



Newsletter

Beware of cats with ~~hairballs~~ hairbands!

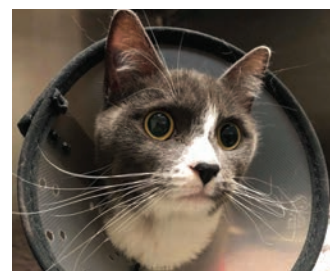
It is relatively well known that cats can be partial to eating their owner's used ear plugs (maybe something to do with the taste of ear wax). However, binge eating hairbands is a new one to us.

Max's owners bought him to our Edison Park Clinic & Hospital as they were concerned that he may have picked up a nasty bug. He had been sick over a period of 2-3 days and, unusually for him, he was not interested in his food. Vet Will examined Max and quickly admitted him for an ultrasound scan.

Vet Richard scanned Max and also felt a 'string-like' ball in his abdomen and promptly prepped Max for surgery. Two hours after admission, Max was recovering from surgery where a total of 24 hairbands were removed from his stomach. Amazingly, without his stomach full of elastic, Max felt well enough to eat that evening and returned home the following day.

Curiously, another cat was reported to have done the same thing in Swindon the week afterwards and another on ITV's The Yorkshire Vet.

Some cat owners are reporting that their cats are drawn to elastic bands and hairbands and so, just as we would advise owners to keep any earplugs away from their cats, we must now advise that they do the same with hairbands and elastic bands.



Rabbits and dental health

A healthy rabbit diet should comprise of 85-90% hay, supplemented by a small amount of pellets and green leaves. Feeding a muesli-based diet can lead to dental disease, amongst other health issues.

This lack of 'abrasive food' in a rabbit's diet can lead to the teeth becoming over grown as they are not being constantly worn-down during eating. It is therefore wise to check all rabbits' teeth at regular intervals. A rabbit with overgrown teeth will find it difficult to eat and teeth can grow into the soft parts of a rabbit's mouth causing significant discomfort.

We provide free rabbit dental check-ups all year with Alix Freeman, who is part of our dedicated dentistry team. Please contact us if you would like to make an appointment for your rabbit with Alix.



Brexit and pet travel

At the time of going to print, there is continued uncertainty as to whether we will leave the EU with a Deal or a No Deal.

We are advising all pet owners who plan to travel outside the UK with their pets this year to plan 4 months ahead as Pet Passports are likely to become invalid in the event of a No Deal.

Please keep in touch with us regarding ongoing provision, or you can visit www.gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-europe-after-brexit for up to date news.



Leishmaniasis disease

An increasing number of us are travelling outside the UK with our pets. This travel means that we may be exposing them to parasites that they would not have encountered at home.

This can put them at risk and also has the potential to spread a wider variety of diseases within the UK. One of these diseases is Leishmaniasis.

Leishmaniasis is an infectious disease in dogs transmitted by sandflies that are found particularly in countries bordering the Mediterranean, South America, the Middle East, and the tropics.

Common symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Skin problems, with hair loss
- Weight loss
- Diseased eyes
- Liver disease
- Kidney disease.

Leishmaniasis can be fatal if untreated, and incurable even if treatment is given. Signs can take years to develop after infection due to a long incubation period.

We stock a medicated collar that controls fleas, ticks, sand flies and has an anti-feeding effect on mosquitoes for up to 6 months. The collar should ideally be applied a minimum of 1 week before travel.

Sandflies are most active at night, so even with appropriate preventative treatments, it is advisable to keep dogs inside from sunset to dawn between May and October.

Please ask our staff if you would like more information on Leishmaniasis.

Who is looking after your pet?

Provision for dogs and cats has changed over the years and there seem to be new companies popping up providing services on what seems to be a daily basis. There are a variety of providers ranging from boarding kennels and catteries, dog day care, dog walkers, pet sitters and home boarders. So, how can pet-owners be reassured that the people looking after their pets are caring, capable, legitimate and safe?

Boarding kennels, catteries and home boarding

All dog boarding kennels, catteries, dog day care and home boarders must now be licensed in line with the Animal Activities Licensing Regulations 2018 (AAL), which came into force on 1st October 2018. If a boarding establishment is not licenced with your Local Authority, they may not be operating legally.

Whilst licensing provides some form of inspection and the standardisation of minimum facility levels, it should not replace you going along to visit to ensure that what is provided meets your own exacting standards. It is important to meet, and feel comfortable with, those who will be looking after your pet.



Dog walkers should:

- Be fully insured (public liability insurance - minimum £5million cover) and should not walk large numbers of dogs together. Fewer than 4 dogs at any one time (unless on private secure land) is considered a reasonable number, however whilst 4 dogs may be a good suggested maximum, it will depend a little on the nature of your dog and the others being walked. Having a timid, or elderly dog constantly 'bundled' and 'rough-housed' by other dogs will not be much fun for instance. A boisterous dog running rampant with other boisterous dogs may actually impact on your ongoing training
 - Ensure that the dogs can be controlled and kept safe should there be a negative interaction with other dogs
 - Understand the individual needs of your dog's breed (e.g. Pugs and French Bulldogs), especially in hot weather
 - Have a sound knowledge of dog behaviour and handling, using kind reward-based methods
 - Have a certificate or good knowledge of pet first aid
 - Use a secure and well-ventilated vehicle, if transporting to and from walks
 - Walk dogs to and from the vehicle on a lead.
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Dog day care

A dog day care establishment should very much cater for the needs of individual dogs. It will be up to you to decide whether you wish for your dog to integrate with others during their time in day care. If you do, there should be no opportunity for older or more boisterous dogs to be overly enthusiastic with young, elderly or more timid dogs.

