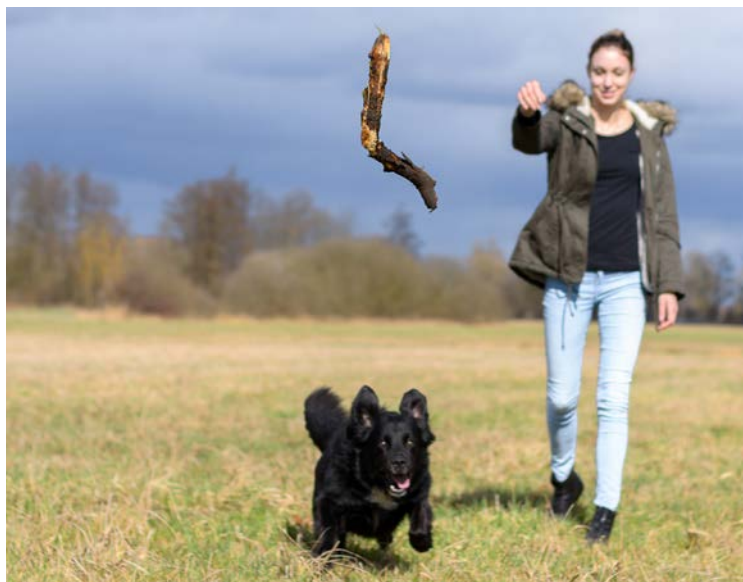


## A Sticky Situation

People traditionally throw sticks for their dogs but many are unaware of how dangerous this can be. Serious injuries can occur when dogs run onto a stick that is rammed into the ground. The stick is then forced down the throat cutting under the tongue or even tearing the gullet further back. Thousands of dogs are injured like this every year. Injuries can be serious and sometimes life threatening. Often splinters of wood are left embedded and go unnoticed until the dog becomes unwell. We often see dogs as emergencies suffering injuries caused by sticks. We frequently use CT scans to help identify splinters that have become embedded in dogs' mouths. This maximises the chance of removing all foreign material. If your dog enjoys playing with sticks, there are safer stick shaped alternatives for stick loving dogs such as the Kong Safestick.



## Seasonal Respiratory Disease in Dogs

Brachycephalic breeds, which include the English and French Bulldogs, Pugs and Boston Terriers are susceptible to seasonal respiratory disease. Many dogs with overlong soft palates and narrowed (stenotic) nostrils, will have major problems in regulating their body temperature due to an inability to pant efficiently. Many of these dogs will start showing signs of exercise intolerance, retching and even gastrointestinal disturbances all because of their breed-associated conformation. Symptoms often start at a very young age but progress due to secondary changes and further deformation of their respiratory tracts i.e. laryngeal collapse. These dogs can appear stable but can struggle if they exercise or even just sunbathe on a hot day. Prompt treatment during a crisis is essential. This can include cooling and oxygen therapy.

### Laryngeal Paralysis

Laryngeal paralysis in dogs is very common in



certain breeds especially Labradors and Golden Retrievers but any breed can be affected (including brachycephalics). These dogs are brought in to us as older dogs with a history of panting, exercise intolerance and a change of bark. Many owners attribute the slowing up to arthritis or 'old age' and it can be very difficult to differentiate symptoms between the two syndromes. Dogs with laryngeal paralysis can also struggle in the heat. Laryngeal paralysis is when there is paralysis of the nerves supplying the cartilage flaps that protect the opening of the windpipes. These normally closed only to prevent food and other materials entering the lungs. In laryngeal paralysis, these flaps remain partially close obstructing the trachea (windpipe). Please book an appointment for your dog if you feel that they may have Seasonal Respiratory Disease or if you have any concerns about their breathing.

## Why do cats purr?

Purring is an extraordinary sound and it isn't exactly clear how cats do it. Not only domestic cats purr – many of the larger members of the cat family can also generate this vibration.

The behaviour stems from kittenhood, as the mother returns to the den and quietly signals (to avoid attracting attention from predators) that all is OK by purring to her kittens, they in turn suckle and purr at the same time.

Cats will also purr when they are sick or injured; there are various theories for this – the frequency of the purr in sick animals differs from the healthy purr and it may have healing properties or it may be self-soothing when the cat feels at its most vulnerable.

We are  
Certified  
Cat  
Friendly  
Vets



# Hyperthyroidism in Cats

Hyperthyroidism is caused by an increase in production of thyroid hormones from the thyroid glands which are situated in the neck. It is a condition most commonly seen in older cats and symptoms can be mistaken for old age.

## Symptoms

- Despite a good or increased appetite there will be weight loss
- Increased thirst
- Cats can become hyperactive, restless and prone to being irritable
- An increased heart-rate
- Poor coat condition
- Diarrhoea and/or vomiting

## Complications of hyperthyroidism

Uncontrolled hyperthyroidism has important consequences on the heart, causing increased heart rate but also changes in the muscular wall of the heart that will eventually cause heart failure if untreated.

Hypertension (high blood pressure) is another potential complication of hyperthyroidism, although seen less commonly, and this can cause damage to several organs including the eyes, kidneys, heart and brain. If hypertension is diagnosed along with hyperthyroidism, drugs will be needed to control the blood pressure.

Kidney disease (chronic kidney disease) does not generally occur as a direct effect of hyperthyroidism, but the two diseases often occur together because they are both common in older cats. Care is needed where both these conditions are present, as managing hyperthyroidism can sometimes have adverse effects on kidney function.

## Diagnosis

A vet may be able to feel enlarged thyroid glands but blood tests will confirm the diagnosis. Additional blood tests and investigations may also be carried out in order to rule out any additional issues such as concurrent kidney and/or heart disease.

