

Tick-borne disease, Canine Babesiosis, found in UK

Babesiosis is a life threatening disease caused by a parasite (*Babesia* spp.) that can be transmitted to dogs by ticks. Infected ticks are found globally, historically sparing the UK, there have been recent confirmed cases of *Babesia canis* in Essex. None of the infected dogs had travelled abroad but had all been exercised in the same area. Vets in the area have reported an increase in local dogs being rescued from abroad.

Tick prior to feeding



Engorged tick



Symptoms of Babesia Canis

Symptoms range from mild to severe and may include lethargy, lack of appetite, fever, pale gums, red urine and jaundice.

How to remove a tick

Many pet owners are unaware that ticks look like small spider like creatures until they have taken a blood meal after which they become engorged and are often mistaken for a 'wart' or small lump.

- Wear gloves and dispose of ticks hygienically so they cannot re-attach themselves or lay eggs
- It is important to remove the whole tick, including its mouthparts without squeezing the tick's body
- Use a specially designed 'tick hook' – these are available to purchase at all 3 of our clinics
- Slide the hook under the tick at skin level so as to grip the head of the tick
- Rotate the hook around the tick's head, in an anti-clockwise direction, to help dislodge the mouthparts before removal
- Once removed, destroy the tick by squashing it between some absorbable paper towel and dispose of everything
- If you are unsure, please bring your dog (or cat) in to the surgery to have the tick removed and we can show you how it is done

How to protect your dog from ticks and tick borne disease

We stock a range of highly effective anti-tick products including a chewable tablet. Please contact us to discuss the most effective product for your dog or cat.

What about babesiosis in Cats?

There is much less known about feline babesiosis, although some *Babesia* spp. may infect cats and cause similar clinical signs to those seen in dogs. Disease is predominantly associated with residence in or travel to South Africa.

What breed am I?



Please go to www.eastcottvets.co.uk and visit our Blog page (fun stuff) for the answers.

Recommend a Friend Prize Draw

Congratulations to Audrey Martin who has won £100 worth of Eastcott vouchers in this quarter's draw to spend on Monty. To read more about Recommend a Friend, visit our website or pick up a form from one of our waiting rooms.

Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus (GDV) – Essential Knowledge for Dog Owners

Gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV), colloquially referred to as 'bloat', is an acute and life-threatening condition characterised by distension and rotation of the stomach. Suspected cases of GDV should be treated as an emergency and seen as soon as possible.

Early Warning Signs of GDV

In the early stages of GDV, dogs will display signs of abdominal discomfort. These may include restlessness, drooling, stretching out into the 'praying' position, bloating and unproductive retching.

As the condition progresses your dog will become increasingly unwilling to stand and may display difficulty in breathing. If you notice any of these signs, contact us immediately for advice.



What is GDV and Why Does it Happen?

Dilatation occurs due to the accumulation of food and gas in the stomach. Dogs with GDV are unable to empty their stomach contents and begins to dilate and expand. The increase in pressure and size of the stomach can have several severe life threatening consequences including:

- Breathing difficulties
- Prevention of blood flow from the abdomen back to the heart
- Potential rupture of the stomach wall

Treatment

When dogs arrive at the hospital, they are usually in a state of shock and stabilisation of the patient will be initiated immediately upon arrival. Initially this may include blood tests, intravenous fluid therapy, pain

relief, oxygen therapy, antibiotics and x-rays. As soon as the patient is stabilised, the stomach must then be decompressed. This can be achieved either by passing a stomach tube down the oesophagus or by inserting a wide gauge needle through the skin directly into the stomach. This provides a vital escape route for the trapped gas inside. This is usually followed by emergency surgery (once the patient is sufficiently stable) to de-rotate the stomach and fix it back in its normal position permanently (gastropexy). Other abdominal organs, such as the spleen and small intestine, will also need to be evaluated for damage and treated appropriately.

Dogs at Risk of GDV

The exact cause of GDV is not fully understood, however several risk factors have been identified:

- Large or giant breed dogs, in particular the Great Dane, German Shepherd Dog, Doberman Pinscher, Saint Bernard, Standard Poodle, Weimeraner, Irish & Gordon Setter
- Deep or narrow chested dogs
- Age, most commonly affected dogs aged 7-10 years old
- Vigorous exercise undertaken after a large meal
- Ingestion of a large volume of food or water within a short space of time, especially dry food of small particle size
- Feeding from an elevated bowl
- First degree relative with history of GDV

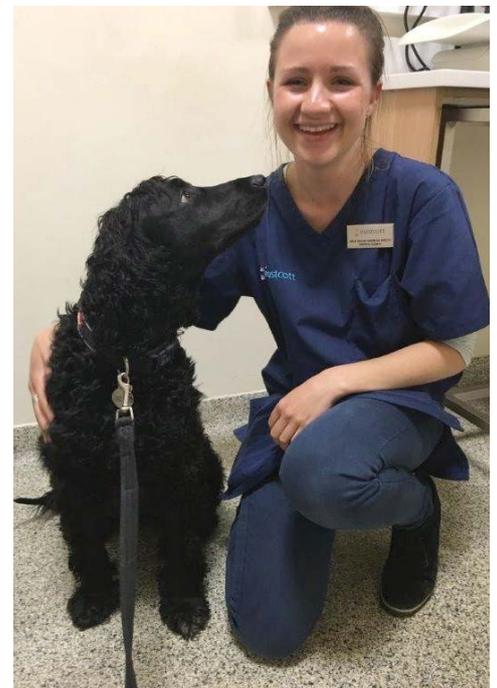
Some of these risk factors are unavoidable, however, there are some changes that you can make to your dog's daily regime in order to minimise some of the risk factors such as those associated with diet and exercise:

