



Companion Animal Newsletter - JULY 2020

FLYSTRIKE IN RABBITS

WHAT IS "FLYSTRIKE"?

Flystrike occurs when blowflies lay their eggs on your rabbit, and those eggs then hatch out into maggots. Maggots from blowflies: bluebottles and green bottles, are the most dangerous. They can eat into your rabbit's flesh within 24 hours which can cause death in a very short time.



PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

- Keep your rabbit's accommodation clean and do not allow a build up of soiled bedding, this will prevent flies being attracted.
- Check your rabbit's bottom every day. This should be done several times in the summer during the high risk period.
- If your rabbit's rear is soiled clean and dry the area.
- Apply a fly repellent such as 'Rear-guard', ensure administration instructions are followed as directed by the manufacturer. Please speak to one of our small animal vets, nurses or SQP staff if you would like to discuss fly repellent products.
- If your rabbit is obese, discuss weight loss with one of our vets or nurses. An ideal weight and body score allows less strain on joints, encourages your rabbit to squat correctly when toileting and is able to clean itself properly.
- If your rabbit has a wound, keep it clean and dry.
- If your rabbit is producing unusually wet faeces, please make an appointment. This will allow for diagnosis and treatment, and prevent further issues such as fly strike.



If you would like to discuss flystrike please do not hesitate to contact the surgery.

COVID-19 UPDATE

We would like to thank our clients for their patience regarding the socially distanced provision of services and fact that they are not able to enter the practice buildings.

Whilst lockdown is beginning to ease across other sectors we are striving both to resume normal services and maintain an emergency service for your pet's welfare and so at this current time, the decision has been made to continue to provide services which are socially distanced at 2 meters and not to allow entry into practice premises for clients at this time.

These measures are being implemented in order for us to work at the recommended social distancing within the practice and controlling the amount of 'outside traffic' into the building in order to reduce the risk of possible transfer of Covid19. This is necessary to reduce the risks to our staff and so continue to provide veterinary services through these difficult times.

We thank you for your continued support in this matter.

KEEP YOUR PETS COOL THIS SUMMER

For many people, Summer is the best time of year. Longer days, light evenings and warmer weather... What's not to love?! Most pets are also fond of the warmer weather, sunbathing in the garden or that warm spot in the window, however precautions **MUST** be taken to keep your pets safe in the sun. Here are some of our top tips....

- **NEVER** leave pets in parked cars: Temperatures can soar rapidly and can reach dangerously high levels in just 15 minutes, even quicker on hotter days! Dogs deteriorate quickly and can die from heatstroke. Dogs do not sweat and can only lose body heat through heavy, excessive panting.
- Make sure they can always access shade: Don't let pets sit out in strong sun, a picnic in the park is great fun, especially when your dog goes too! Just make sure they have access to shade and water.
- Ensure water is always available: Like us it's important for animals to remain hydrated.
- Buy a doggy paddling pool: If your pet enjoys water, why not treat them to a paddling pool, allowing them to wallow in the water will help to keep them cool as well as giving mental stimulation.
- Avoid walking your dog during the hottest part of the day: Try to exercise your dog either in the morning or night when the temperatures are lower.
- Slap on the sun cream: Pets can suffer from sunburn, light coloured pets are particularly vulnerable to sunburn, their noses and ears especially.



FACT OR FICTION?

Once upon a time it was thought that playing tug of war with your dog had a negative effect on their behaviour and could cause aggression. Tug can be a great game to play with most dogs - providing you and your canine companion play by the rules! The game should be equal on both sides, sometimes you win, sometimes your dog wins.

The benefits are:

- Tug-of-war is a fun way for you to bond with your dog.
- Played properly, tug of war teaches your dog instinct control. Dogs aren't born knowing what you mean by 'drop', 'give' or 'leave', this has to be taught. Despite how much they want to keep tugging, instruction to release their toy allows us to control that urge resulting in improved handling.
- When dogs mouth at you, tug of war can be used for redirection. This shows your dog that mouthing their toys is acceptable whereas nipping or mouthing you is definitely not!
- It can be a way of releasing pent up energy and decreases the chances of boredom or stress-related negative behaviours by leaving your dog happy and tired.
- It allows for 'rough housing' play that has ground rules and means you are not using your hand or arms to engage in that type of activity.
- Dogs can love tug-of-war so much that it can be used as positive reinforcement during training sessions.
- The benefits far outweigh the outdated myth that it can lead to aggression.

