weren't sure how well he would manage on 3 legs, the decision was made to amputate.

This situation raises a common dilemma – we are so used to seeing animals on 4 legs, that an animal with 3 legs will often appear to be disabled. However, this couldn't be further from the reality. Most animals, cats or dogs, will adapt incredibly well to being on 3 legs. Certain adaptations will need to be made – shorter more frequent walks for dogs, smaller jumping distances for cats, etc.

A pet's ability to recover well from an amputation can also depend on whether a front or a back leg is being removed. Front legs are harder for animals to cope without- purely due to the fact that 60% of an animal's weight is carried by the front legs and 40% by the hindlimbs – this means that more weight has to be shared by the remaining limbs when a front leg is removed.

Other considerations that need to be taken on board are the long-term effects on the other joints – a lot of animals that have had a leg removed are more prone to osteoarthritis later on in life. This shouldn't be a reason not to proceed with an amputation, but is a consideration for longer term management.

Pictured to the right is Chad, he underwent surgery and hasn't looked back! Within 24 hours he was playing with his brother again. Even though there were real concerns about whether an amputation was the right decision, his owner is very happy we chose this route and Chad now has a new lease of life!



## Coping with Scary times!

It's that time of year when seasonal traditions are occurring. We need to think about making changes for our pets, especially those who are noise sensitive.



Halloween – whilst a fun time for the whole family, some pets might find this quite stressful. With lots of people coming and going with different costumes on (most of which aren't everyday wear), this can be both unsettling and frightening. We also need to consider that some foods are toxic to dogs and cats – particularly chocolate and raisins, so ensuring these are not in areas that are accessible is vital.

Fireworks – again, another fun night (or even weekend) for us, is not so fun for our pets. The unusual noises, colours and smells can be very stressful and scary.

There are lots of different ways to alleviate the stress our pets will be under:

- **Desensitisation:** A lengthy process and ideally started months before fireworks night to get the best outcome. One really useful resource available being The Dog's Trust playlists which can be used throughout the year to help this process. These are played from a very low level to build up your dog's tolerance over time.
- **Safe Space:** Creating a den or safe space for your dog or cat to hide in can be very beneficial. An area that they perceive to be their own and where nothing bad happens. This can make them feel reassured as a haven in scary times. The haven combined with calming plug ins or sprays can make the area even more relaxing. Try to find a private area in the house with minimal throughput and then using blankets as cover and putting toys and treats in the area all helps to make it appealing for your pet.
- **Thundershirts:** These work by applying a constant pressure across your pet's body, releasing hormones that reduce the heart rate and calm (similar to oxytocin and endorphins). Studies show that this can have a significant benefit in up to 80% of dogs.
- **Calming Diffusers and Sprays:** There are many different sprays and diffusers on the market. We stock Pet Remedy and Calmex (multi-pet), Adaptil (dogs) and Feliway (cats). Pheromonal products such as Adaptil or Feliway diffusers will cover a set radius and are good to use if you are going to make a safe space. The pheromones mimic the stress aiding chemicals your pet would naturally secrete when calm diffusing them into the environment for your pet to breathe in. Herbal products including Pet Remedy and Calmex use natural herbs (such as skullcap and valerian) to achieve the calming effect. They come in various preparations, as tablets, diffusers and also herbal sprays which can be applied anywhere and are good for travelling.
- **Calming Supplements:** Most nutraceutical (or supplement) suppliers will have their own version of calming supplements. Again, these will be based on herbal remedies such as skullcap and valerian and may also contain other components such as L-tryptophan, that can aid calming and reducing anxieties.
- **Calming Kits-** This is a specific combination of prescription veterinary prescribed medications which aim to reduce fear, anxiety and stress in our animals, whether this is to manage a scary event such as Halloween, Bonfire night or if your pet is anxious when travelling or visiting us here at the vets. The protocol will vary depending on your pet, but it will generally include medication to be administered the night before, and another dose to be administered 2 hours before the stressful event. There are many reasons why your pet may have been prescribed the calming kit. This can be discussed further with one of the veterinary surgeons.

## **SHE DID IT!**

Well done to Practice Manager Emma who finished the Great North Run in 2 hours 13 minutes and 41 seconds on 7<sup>th</sup> September. She was running to raise money for Guide Dogs UK and managed to get a whopping £1020 in sponsorship! Guide dog puppy Crispin was so impressed that he came into the surgery to say thank you in person.



Crispin is only a youngster, despite his size, and was a little overwhelmed when he first came to the vets but thanks to the patience of his puppy trainer working together with veterinary nurses Glen and Lizzy, they have steadily built his confidence through regular gentle visits so that Crispin can experience different veterinary situations in a calm and reassuring manner. We wish him all the best in his ongoing training to become a Guide Dog.



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