- Do not walk your dog within 2 hours of eating
- Consider feeding 2 small meals morning and evening rather than 1 large meal
- Feed a wet diet or soak biscuits before feeding

- Choose a diet of large kibble size
- Feed from a bowl on the floor

Curly was recently rushed to our Edison Park Hospital and treated as an emergency by vet Alice. Her owner Jemima said:

"The initial signs were very subtle. She just wasn't quite "herself". I didn't realise what it was until she ran out into the garden in the pitch black and started to dry-heave with a horrendous-sounding bellow, trying to expel the gas from her stomach. I got her to Eastcott within 20 minutes of that (15 miles) and we still nearly lost her. One of our retrievers bloated about 4 years ago. With him he was just a bit whingey, and it was only when I put my ear to his tummy that I realised it was distended. Another clue was that there were no digestive noises coming from his belly. The signs are clearly very variable. Bottom line: if you are remotely worried, please take to a vet whatever the time of day and night. It is always better to be safe than sorry. Bloat kills - and frighteningly quickly."



Curly and Vet Alice after GDV surgery

Giving Blood – Saving Lives

Could your feline friend be a lifeline for a cat in need?

Blood transfusions are commonly performed in our veterinary hospital. Both dogs and cats can become critically ill for a variety of reasons, either as a result of an internal disease process or a traumatic event. In many of these situations a blood transfusion can be a life-saving.

In the UK there is a 'Pet Blood Bank' for dogs that is well supported by dog owners. Unfortunately, there is no 'Blood Bank' for cats. When blood transfusions are required in cats, we are often in the position of urgently seeking a local donor. These cases often arise quite quickly and without much warning – a patient can be stable one day and require a life saving transfusion the next.

In order to provide prompt transfusions, when required, we are looking to establish a group of Feline Blood Donors who can be contacted in these times of need.

What makes a suitable feline blood donor?

A suitable donor should be 1-8 years old and fully vaccinated. Cats must be healthy and over 4kg in weight. Potential donors will be health screened (heart scan, general health and infectious disease blood test). If any abnormalities are identified on the health screen a cat would not be used as a donor. In addition, cats must have been resident in the UK only (so no foreign holidays!).

What does blood donation entail?

Cats may safely donate blood once every two months. In reality, if we have a full blood donor list, it is unlikely we would need to call on an individual cat more than 2-3 times a year (sometimes it may be considerably less frequent than this). Prior to each donation cats will receive a full examination and blood test to ensure that their blood count is suitable for donation. The donation process takes about 10-15 minutes and the donor needs to remain perfectly still during this time so donor cats will be sedated. Rather than a cup of tea and a sweet biscuit, cats will receive a drip of fluids for 1-2 hours and a meal before going home. Donations are most likely be taken during the day, but may less commonly be at the weekend or overnight.



Are there any risks involved?

The risks associated with a healthy cat donating blood are low. The risks associated with an unhealthy cat donating blood are higher. This is why we thoroughly screen donors on an annual basis to ensure they are fully healthy and there are no previously undetected problems that would mean they shouldn't be used. Any cats with abnormal findings on health screening would not be used as donors and these findings would be discussed with their owners.

What does my cat get in return?

Assuming, within reason, you are contactable and your cat is available for donation at times of need, your cat would get the benefit of the free annual health screening required to ensure their suitability as a donor, in addition to free annual vaccination.

Interested?

If your cat fulfills these criteria and you are interested in either having more information or registering them as a blood donor, please contact our Medicine Specialist Jenny Reeve for further information on medicine@eastcottvets.co.uk or phone 01793 528341 and request a call back.

Our Early Neutering Package for Kittens

Between 8 and 10 weeks: 1st Vaccination, health check, free dose of flea treatment, worming treatment and 4 weeks free insurance.

At 12 weeks: 2nd Vaccination, Neuter (Spay or Castrate) & Microchip.

Free post-op check up 3-5 days post surgery.

Cats can safely go out 10 days after neutering.

FEMALES £110 MALES £85





Direct Insurance Claim Service

Taking the headache out of insurance claims

We offer a free pet insurance claim service whereby we will make claims to selected insurance companies for direct settlement to us. Please speak to our Client Care team if you would like to take advantage of this service.

We Really Are 'Always Here'!

Unlike many Swindon vets we don't contract out our emergencies to other vets. We see all of our cases day or night. This means:

- No trips across the county for your pet to be seen in an unfamiliar vet in an unfamiliar place
- No long journeys means that you will be seen quicker
- We have all of your records and relevant history at hand
- Hospitalised pets do not have to travel between surgeries each night

Pets seen between 8.30am and 8pm at weekends are not considered 'out of hours' patients. We are open between these times and charge normal weekday fees.

We have a vet and nurse on site all day and night*, this means:

- You can be seen quickly and locally
- Any emergency procedure, medical or surgical can be carried out quickly
- Your pet will be seen by an Eastcott Vet, not a vet from another practice
- Through the night nursing
- All records are available
- (All emergencies are seen at our Edison Park Clinic & Hospital – arrangements must be made by phone)



*We have a vet and nurse on site all day and night every day with the exception of Christmas Day and Boxing day. We still provide a full 24 hour emergency service on these 2 days.

Edison Park Clinic & Hospital

Edison Park, Dorcan Way, Swindon SN3 3FR
For Sat Nav use SN3 3RB
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