



# FAIRFIELD VETERINARY CENTRE

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# NEWS

## Practice News

As a “preferred practice provider” for the Royal Veterinary College in London we are quite accustomed to educating our undergraduate colleagues. Many clients will no doubt already have seen Emily (pictured below – right) or one of her colleagues during their visit to the Fairfield Veterinary Centre. We provide practical application to the huge volume of theory that veterinary students are required to learn during their 5 years at University (6 years if at Cambridge as they really need that extra year!). This is of crucial importance if they are to provide the standards of knowledge and care that our clients now demand.

Many clients have palpably winced at the “grilling” that the students have received at the hands of me and my colleagues (Geraldine’s interrogations are legendary amongst the undergraduate fraternity). One client even registered some concern after my physical health as the student I was “educating” at that time towered over me at 6 foot 7 inches tall! I am pleased to report however that most of our colleagues are grateful for the learning opportunities they receive as the array of **home-made** chocolate cakes will testify.....a consequence of student debt. “Seeing good veterinary practice at the coalface” provides them with a chance to put their theory into perspective.



The arrival of a new pet is a happy occasion and to help with this, we’ve put together a check-list of things to do to keep your pet fit and well throughout their lives.

**Vaccination** Provided their mother was vaccinated, pups and kittens will have a degree of immunity to *infectious diseases* that will protect them in the first few weeks of life. However this immunity rapidly falls and in order to restore it, a primary course of vaccinations is required. This immunity will also fade over time and regular booster vaccinations, combined with a health check, are the best way of protecting your pet, *plus* keeping an eye out for any other problems.

## Looking after your new pet

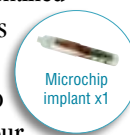
**Life-stage diets** We can now offer your pet a tailored series of diets from tiny kittens and puppies, through adult hood and into their senior years. These diets are designed to offer the ideal balance of nutrients for each life stage – as such they come highly recommended.

**Parasites** It is very important to treat puppies and kittens for roundworms since they can acquire these from their mothers early in life. Following this, since our pets are readily infested with worms, fleas and ticks, treatment is best regarded as a life-long endeavour. We are happy



to offer you advice on the most effective and convenient form of treatment for your pets.

**Lost and found** It is important to get your pet identified as soon as possible. As well as the traditional collar and tag, we also recommend having your pet microchipped as a more secure and permanent form of identification, since tags can fall off just when your pet may need them the most.



**Insurance** Whilst we hope your pet stays fit and well, if problems do occur and your pet is insured, we can hopefully ensure that decisions regarding treatment can be made on the basis of *need* rather than *cost*. Very highly recommended!

**Early socialisation** of pups in the first few months of life is very important as well! Please ask us for further information on this, or any of the topics covered in the article.

Being able to list the disease options in order of “most likely” according to clinical signs and presentation is paramount if these students are to become quality veterinary surgeons of the future. “Common things are common” is the mantra that is underlined. But with the access to information that the internet provides and the levels of care that our clientele demand they really need to know all of the rarer conditions too! “Oscar” featured right has polydactyly, plasmacytic/lymphocytic gingivitis, bronchitis and early renal pathology, the combination of which had Emily really scratching her head! “Oscar’s” owners continue to insist that he obtains the best care and attention, and, through their dedication and support ensure that he receives it!



Puppy photo: Jane Burton

## How healthy are your pet's gums?



DID YOU know that – just as in humans – gum disease is very common in pets as well, with typically 85% of pets over the age of three affected!

A **healthy mouth** typically has bright white teeth and shrimp pink (or sometimes pigmented) gums. However plaque bacteria are constantly accumulating on the surface of their teeth and will, in time, lead to inflammation of the gums – a condition called **gingivitis**. Affected gums are more reddened in appearance, and these changes may also be associated with localised mineralisation of the plaque to form calculus (tartar) – see picture (b).



Removing the calculus using an ultrasonic scaler, followed by polishing the teeth is a very effective form of treatment

If gingivitis is allowed to continue *unchecked*, it will over time progress to **periodontitis**; here the problem now spreads *below* the gum line, leading to destruction of the tooth supporting structures and eventually resulting in tooth mobility and finally tooth loss.

Unfortunately once a tooth becomes loose, the problem has usually progressed too far to save that tooth. However if gum problems are identified at an *earlier* stage, a combination of a Scale and Polish and ongoing Home Care can make a real difference to your pet's oral health (and also their breath!). Please contact us today for further details!



(a) Healthy mouth



(b) Gingivitis – with early calculus



(c) Periodontitis

## Some like it hot: summer survival tips!



AS WE enjoy the lovely sunny weather how prepared are our pets for this challenging time of year? Here are a few tips to keep your pet safe this summer:

When going on walks it's always a good idea to start early or late, rather than going out in the midday heat. You may also wish to consider taking some water with you on the walk as well.

**Ticks** are a particular problem for pets roaming through long grass and woodland areas. Ticks

swarm onto passing pets firmly attaching themselves before feeding on your pet's blood.

Worse still they can also spread a range of diseases including *Lyme disease* and *Babesiosis*. Please ask us to advise you on the best method of preventing and (if necessary) removing ticks from your pet.



Don't forget that **fleas** are also a cause of great irritation at this time of year – so make sure you keep your flea treatments going all year round!

**Grass seeds** are another summer problem – the grass awns of the meadow grasses are easily trapped in the coats of pets – especially dogs. They then migrate and become lodged in a variety of places including the ears (causing severe head shaking)



and between toes (causing abscesses). It is always a very good idea to groom your pets regularly – and especially after walks – to keep a close eye out for both ticks and grass seeds.

The **sun** itself can also pose a hazard! Pets (especially cats), with white ear tips and noses are at risk of sunburn, which in turn can lead to *cancerous changes* in the sunburnt areas. High factor sun block applied to at risk (white) areas will help in minimising this risk.



Ear tip of a cat showing early (reddened) cancerous changes.

If your pet is showing any signs of skin changes, please call us at once.

**Flies** can pose a big problem for rabbits as the weather warms up. Flies are very

attracted to rabbits if they have soiled bottoms – here they lay their eggs, which rapidly hatch out into flesh eating maggots. It is important to check bunnies' bottoms on a daily basis and call us at once if you are worried. Also remember that pets in outside runs need a *shaded area* to get away from the sun.



**Bees** are often irresistible to inquisitive pets who may get stung for their troubles! Some stings can



– in allergic pets, swell very alarmingly and may require urgent veterinary treatment.

Finally, please give us a call or drop in for further information on fleas and ticks or on any of the other topics in this article.



## Does your cat drink like a fish?



DO YOU notice that your pet's water bowl seems to empty faster than normal? Although hot weather can sometimes be a factor, if you notice your pet seems to be drinking *excessively* this is an important symptom that shouldn't be ignored.

Increased drinking is seen fairly commonly in older cats and may be indicative of a number of conditions including **kidney disease**, an **over-active thyroid gland** and **sugar diabetes** (diabetes mellitus).

As well as giving your pet a thorough clinical examination, **urine and blood tests** are usually very helpful in making a diagnosis.

The good news is that although there is no cure for old age, we do have specific treatments for the conditions mentioned above which will hopefully ease the symptoms and prevent *or slow* the ongoing deterioration of your pet's health. So, if you are concerned that your pet is drinking excessively, please give us a call today!