



HILLSIDE VETERINARY CENTRE

SPRING 2010 Newsletter

NEWS



Practice News

Spring is here and for our pets it's always a good time to ensure they are up-to-date with their vaccines, flea and tick control is more important than ever and their diet is healthy. Why not book an appointment today for an all over **spring health check** for your pet when all of these important issues can be discussed? The first five clients to book a spring health check appointment quoting 'Spring into action' will receive a free bottle of wine.

We are delighted to welcome Liz Philo BVetMed MSc VN MRCVS to our experienced veterinary team joining us on a part-time basis. Liz has a wealth of experience gained from a varied career covering an internship treating race-horses at the University of Pennsylvania, several years at the Putney RSPCA hospital and running her own practice in Dorset from 2000-06. Liz has particular experience in orthopaedic surgery and diagnostic medicine.

Don't forget to visit our website at www.hillsidevets.co.uk for seasonal advice and downloadable fact sheets.



Surgery times:

Mon – Fri: 8.30am-6.30pm

Wednesdays **LATE NIGHT OPENING:**
8.30am-8pm

Saturdays **ALL DAY OPENING:**
8.30am-5pm

T: 698899

E: mail@hillsidevets.co.uk

Repeat prescriptions
can be ordered on-line at

www.hillsidevets.co.uk

simply click on:



Meal deal – choosing the ideal diet!



CHOOSING a diet for your pet can sometimes seem a daunting task with such a huge range to select from! To make matters more complicated – and just as with ourselves – our pet's dietary requirements *alter* as they grow from tiny kittens and puppies, into adulthood and eventually old age. However, the good news is that with *life-stage diets*, we are able to feed our pets a correctly balanced diet for every stage of their lives.

Puppies and kittens, because of their rapid rate of growth, need *higher* levels of energy, protein, fatty acids and other nutrients. Specifically formulated junior/growth diets ensure controlled growth (avoiding obesity) and healthy joint development. Puppies of large and giant breeds also have different dietary requirements and require their own specially formulated diets.

Adult pets, with their major growth phase now complete, require a balanced diet to keep them fit and healthy, but with *lower* levels of many of the nutrients mentioned above. To achieve this, adult pets require carefully balanced adult/maintenance diets.

Older pets also benefit from specifically formulated geriatric/senior diets. These have a reduced calorie content to help prevent weight gain in older age, higher fibre content to reduce constipation and changes in protein and mineral levels to reduce the workload of internal organs such as the kidney, liver and heart.

Whether healthy or poorly, your pet will benefit most from a high quality diet that suits their needs. Hillside recommends **Hill's Pet Nutrition and Prescription** diets and we are happy to discuss the best option for your pet to ensure they have a healthy diet. Hill's have also introduced a new range of *healthy snacks* available to purchase at reception. Also ask about our *Loyalty Scheme* saving you **10%** on each purchase.

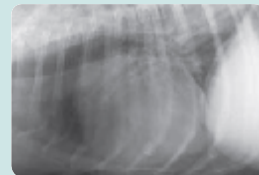


Photo: Jane Burton

Prescription Diets

Pets with particular disease problems may also benefit from specific "*prescription diets*". These are specifically formulated diets that can help greatly in the treatment of a variety of conditions including diseases of the kidneys, heart, joints, skin and teeth.

The heart of the matter!



Chest x-ray of a dog with an enlarged heart and heart failure. Specifically formulated cardiac diets are a key part of treatment.

Pollen Problems

SPRING IS HERE with longer days and warmer weather signalling the start of the allergy season. Pets can be affected too...

So what are the signs of allergies in pets? Whilst our pets aren't likely to sneeze when confronted with a garden full of flowers, they can suffer from skin irritation. Common signs of allergy include sore red itchy skin, hair loss and inflamed ears or feet.

Can allergies be cured? Unfortunately allergies cannot be cured, but they can normally be well managed by the vet. A simple blood test can reveal what your pet's immune system is reacting to (it could be a tree, weed, flower pollen or a combination of several allergens).

We can then tackle the root cause of the allergy. One tactic is avoidance, this can be a useful strategy including changing your exercise route to avoid certain trees or keeping the lawn mown. Another option is desensitisation vaccines; these work by injecting a weakened, diluted allergen under the skin so that the immune system becomes accustomed to it. This simple and popular option reduces the need for repeated doses of steroids and antihistamines leading to a much happier pet and owner!

If your pet is prone to itching or losing hair it could be an allergy; book an appointment for a check-up!



116 Wareham Road Corfe Mullen Wimborne Dorset BH21 3LH T: 01202 698899
E: mail@hillsidevets.co.uk www.hillsidevets.co.uk **24 hour Emergency Service**

Rabbits – keeping one jump ahead!



