

So here is the Autumn edition of our newsletter and we are left wondering how has it reached this time of year so quickly?

This edition contains a couple of articles focusing on our older patients. There are numerous problems that develop as we inevitably get older, some of which may be influenced if we could recognise them a little sooner. Our senior pet checks are aimed to do just that and the urine check is free for our older patients, and the blood pressure check is also free for cats. Dogs don't tend to suffer from high blood pressure so we don't worry about them. Please ask reception or take a look at our website to learn more about the free tests and special discounted blood tests available. These checks can be done whilst your cat stays with us for the day and we can even worm them for you too!

 With the recent warm weather, our pesky friends the fleas will probably have woken from their autumn slumbers so if your pet starts scratching please do ask us about the easiest, safest and most reliable treatments. A new treatment for dogs is a very simple monthly tablet which provides flea killing protection for a full month! For dogs that need regular worming, or we have to be aware of lungworm, the spot-on may still be the best option. For advice about the best products, just ask.

Making life easier...

You can place orders for repeat prescriptions, or food supplies by simply emailing us. For some foods, and medications we need to ensure that they are in stock so 1 working day generally allows for the order to be completed. Prescriptions are checked by the vets and we'll reply to let you know when they are ready for collection.

Contact us via our website at wmvets.co.uk or you can email your preferred surgery using these addresses:

Macclesfield@wmvets.co.uk,
Wilmslow@wmvets.co.uk and
Congleton@wmvets.co.uk

Don't forget that you can sign up for the newsletter online at wmvets.co.uk



Contact us at...

www.wmvets.co.uk



Autumn feature...

Kidney disease in pets!

by Wendy Scourfield, BVetMed, MRCVS
Allen & Partners

The kidneys are responsible for the elimination of the body's waste products in urine and maintaining fluid balance in the body. Certain hormones are also produced by the kidneys. If kidney function is damaged waste products are not eliminated as effectively. Diseased kidneys are less able to concentrate urine and so the body loses large volumes of dilute urine, making the patient susceptible to dehydration.

Acute or sudden onset kidney disease may be triggered by many things including exposure to toxins such as antifreeze or grapes. Kidneys may be damaged by severe infections, dehydration and certain medications, such as anti-inflammatories and certain antibiotics. Acute kidney disease may be reversible if treated early and aggressively but it can result in death, or permanent kidney damage.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a progressive and irreversible disease. Approximately 10% of cats older than 10 years, and 30% of cats over 15 years will suffer from it, and although less common in dogs it can occur in any breed often in animals over 7 years old.

The causes of CKD:

The commonest causes are as a result ageing.

Other causes include:

- Hereditary or congenital conditions such as polycystic kidneys in Persian cats
- High blood calcium (often secondary to a cancer)
- Kidney infection

The signs of CKD include:

- Increased thirst
- Increased urination and urine looks lighter as it is more dilute
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Pale gums
- Bad breath and mouth ulcers
- Muscle weakness

Diagnosis of CKD can only be made with blood and urine tests. We look at the level of two waste products in the blood (which are high in kidney disease) and the urine concentration (which is low, or dilute, in kidney disease).

Other changes that can occur with CKD include:

- High phosphate levels in the blood
- Anaemia (low red blood cell count)
- High blood pressure

Treating CKD may include the following measures:

- If an underlying cause is identified this must be treated. For example antibiotics for a kidney infection.
- Fluids may be given into the vein or under the skin. This may be done initially to improve a poorly animal then on-going to maintain that situation.
- Diet is very important in managing this disease. Commercial kidney diets are available and they are designed to offer restricted protein to reduce the waste products from protein breakdown, and restricted phosphorus.
- Phosphate binders are added to the diet to further bind phosphates.
- Vomiting can be controlled with specific medicines.
- High blood pressure is controlled when required.

CKD requires regular health checks including an examination, blood and urine tests. These are critical to monitor progression of the disease and spot new developing symptoms as early as possible. The prognosis for CKD is very variable and while some pets will survive only a very short time from diagnosis some will have happy lives for months and even years with good management.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

Small talk



SMALL ANIMAL
NEWSLETTER

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Kidney disease
in pets...