Dogs should be kept securely in conditions suitable for their own needs and the weather conditions. There should be a good carer to dog ratio should there be any issues and staff should have a sound knowledge of dog behaviour and a certificate or good knowledge of dog first aid.

Many dogs would sleep for large periods of time within their own home and there should be the opportunity for them to rest in day care rather than be 'on the go' all of the time. Dogs should be matched according to their temperaments and needs rather than necessarily by size or age.

If you do not wish your dogs to socialise with others, choose a day care where dogs spend their time much as they would at home. Their provision should offer enrichment, company, TLC and the opportunity to go outside to exercise and toilet.

Whilst we are unable to provide recommendations of establishments or providers, we would advise asking for recommendations from other pet owners and looking for online reviews and testimonials. Always review your dog's behaviour when they return, this will give you a good indication as to how the provision that you have chosen is impacting on your pet's well-being.

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Winner of recommend a friend

Mrs Sue Walter who will receive £100 in Eastcott Vets' vouchers to spend on pets Amelia, Conner, Kade & Smokey.

Referral team news

The new ophthalmology suite complete with teaching screen is nearly complete. Work is well underway in other areas.

Specialists vets have been busy lecturing at the annual BSAVA (British Small Animal Veterinary Association) Congress in Birmingham, where vets from all over the world come together to both learn and share their expertise. Duncan Barnes delivered lectures on 'Orthopaedic surgery, how to approach cases of combined medial patellar luxation and cranial cruciate ligament rupture, juvenile lameness and stiff, painful and pyrexia'.

Tim Charlesworth lectured on 'A comparison of the rates of postoperative complications between dogs undergoing laparoscopic and open ovariectomy and accuracy of medial to lateral transcondylar screw placement using a C-guide for the treatment of humeral intracondylar fissure'. Many of our vets attended lectures at the congress.

Alix Freeman MRCVS joined the Referral team as a Resident in Dentistry and Oral and Maxillofacial surgery. Alix will be taking over from Ingrid to provide our **FREE** dental health checks.

If you would like to book a free dental health check, please contact our Client Care team to book an appointment.

Can cats thrive on a vegan diet?

Cats are obligate carnivores. This means that cats must eat meat, it is an absolute biological necessity in order to thrive. Plant-based proteins found in vegetables and grains are not an adequate substitute.

Taurine is a specific amino acid which is found in meat. Cats are unable to synthesize taurine by themselves and it is therefore an essential component of all cat's diets.

Insufficient levels of taurine in the diet, can result in heart disease, problems with vision, and other health issues.

As cats must eat meat to meet their nutritional needs, including the provision of taurine, the simple answer to whether cats can thrive on a vegan diet, is no.



Dry eye in dogs

What is dry eye?

Dry eye, also known as Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca (KCS), affects 1 in 22 dogs and 1 in 5 predisposed breeds. The tear glands stop producing enough tears and the eye becomes inflamed and sore.

What are the symptoms of Dry Eye?

- Sore, irritated eyes
- Discharge from the eyes
- Frequent eye infections or ulcers
- Rubbing at eyes.

Why is dry eye so important?

If left untreated, dry eye can lead to painful eyes, ulcers, and for some dogs, blindness. With treatment though, it can be managed and you can save their sight.

Which dogs are at risk?

Dry eye can affect all dogs but some are at greater risk. These include: English Cocker Spaniels, Bulldogs, Lhasa Apsos, Shih-Tzus, Pugs, Westies, Cavalier King Charles Spaniels & Yorkshire Terriers.

How can we treat dry eye?

Lifelong medical therapy can treat the signs of dry eye and preserve sight. The treatment stimulates the tear gland to produce more tears and slows the progression of the disease. Artificial tears (eye drops) alone are not enough to save a dog's sight.

Regular eye checks with a vet could save your dog's sight. Ask us about effective treatment today.



Changes to recommended parasite protection for dogs

Flea, tick and worm prevention products have developed over the years and there are now a number of ways in which we can protect our pets. We continually follow developments and review our flea, tick and worm products that we prescribe accordingly. We take into account safety, efficacy, ease and frequency of use.

With these factors in mind, we have recently changed our recommended parasite product for dogs. We have moved from the previously prescribed chewable 3-monthly tablet that protected against fleas and ticks to a monthly chewable tablet that protects against fleas, ticks, lungworm and roundworm, the 4 key parasite threats.

For more information, please speak to a member of staff.

Edison Park Clinic & Hospital

Edison Park, Dorcan Way, Swindon SN3 3FR

Mon to Fri 7am - 8pm Sat & Sun 8.30am - 8pm

Bath Road Clinic

59 Bath Road, Old Town, Swindon SN1 4AU

Mon - Fri 8.30am - 7pm Sat 9am - 12pm

Cricklade Road Clinic

6 Clive Parade, Cricklade Road, Swindon SN2 1AJ

Weekdays 8.30am - 10am and 4pm - 7pm