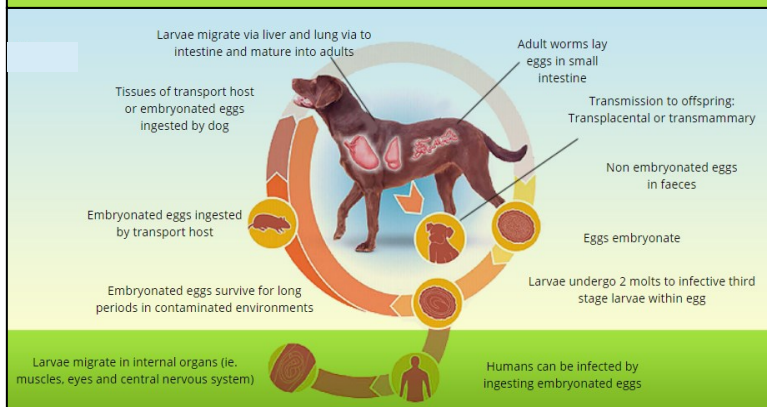


You can read more about how to teach your dog the rules of tug of war and other training tips, visit www.speakdog.co.uk/blog

WISING UP ABOUT WORMS

Those of you who follow our Facebook page will have seen several posts addressing worm control for our dogs and cats. Unfortunately, cats and dogs are prone to picking up worms but more often than not, they do not show any obvious symptoms. Different types of worms can cause different issues for both your pet's health, and that of your family, so while this may not make for particularly pleasant reading, it is a subject worth understanding. There are several species of worms below we learn about 2 of the 7 species.

Roundworm Lifecycle



ROUNDWORMS

Roundworm (*Toxocara canis*, *Toxascaris leonina*, *Toxocara cati*) are found in the faeces of infected dogs and cats. The eggs can be found in soil anywhere, from parks and playgrounds to gardens.

SYMPTOMS:

It is not always obvious if your pet has picked up roundworms as although their digestive system can become blocked and inflamed they won't necessarily display any obvious symptoms. Puppies and kittens however can start to lose weight, develop a 'pot bellied' appearance and may even develop pneumonia.

The incubation period for roundworm is about 4-6 weeks, meaning it can be over a month between ingesting the roundworm, and then passing eggs in their faeces which may infect other animals. We humans are not immune to the roundworm either – the eggs can be found in soil so if we're not careful we can unwittingly ingest them from dirty hands or a dropped, but hastily retrieved, biscuit.

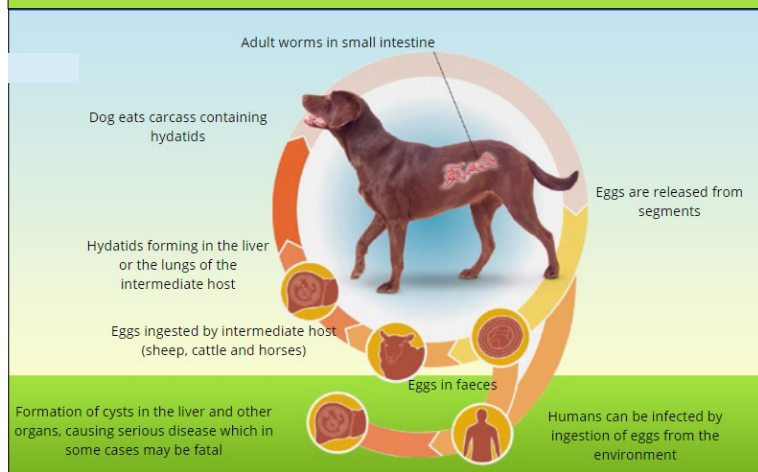
Unfortunately, children (who are most likely to pick up an infection because they are always grabbing, touching and sticking their hands in their mouths) are particularly vulnerable. Problems occur as the roundworm larvae pass into internal organs, affecting the muscles, eyes and central nervous system. A fever may develop and there can be internal damage to the lungs, liver and eyes.

TAPEWORM

Tapeworm can be found in infected animals and is also spread by fleas. There are four main types of tapeworm that tend to affect our pets:

- **DIPYLIDIUM** – the most common species which is spread by fleas
- **TAENIA TAPEWORM** which can be caught by dogs who scavenge while out walking or cats that hunt mice and other prey
- **ECHINOCOCCUS GRANULOSUS**, or sheep tapeworm, which can be caught by dogs but not cats
- **ECHINOCOCCUS MULTILOCULARIS** which is found abroad.