Diabetes

Could your pet have
diabetes without
you knowing...



Toxic Treats



NOISE PHOBIAS!

XLvets
Excellence in Practice

With Bonfire Night fast approaching we look at
noise phobias and what we can do to help our pets...

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Welcome...

...to the autumn edition of Small Talk! With Bonfire Night fast approaching we have an article looking at noise phobia and what we can do to help our pets. We also have articles discussing some of the conditions our pets may suffer from when they become older; diabetes, kidney disease and behavioural changes. Finally, we all know our pets like treats and most pet owners know that chocolate can be toxic to dogs. Our toxic treats article shares advice on other foods that may harm our pets.

Senile Behavioural Changes

Mark Bayliss BVMS, MRCVS,
Ardene House Veterinary Practice

Humans are not alone in suffering from age related behavioural changes. Both cats and dogs are susceptible to brain changes during their later years. These changes lead to a decline in mental awareness that is far more severe than that expected due to age alone. This condition is often referred to as cognitive dysfunction syndrome - and may be regarded most simply as a type of senility.

In dogs the signs of cognitive dysfunction syndrome usually appear slowly and creep into their behavioural patterns. These subtle changes may initially go unnoticed. Dogs may become unresponsive to their name being called and not simply because of their hearing deteriorating, or may refuse to participate in their favourite games like they used to. Some dogs suffer with confusion and can even get lost in their own garden or on their daily walk. They sometimes just sit and stare at the wall or sleep all through the day and pace the house at night. Toilet training may also be lost and a perfectly house trained dog may start to mess inside the house or in their beds. As an owner, it can be very worrying to see your pet lose interest in life like this and watch your relationship slip away. Cats may also lose their litter training and start to urinate in strange places round the house. Grooming becomes less frequent and their coat may develop mats. Cats can become more vocal, with louder or more confused crying round the house, especially during the night. They may even become quite grumpy and avoid human contact. These symptoms can be caused by a number of very treatable medical conditions, so an accurate diagnosis by a veterinary surgeon is always worthwhile. Similar signs can be seen with arthritis, cystitis, diabetes, thyroid disease, renal disease and other rarer neuronal diseases. Cognitive dysfunction syndrome is often a diagnosis of exclusion, so your vet may need to check for concurrent disease before a treatment plan is agreed upon.

Even in humans, these ageing changes are challenging to treat. In pets, treating cognitive dysfunction syndrome can include medical therapy or dietary therapy. Medical therapy includes drugs to increase the blood supply to the brain and increase mental awareness, or drugs that alter the level of dopamine in the brain which has a direct effect on brain activity. Please contact your vet for any further advice regarding the treatment of old age change in your pets.



Fireworks and Noise Phobias

Fear of noises such as thunder and fireworks is a common problem in dogs and will start early on in life with noises encountered on a daily basis that make us jump. We know where the noise comes from, our pets don't and noises such as fireworks are similar to things like cars backfiring, slamming doors, high pitch alarms - all of which attract our hearing, let alone our pets with their sensitive hearing. What may be worse is that the pet may associate the noise with other things which they may then become fearful of too. Being attuned to body language, your pet may also pick up on your nervousness and if you reassure them and comfort them during these problems, they may believe there really is something to be fearful of. This makes it even more likely that they will become more frightened by fireworks.

What we can do to help...

Firstly, whilst you may want to comfort your pet, you should actually try not to because you may well be suggesting that their fear is normal. Equally, do not punish them. It really isn't their fault if they are scared and have an accident. Instead, try to behave as normally as possible and try to do things that the pet enjoys.

Medications:

There are a number of medications that can help your pet. We do try to avoid straightforward sedation, but a number of

medicines that relieve anxiety are available - you can discuss with staff at your practice to identify what is most suited to you and your pet. There are medications that are natural products, for example herbal products and pheromones, so we don't have to use strong sedatives.

Ideally, in the longer term, we need to change how our pets respond to the noise by getting them used to it. This is a lengthy process but is well worthwhile so have a chat to staff about what is involved.