LIKE other pets, your rabbit needs to visit us from time to time for a routine health examination and vaccinations. **Vaccination:** with the onset of warmer weather,

now is the time to ensure your rabbit is vaccinated. Vaccination primes your rabbit's immune system to recognise and defend against incurable and life threatening infectious diseases – specifically Myxomatosis and Viral Haemorrhagic disease.

- **Myxomatosis** is a distressing viral disease spread by rabbit fleas, mosquitoes and other blood sucking insects. Affected rabbits typically suffer from swollen eyes, leading to blindness and death in most cases.



- **Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (VHD)** is another very serious viral infection. It spreads easily between rabbits or via contaminated hutches, bedding or food. Infected rabbits may show a variety of signs including nose bleeds, loss of appetite and lethargy. Sadly most will die despite treatment.

Protection is **vital** against these deadly infectious diseases and you should make an appointment today to arrange a full healthy hopper health check and vaccination.

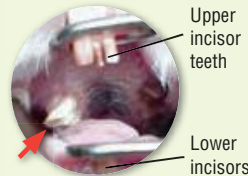
Flystrike is a big problem for rabbits during the warmer months. Rabbit rear ends often become damp and this moist area attracts flies, which lay their eggs there. These eggs hatch out into maggots, which are capable of burrowing through the rabbit's skin and into the underlying flesh. You should inspect your rabbit's rear end daily for fly eggs/maggots and bedding is best changed daily to avoid flies being attracted in the first place.

Tooth problems

You may be surprised to learn that dental disease is a very common health problem in rabbits. Rabbits have *continuously growing* teeth, with both the cheek teeth and the incisor (front) teeth growing by as much as 1-2 mm per week!

This enables wild rabbits to graze *all day* on grass and other abrasive foods without wearing out their teeth!

Equally, feeding your pet rabbit the correct diet is very important. Their ideal diet includes plenty of hay (high in fibre), together with a selection of fresh food and a small amount of commercial rabbit food.



Feeding a high fibre diet will help to reduce the incidence of *overgrown* cheek teeth (arrowed) These are sharp and lacerate the gums.

High fibre diets promote dental health, reduce obesity and keep them occupied for several hours each day! Commercial rabbit foods are now available as extruded pellets and this helps to avoid the problem of rabbits selectively feeding – leaving vitamins and minerals uneaten.

We can recommend the best diet to ensure your rabbit is healthy and happy.

Kidney disease Is my pet affected?



THANKFULLY most of our pets lead healthy active lives. However for some, kidney disease can be a problem and it is particularly prevalent in older pets (especially cats).

Dogs and cats have two kidneys and each kidney has several hundred thousand tiny filters called **nephrons**. These filter the blood, removing toxic waste products, salts and water which are then concentrated to form urine.

Over time a proportion of the nephrons will disappear with age and not be replaced. Other factors such as toxins, infections or cancer may also destroy nephrons.

However, the kidneys have *excess* filtering capacity with the result that *visible* symptoms of kidney disease are not usually seen until roughly two thirds of the nephrons have been lost. If this stage is reached the filtering capacity falls and toxic wastes begin to accumulate in the blood. Common symptoms include **increased drinking and increased urination, weight loss, muscle wastage, lack of appetite and lethargy.**

With regular veterinary check-ups the symptoms of kidney disease can often be detected at a much earlier stage – *before* they become outwardly noticeable. If your pet is showing *any* of the above symptoms book an appointment for a check-up. Whilst kidney disease cannot be cured, a combination of specially formulated diets that reduce the workload of the kidneys, together with novel forms of medication, can often significantly improve the quality of life for affected pets.

Rabbit picture: Jane Burton



Parasites: Spring into action!

THE warmer months are peak season for pesky parasites and two of the most annoying are fleas and ticks!

Fleas need little introduction to most pet owners! Adult fleas are 2-3mm in length and can be seen without magnification. These tiny

wingless insects survive by feeding on your pet's blood, causing very intense irritation and sometimes allergic skin disease. Fleas also play a major role in transmitting tapeworms in dogs and cats.

Ticks tend to be a problem in the warmer months and commonly live in areas of heathland, moorland and woodland, waiting to attach themselves to passing animals. Ticks feed on your pet's blood and can cause problems in two ways – firstly they can cause a tissue reaction at their site of attachment and secondly they can transmit serious diseases such as Lyme disease and Babesiosis.

Ensure your pet's flea and tick control is up-to-date now...

What to look for when you groom your pet's coat



Specks of flea "dirt" (flea faeces) in the coat are easy to find



Parting the coat reveals a tick in situ with buried mouth parts