Tapeworm Lifecycle



SOME TAPEWORMS CAN GROW UP TO 5 METRES IN LENGTH!

Because the most common type of tapeworm is transmitted by fleas, any cat or dog that has had fleas may be infected. You won't always be aware if your pet has a form of tapeworm as there may not be any obvious symptoms. You may occasionally, however, notice your pet spending more time than usual cleaning its bottom, since the egg-filled worm segments tend to irritate it as they pass through. You may be able to pick up clues as to whether your pet has tapeworm - sometimes tiny segments (about the size of a grain of rice) can be found in their bedding.

The incubation period for tapeworms is between 3 and 10 weeks - that's the possible time lapse between your pet ingesting a tapeworm and starting to pass egg segments (these are not always visible).

Risk to humans: Tapeworms can pass from pets to people. *Echinococcus granulosus*, the tapeworm that only affects dogs, can cause a serious illness called hydatid disease in people, causing cysts to form on internal organs.

For more information or to discuss your pets worming protocol, please telephone the surgery.






GRASS SEEDS

It's that time of the year again when the abundance of grass seeds can become a health issue for your dog or cat! The pointed end on the grass seed means it can easily become embedded in your pet's skin, most commonly in the paw, under the tail, or in the armpit or groin region, but the ears and eyes are also susceptible areas.

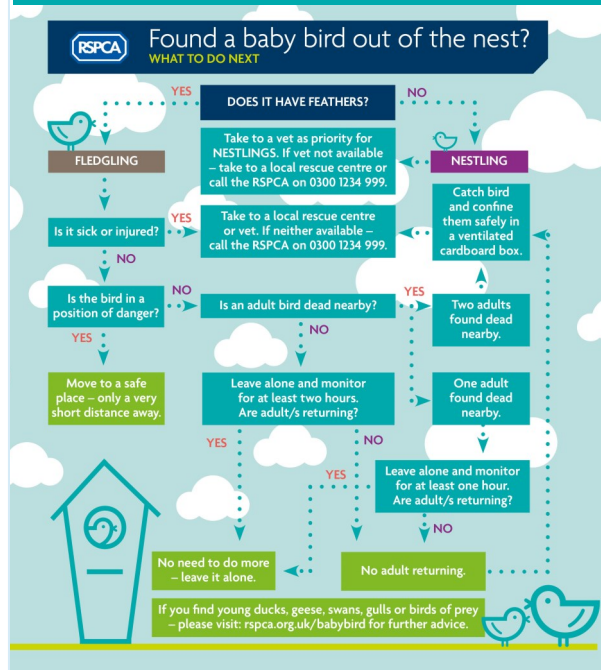
Grass seeds pierce the animal's skin or enter through the cavity (ear/eye) and can migrate deeper into the body. The seed is not usually able to be broken down by the body's defence mechanisms and so remains intact, as a foreign body which will eventually need removing.

The best way to prevent damage from grass seeds is to find them and remove them as quickly as possible when they are close to the surface of the skin and easily accessible. Daily nose to tail checks after walks, including between the toes will help to reduce the threat significantly by removing seeds from your pet's coat. If you suspect a grass seed is lodged too deeply or there is sign of a grass seed present such as a new or unusual lump, reddened or oozing skin then it is best to get it assessed by your vet. Delaying could result in more invasive surgery to find and remove the seed.

The symptoms of grass seed infections in various locations are:

EARS	EYES	PAWS	NOSE	SKIN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shaking of the head Redness of the ear Painful to touch Holding head to one side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swollen, red eye Excessive tear production Rubbing at the eye 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licking at the toes Red, swollen between toes Swelling of the foot Limping or holding the leg up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constant sneezing Discharge from the nostrils Rubbing face on ground Difficulty breathing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swollen, red lump, with possible blood or pus oozing out Dog licking constantly at site Grass seed protruding out
				

WILDLIFE ADVICE



Our natural instinct upon seeing a baby bird on the ground is to pick it up thinking it has been abandoned or is in trouble, but...

STOP - This almost certainly is NOT the case!

When fledglings leave the nest they often spend a week or so **on the ground being looked after by their parents** before taking to the sky! If you intervene and remove the fledgling from this perfectly normal situation you reduce it's chances of survival to almost zero. It may feel strange but you should **leave it alone**. It's parents are almost certainly nearby waiting for you to move away.

Follow this simple guide (see left) from the RSPCA to help you make the right decision or visit <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/injured-and-baby-birds/baby-birds/>



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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!

