



SUMMER 2016

FAIRFIELD VETERINARY CENTRE

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NEWS



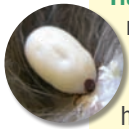
Parasite Alert!



Everyone loves the summer – us, our pets and, unfortunately, the pesky parasites that live on them!



Fleas: The balmy weather allows fleas to breed both inside and outside our houses. Pets who hunt are at particular risk because the fleas will be alive and well in large numbers on their prey. Fleas also carry worms, so always de-worm and de-flea pets at the same time. There are now several combination products on the market.



Ticks are particularly numerous on moors and scrubland or where there are lots of sheep. They are most often found attached to the head and neck of pets and look like small, grey warts or peas. If you find a tick, it is best removed with a specially designed tick remover, using a twisting action to remove them. Spot-ons, collars and tablets are all available to kill, and in some cases, repel ticks.

Harvest Mites are a late-Summer and Autumn problem. The mites tend to attach themselves to our pets' paws and ear flaps and can make them very itchy. They are visible to the naked eye as tiny orange specks on the skin but they can be difficult to spot. Treatment is with a flea spray, rather than a spot-on medication.

Scabies is a relatively common problem in dogs – especially if they enjoy exploring fox holes or rolling in fox faeces. The mite burrows in the skin and causes an extremely itchy rash. It can be treated and prevented using veterinary medications.

If you have any questions about parasites and how to treat and prevent them in your pets, we are happy to help – please ask a member of our team.

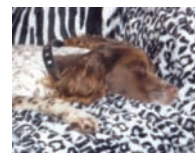
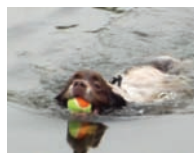
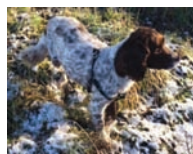
Practice News

The summer of 2016 marks over 30 years in the veterinary profession for me, with over 25 of those years working at Fairfield. As you might expect, I have amassed a vast number of interesting experiences and anecdotes. Many of my clients and patients have left their mark in one way or another! However, one patient has stood out in his ability to make my own veterinary colleagues eyes widen and jaws drop when I have recounted the details.



Just over 10 years ago a Springer Spaniel called Benji was rushed to my practice on Leicester Road having been hit by a car in a road traffic accident. The wheels of the car had driven over his body crushing him underneath. When his owner placed his body on my examination table Benji's intestines and liver spilled out. His abdominal wall had burst open and in the process his muscular diaphragm protecting his chest cavity had torn revealing his beating heart and collapsed lungs. My immediate thought was "How on earth can this dog's heart still be beating?" Recognising that his "life force" refused to surrender at this point in time I responded instinctively as any trained professional would. He was intubated, ventilated, anaesthetised, surgically repaired and rehydrated. Due to the immediate requirement for assistance my wife and 3 daughters (aged 11, 9 and 8 at the time) were drafted in to squeeze oxygen bags, hold intestines and pass surgical instruments to me. Throughout the entire process I never imagined Benji would survive. In fact for the next 10 years afterwards when that dog came into my consulting room I had to shake my head in astonishment. There was no doubt that the "force" was strong in that one. And so, over 10 years later Benji walked into my consulting room for the very last time. His final battle with cancer could not be won. His owner, who could not have been more devoted and appropriate for such a dog, remarked that she couldn't do my job for what I was about to do. In contrast, I felt great privilege and humility, like so many of my veterinary colleagues, at being trained to assist our patients in both "living" and "dying". Soon after Benji's life force finally succumbed I texted my three daughters to remind them of an unforgettable day in June 2004. Benji may no longer be here but his legacy will live on for some time yet.

Terry Dunne BVMS, Cert SAO, MRCVS



The importance of early socialisation



The early experiences a puppy or kitten has of people and their surroundings has a huge impact on their behaviour and personality for the rest of their life. When considering a new pet, it's really important to make sure the breeder or rescue centre has fully socialised them – it could save you a lot of problems and heartache in the future.

It is vital puppies and kittens stay with the litter and mother until at least 8 weeks old, to learn good dog or cat manners and behaviour. After their first few weeks, puppies and kittens should have regular contact with all kinds of people; adults (both men and women), children and the elderly. They should ideally be reared in a home environment, so they get used to the sights, sounds and smells of family life. Once puppies are fully vaccinated it's a good idea to get them out and about – gradually introducing them to loud noises, cars, horses, fire engines – pretty much everything and anything!

Dry itchy eyes?



Did you know that keratoconjunctivitis sicca, commonly referred to as “Dry Eye”, is one of the most common eye problems in dogs. Dry Eye affects 1 in 22 of all dogs in recent surveys.

In most cases, Dry Eye is caused by destruction of the tear glands by your dog’s own immune system, leading to partial or total loss of tear production.