## Treatment

There is a variety of treatment options for cats with hyperthyroidism and successfully treated cats, irrespective of what treatment is used, will usually have complete reversal of all the signs of hyperthyroidism.

### Treatment options include:

**Medical management** (anti-thyroid drug therapy). These drugs are available in tablet form and they reduce both the production and release of thyroid hormones from the

thyroid gland. They do not provide a cure for, but they do allow either short-term or long-term control of hyperthyroidism.

However, to maintain control of the disease medication has to be given at least on a daily basis (and often twice daily).

## Surgical removal of the thyroid glands (thyroidectomy).

Generally, this is very successful and can produce a long-term or permanent cure in most cats. However, occasionally signs of hyperthyroidism develop again at a later time if previously unaffected thyroid tissue becomes diseased. The major risk associated with the surgery itself is inadvertent damage to the parathyroid glands – these are small glands that lie close to, or within, the thyroid glands themselves, and have a crucial role in maintaining stable blood calcium levels.

**Radioactive iodine therapy.** Radioactive iodine is an effective treatment for hyperthyroidism. It has the advantage of being curative in most cases with no ongoing treatment. The radioactive iodine is administered as a single injection, usually simply given under the skin. There are no significant side-effects with this treatment, but because cats are temporarily radioactive they have to be kept hospitalised for a period after treatment as a precaution. Unfortunately, because this treatment requires handling of radioactive drugs it is also only available at certain centres. A single injection of radioactive iodine is curative in around 95 per cent of all hyperthyroid cats, but following treatment occasional blood tests are recommended to ensure normal thyroid hormone levels are being maintained.

**Dietary treatment.** A diet that contains a restricted amount of iodine will prevent the body from producing excessive thyroid hormone. By exclusively feeding a special diet hyperthyroidism can be controlled in some cats. The pitfalls of this approach are that many cats will eventually refuse to eat the special diet (if they start eating it at all!) and many will source food from elsewhere allowing the signs of hyperthyroidism to return. When it does succeed it is an elegant way of treating the condition.



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# Warm weather and your small pets

Don't forget to pay particular close attention to your smaller domestic pets during the warm weather. Hamsters and other caged pets should be moved away from windows where the sun may get strong during the course of the day. Rabbits should be checked twice daily for fly strike. Fly strike (maggot infestation) happens quickly and catching it early can make all the difference. Check beneath the tail especially for small white/cream clumps. These are fly eggs and in the heat, they will quickly develop into maggots. Of course, provide plenty of shade and fresh drinking water for all pets.



# News from our charity this year – Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

Do you love dogs and are you looking for a new challenge?

Do you want to challenge yourself?

Why not contact Hearing Dogs?

There are many volunteering roles. You could look after their life-changing hearing dog puppies, walk a Hearing Dog, volunteer at their training centres, local events or have your own fundraising event.

Visit [www.hearingdogs.org.uk](http://www.hearingdogs.org.uk) for more information.



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## Too Hot to Handle?

Have you ever tried to walk on the sand when visiting a hot country on holiday? It can be unbearable. If the weather is hot, take a moment to test the temperature of the road or pavements before walking your dog. If it is too hot for your hand or bare foot – it will be too hot for their paws!

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## Annual Careers Evening

Thank you to 60+ people who joined us for our annual veterinary careers evening during May's Veterinary Nursing Month. It was inspiring to meet and chat to the vets and nurses of the future. It was also wonderful to raise the profile of the Veterinary Nurse. Our team of Registered and Trainee Veterinary Nurses are a vital and highly skilled part of our team.



## Alabama Rot update

Alabama Rot has been in the news again after a few recent UK cases. Eastcott's Veterinary Nurse Jess Worthington and Vet Richard Gowshall were recently interviewed by Sky News about Alabama Rot. Jess tragically lost her dog Molly when she caught Alabama Rot in 2016 - she has since set up the Pledge for Pippa - Stop Alabama Rot charity in order to raise money for research into the disease.

Whilst concerning for dog owners, Alabama Rot is still very rare and our vets advise owners not to panic but to be aware of the disease and continue to observe their dogs for potential symptoms.

### What are the symptoms of Alabama Rot?

**Skin disease:** Lesions can vary in appearance; the most common lesion is a circular, ulcerated area usually on the lower part of the limb or sometimes around the muzzle.

**Kidney failure:** Not all dogs will go on to develop kidney failure, however, this is life-threatening for those that do. Symptoms often start with acute increased water intake and urination followed by loss of appetite, lethargy, sometimes vomiting. As kidney damage progresses the water intake and urination volumes can reverse and become abnormally low.

These symptoms can develop any time from 1-10 days following development of the skin lesions.

A full information sheet can be downloaded from our website Pet Care Library.

## Microchipping update

We are still reading reports of dogs being found in Swindon that are not microchipped, or with out of date microchip details. If your dog is over 8 weeks of age, it should be microchipped. Please don't think that if your dog is not likely to 'get out' that there is no need to have them microchipped. It is now a legal requirement. We read at least half a dozen reports of missing or found cats each day. If you are a cat owner, please consider getting your cats microchipped, especially if you have a cat that can't keep a collar on, or one that is prone to wandering off for a day or so like the story of Six Dinner Sid (he 'kept' six owners!). Many finders consider a cat that visits regularly for food a hungry stray! If this is your cat, you could find them rehomed by a well-meaning cat lover.

# Recommend a Friend

## PRIZE DRAW WINNER

**Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Crannis who have won £100 worth of Eastcott vouchers in this quarter's draw to spend on of Rufus and Trixie.**

To read more about Recommend a Friend, please visit our website or pick up a form from one of our waiting rooms.



*Thank you to ISFM for some feline extracts.*  
Visit [icatcare.org](http://icatcare.org) for more feline focussed articles.

### 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