



# HILLSIDE VETERINARY CENTRE

## NEWS

Winter 2006 Newsletter

Welcome to our Winter 2006 Newsletter which we hope is both interesting and useful. Any comments then visit our new website on [www.hillsidevets.co.uk](http://www.hillsidevets.co.uk) and follow the link.



### Surgery times

**Mon - Fri:** 8.30am – 6.30pm  
**Wednesdays:** 8.30am – 8pm  
**Saturdays:** 8.30am – 5pm  
 Please telephone to book an appointment.

### Your dog could save a life!

We've started a blood donor programme in conjunction with the Royal Veterinary College and are looking for possible new recruits ... Interested? If your dog is aged between 1-8 years, weighs more than 25kg, of even temperament, fit and healthy and not travelled outside the UK then please contact Emma at the surgery.



Vet, Chris Devlin and Nurse Emma, investigating a recent case of chronic vomiting.



DID you know that what you feed your pet can have a direct influence on his or her overall health? As our pets develop from kittens and puppies, into adulthood and eventually old age, so their dietary needs change. A huge amount of research has resulted in the concept of *life-stage diets* – with distinct diets for pets of different ages (or life-stages).

**Puppies and kittens**, because of their rapid rate of growth, need higher levels of energy, protein, fatty acids and other nutrients. Puppies of large and giant breeds also have different dietary requirements, and they require their own specially formulated diets.

## You are what you eat!

**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.

**Senior pets** benefit from reduced calorie levels to help prevent weight gain in older age, higher fibre levels to help reduce constipation and changes in protein and mineral levels to reduce the workload of internal organs such as the kidneys, liver and heart.

Pets with particular disease problems may also benefit from specific

'*prescription diets*.' These are specially formulated diets that help greatly in the treatment of a variety of conditions including diseases of the liver, kidneys, heart, joints, skin and teeth.



Whether healthy, or poorly, your pet will benefit most from a high quality diet that suits his or her specific needs. A tailored healthy diet can help to *prevent* or *treat* disease, whilst an inappropriate one can be responsible for *causing* health problems.

Hillside recommends Hill's Science Plan and Prescription Diet – if you would like more information please ask at reception.



## Does my pet have worms?

DOGS and cats commonly play host to two major types of worms – roundworms and tapeworms. **Roundworms** are spaghetti like in appearance and live in the small intestines. They shed thousands of tiny eggs which pass out in the faeces and infect the environment. As well as reinfecting our pets, the eggs – if swallowed – can also pose a serious risk to children.

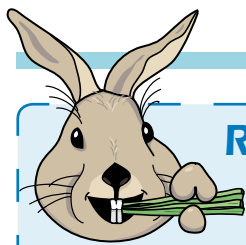
**Tapeworms** are long and flat and have a segmented body. Segments (containing eggs) are shed in the faeces and break down releasing the eggs into the environment. The eggs are then ingested by an *intermediate* host – these include fleas and mice. Both cats and dogs swallow fleas when grooming, and in doing so, reinfect themselves with the tapeworms.

We recommend the **Milbemax** range of wormers to ensure effective worm control.

Please let us advise you on the best worm and flea control program for all your pets.



Pet photos: Jane Burton. Cartoon: Jenny Hole



## Rabbit teeth – time for a check-up?

YOU MAY be surprised to learn that the most common health problem in rabbits is dental disease. 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!

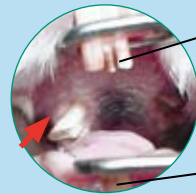
The **incisor teeth** should meet, thereby ensuring that as your rabbit chews, they will wear down. If they become misaligned they will continue to grow, and will overgrow past each other. This invariably leads to eating problems.

Turning to the **cheek teeth**, these are grinding teeth. However if they become overgrown they frequently develop sharp spikes (see photo – lower right) which can lacerate the tongue and cheeks, making eating very painful. Signs commonly include “slobbers” with saliva wetting around the mouth, a decreased appetite and often marked weight loss.

Chris, one of our vets, has a special interest in rabbit health care and will be pleased to check your rabbit's teeth and advise on diet regimes aimed at promoting optimum dental and overall health.



Misaligned and overgrown lower incisor teeth.



Overgrown cheek teeth (arrowed) are sharp and lacerate the gums.

## Winter worries!



WITH THE cold weather upon us, now is a time when we all start to feel our aches and pains, and dogs and cats are no exception! Look out for limps, and difficulty rising after a rest – these are signs that your pet has a bit of joint stiffness and pain which can be exacerbated by cold or damp wintry weather.

With all the seasonal cheer, it's all too easy for pets (and sadly their owners as well) to start expanding the waistline! Don't hesitate to get in touch if your pet is gaining a few extra pounds and we can give you some nutritional advice; carrying too much weight has a multitude of adverse effects on the body.

Inside the home, remember that items such as ribbons and tinsel are very attractive to kittens and may be swallowed, leading to an intestinal blockage.



Don't forget to keep pets away from anti-freeze, a very palatable poison, and to prevent access to fallen fruits, conkers, acorns, chocolates off the Christmas tree, and leftover Christmas dinners – all of which can cause illness!



Finally, don't forget about fleas – even in winter they can breed in your home, so it is advisable to keep anti-flea treatments up to date, even at this time of year!



## Is your dog at risk from kennel cough?



Kennel cough, otherwise known as canine infectious tracheobronchitis, is a highly unpleasant and contagious disease of the dog's respiratory tract. Dogs of all ages can be affected and signs include a harsh, dry, whooping-type cough. Coughing can last for some weeks and, during this time, more serious complications such as pneumonia may arise and can even prove fatal in old, weak or very young dogs.

Passed from dog to dog by airborne droplets – a true case of 'coughs and sneezes spread diseases' – and direct nose to nose contact, dogs are at risk whenever they gather together, for example at boarding kennels, shows and training classes or even out on a walk.

Prevention is better than cure because, without vaccination, treatment of kennel cough can be a costly and lengthy process, involving isolation and antibiotic therapy. Many boarding kennels now insist that all dogs are vaccinated against kennel cough prior to admission, so if your dog is likely to be in contact with other dogs, particularly if you board

your pet over the summer holidays, you should consider vaccination.

Our practice uses an intranasal vaccine, which is very easy to administer and offers protection for a full 12 months. It can be given to dogs of any shape, size and age, including puppies from three weeks of age and provides protection in just 72 hours.



For further details and information, simply call the practice on 01202 698899 to make an appointment with your vet.