It's too late to consider desensitisation for this year so on the night, or nights that we expect fireworks there are a few things to do as well as using some form of medication. Try to block the noise with the TV and radio and draw the curtains. Create a safe haven where they may feel more comfortable, and more secure such as an indoor kennel. Try to remain calm yourself. Your pet recognises your moods and responds to them so try to be positive. Make sure you go for walks before the bulk of the noise commences and before it gets dark.

So, there are many things that you can do to help your dog or cat cope with the stress that arises from fireworks, taking some time to reduce their fear may reduce stress for both you and your pet.

Could your pet have **Diabetes** without you knowing...

Kindly supplied by MSD Animal Health

Diabetes mellitus (sugar diabetes) is the most common hormonal disease seen in dogs and second most in cats; with an estimated 1 in 300 going on to develop this condition during their lifetime. Whilst diabetes in pets is not as common as it is in people (1 in 30 people develop the condition in the UK), there is growing evidence to suggest that the number of diabetic pets is set to rise as pets live longer and the number of overweight pets increases.

Just as in people, pets with diabetes are not able to produce enough insulin or alternatively their bodies do not allow them to use the insulin they produce. Insulin is vital as it allows sugar in the blood to enter cells, allowing the body to function normally. If this process is disrupted, diabetes results with potentially severe consequences.

The good news is that diabetes in pets is readily treatable and with correct insulin therapy and diet, diabetic pets can lead a long and healthy life.

As with many diseases, early diagnosis is really important. Signs that your pet may be at risk of diabetes include; drinking too much water, urinating too much, weight loss (despite an increased appetite) and lethargy. However, these signs are not always that obvious and can be easy to miss. The disease is also more likely to be seen in older pets (over the age of six years) and certain dog breeds are much more predisposed to develop the condition.

To find out more please contact your veterinary surgeon or visit www.petdiabetesmonth.co.uk

Shona MacFarquhar BVMS MRCVS
Chapelfield Veterinary Partnership

Toxic Treats

Most pet owners now know that chocolate can be toxic to dogs, causing nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, abnormal heart rhythms and occasionally death, but there are many other 'toxic treats' lurking at home.



Over-eating fruit can be a cause of stomach upset but there are some fruits that have a more sinister side to them. Apple, apricot, cherry and peach seeds or stones contain cyanide and can have varying toxic effects on pets. Peach stones are also large enough to cause an obstruction in the small intestine requiring an operation to remove them.

Grapes, sultanas and raisins are unsuitable treats for dogs as they can cause kidney failure. Some dogs are more susceptible than others, but all dogs should see the vet if they have eaten any of these items.

Be cautious when feeding 'human food' to pets. Items containing the artificial sweetener xylitol can be toxic to pets; even small amounts can cause low blood sugar levels, resulting in sickness, weakness, fits and in some cases, liver failure. Xylitol can be found in baked goods, sweets and chewing gum.

Onions contain a substance that can be the cause of a type of anaemia where the red blood cells are destroyed. Raw or cooked onions, even in small amounts, have the potential to cause this problem and can be found in a wide variety of dishes and sauces, onion salt is often found in gravy granules. Do not reach for nuts to reward your pets either - almonds, pistachios, walnuts, macadamias and pecans are all relatively high in fat which can cause digestive upsets, macadamias can also cause temporary loss of use of the back legs!

A different kind of toxic treat can be found in a seemingly innocent bunch of flowers, for example all parts of lilies are toxic to cats. A cat can brush past a lily and then groom the toxic pollen from their fur.

The most important thing to remember is not to wait for clinical signs of poisoning to develop - seek veterinary advice immediately if you think your pet has eaten something toxic. As you may see from the items listed above, your five items of fruit and vegetables a day isn't always such a good thing!

Remember, Remember it's not just November!

by Andrew Turkington,
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Different animals may display different signs of noise phobias which include:

- Hiding (most common sign in cats)
- Urinating
- Defecating
- Chewing
- Panting
- Pacing
- Trying to escape (digging, jumping through windows or running away)
- Drooling
- Seeking the owner
- Not eating
- Ignoring calls
- Trembling or shaking
- Barking constantly