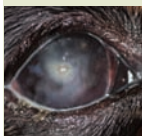
Tears play a key role in keeping eyes healthy. They lubricate and cleanse the eyes, carry vital nutrients and oxygen to the surface of the eye and help protect against infection. Healthy

eyes are bright and clear (see photo left).



Healthy eye

Without tears, the eyes will become progressively more dry and uncomfortable (see lower photo). However Dry Eye has a very variable appearance, with some pets’ eyes appearing relatively normal *despite* little or no measurable tear production.



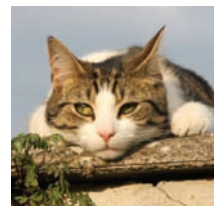
Severely affected case of dry eye

Happily there is a quick and simple test to diagnose Dry Eye in your dog. Better still, medication for Dry Eye, usually in the form of an ointment, can improve tear production and reverse many of the signs of Dry Eye, maintaining vision and keeping pets comfortable. So, if your pet has any of these symptoms, let us know since the earlier the problem is diagnosed and treatment started, the better the long term outlook for affected pets.

Watch out, the sun’s about!

Finally, the summer is here! Most of us, and our pets, love the warmer weather but it brings with it its own particular set of challenges and potential problems. Here are a few tips to keep your pet fit and well at this time of year:

Heat Stroke is an extremely serious problem and can even be fatal. Although all dogs are at risk, the shorter faced breeds, like Staffies, Pugs and Bulldogs are most vulnerable, and the danger is even greater if they are overweight. To prevent problems, avoid exercising your pets in the midday heat and make sure they don’t over-exert themselves at any time. If you become worried, move them to a cool, shaded place, give them lots to drink and call us immediately.



Slip, slap, slop! Most cats are real sun worshippers, which doesn’t tend to be a problem unless they have white ears or noses. These areas are vulnerable to sun burn because the hair is so thin, which is painful in itself but can also trigger skin cancers (see photo right). To protect your pet, apply high factor waterproof sun lotion to their ears and noses. This is sometimes easier said than done but there are pet specific products out there to help you.



Ear tip of a cat showing cancerous changes – note the reddening of the skin. If your pet is showing signs of skin changes on their nose or ears, please call us.

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 and between the toes. It is always a good idea to groom your pets regularly, and especially after walks, to keep a close eye out for grass seeds.



Grass awns of the summer grasses are a perennial hazard

BBQ Beware! Lovely weather and longer evenings mean lots of people break out the barbecue, and dogs often have a great time hoovering up the left-overs! This can cause tummy upsets, but more seriously, if anything like bones, kebab sticks and sweetcorn cobs are snaffled, they can lead to serious blockages requiring life saving surgery to remove. So keep your pets away from the barbecue!

Itch alert! For sensitive dogs with allergies, the flowers and grasses that thrive in the summer months can cause real problems. Dogs will often break out with nasty skin rashes, especially on the feet, tummy and ears. If your pet is affected, please come and see us for a check-up as there are usually treatments we can give them to improve the situation. Also – don’t forget to keep up to date with anti-parasite treatment, since fleas can be a big cause of itching!

So – enjoy the summer months, have fun and keep your pets safe. We are here to help, so if you would like any further information on summer hazards, please just ask a member of staff.

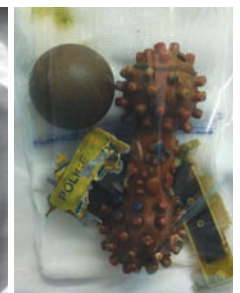
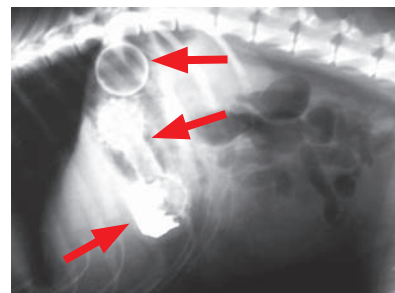
Better safe than sorry! Is your pet insured?

Did you know that you are more likely to claim on your pet insurance than either your house or car policies? The good news is that the majority of policies represent very good value for money and can take a great weight off your mind if you are faced with large vet bills.

There are several different kinds of policies; ‘12 month’ ones will only cover a condition for the first year after diagnosis, whereas ‘life long’ will continue to pay for treatment for as long as is necessary. Some will pay up to a certain amount per condition, whereas others are unlimited. So you really need to understand the policy before taking it out!

On a daily basis we see the heart wrenching decisions some of our clients face regarding the treatment of their pets, but with appropriate pet insurance, we can hopefully ensure that any treatment decisions are made on the basis of need rather than cost.

Don’t take any chances – make sure you get your pet insured today!



Case Study: Harry needed veterinary treatment because he had been vomiting, refusing food and was generally miserable. X-rays showed that Harry had been treating his toys as after-dinner snacks! Harry needed an operation to remove the toys – happily the bill was covered by Harry’s pet insurance!