



# HILLSIDE VETERINARY CENTRE

## NEWS

WINTER 2007 Newsletter

### Practice News

We look towards winter and realise we've been running our quarterly newsletters for a year now and hope you find them interesting and useful – if you have any comments or suggestions we would love to hear from you.

Following on from the success of our client evening held in October, we are planning a further series of interesting talks. Our next presentation will focus on *the ageing cat* and be held in early 2008. If you would like more information or would like us to keep you informed of future client evenings let us know.

Articles this time include:

- Winter aches and pains and how to deal with them
- Lumps and bumps – don't ignore them
- What to look for to ensure your pet has healthy eyes
- Your winter weather survival guide!

Did you know that you can now order repeat prescriptions on-line via our website? Go to

[www.hillsidevets.co.uk](http://www.hillsidevets.co.uk) and click on

**REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS?** then follow the instructions.

Everyone at Hillside wishes all our clients, both old and new, a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy 2008! We are pleased to support Julia's House, a local hospice for children and have donated to their charity instead of sending out Christmas cards this year.

### Finally a reminder of surgery times ...

Mon - Fri: 8.30am – 6.00pm

Wednesdays: 8.30am – 8pm

Saturdays: 8.30am – 5pm

... you can telephone or Email for an appointment

T: 698899

E: [mail@hillsidevets.co.uk](mailto:mail@hillsidevets.co.uk)

### Winter aches and pains...



DOES YOUR dog, or cat, seem a bit stiff when he first gets up? Does he limp at the beginning of his walk? Do these symptoms ease off once he gets going? Does he spend some time licking at his joints?

If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes' or if you have noticed that your pet seems lame, it may be that he is

suffering from joint pain and stiffness due to arthritis.

In the majority of cases, arthritis occurs secondary to a lifetime of wear and tear on the joints. Arthritis may also occur following joint trauma or due to malformation of a joint (for example hip dysplasia).

The joints permitting free limb movements are called synovial joints. A healthy joint has a smooth layer of cartilage covering the bones and is lubricated by synovial

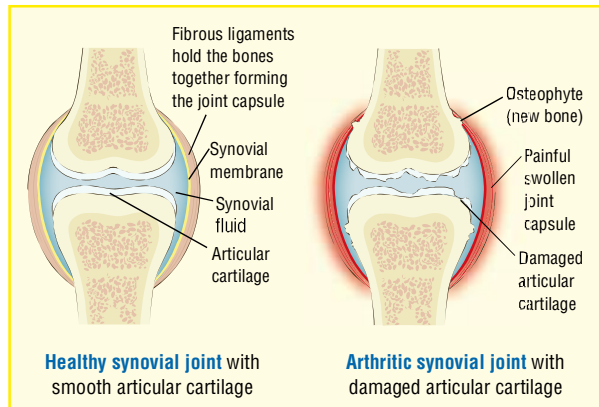
fluid produced by the synovial membrane.

Arthritic joints typically show progressive breakdown and thinning of the cartilage, formation of new bone (osteophytes) and thickening of the joint capsule. Affected joints usually appear stiff, swollen and painful.



Treatment includes weight control, regular appropriate exercise, the use of food supplements and anti-inflammatory pain relieving medicines to help reduce pain, promote mobility and maintain limb strength for as long as possible. Hydrotherapy and other treatments such as acupuncture may also be appropriate in some cases.

If you suspect that your pet has a problem please make a prompt appointment! That way we can identify what's wrong and get him back on his feet and feeling more comfortable without undue delay.



### Hillside website...

Don't forget that for more information about the practice and to download specific fact sheets you can visit our website on [www.hillsidevets.co.uk](http://www.hillsidevets.co.uk).



Pet photos: Jane Burton. Diagram: Jenny Hole

## Lumps and bumps – don't ignore them!



IN ADDITION to the regular health checks that your pet receives when visiting us (often in conjunction with a vaccination), a thorough grooming session at least once a week will alert *you* to any developing lumps – or any other problems for that matter. Just as in ourselves, pets can develop lumps and bumps on their skin that range from those that are slow growing, to lumps that are very fast growing – rapidly increasing in size.

If your pet does develop a lump, there are several possible causes; these include allergic reactions (such as wasp stings), abscesses (common in cats and rabbits), hernias, and tumours.

The most serious of these are tumours, which are either *benign* – which tend to be slow growing and remain in one place, or *malignant* – which invade the surrounding tissues and may also spread to other parts of the body.

If you do find a lump on your pet, it is very important that we examine it as soon as possible, in order that we may establish the underlying cause and start any required treatment without delay. Timing is everything and a delay in appropriate treatment can be the difference between a small mass that is easily treatable by surgical removal and one that is far more difficult to treat – or possibly untreatable. So, *now* is a good time to check your pet over and to give us a call if you find anything unusual.



Small skin lump on a dog

## An eye for a problem!



THE eyes are very complex organs and thankfully function normally most of the time.

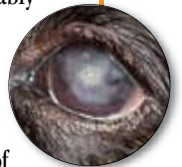
Your pet's eyes should be bright and clear, moist, and free of excessive tears (as in the photo on the right). Any itchiness of the eyes that causes the pet to rub at them, or any abnormalities that you can see may indicate problems which could need treatment.



Normal eye

Without appropriate treatment, eye diseases can progress quickly as the eyes are particularly delicate and can be slow to heal and recover.

One problem seen reasonably commonly in dogs is '**dry eye**'. This is caused by a *reduced or total lack of tear production*. Tears lubricate the movements of the eyelids and provide oxygen and nutrients to the cornea (the clear outermost part of the eye). There are many different signs of dry eye and these can develop over time. Affected eyes commonly develop a thick yellowish discharge and may be reddened.



Dry eye

Another common problem seen in many older pets in particular, is **loss of vision**, which may cause pets to start bumping into things even if their eyes appear normal. Any indication of poor vision should be checked out rapidly, as should any change in the appearance of the eyes.

We can perform a thorough eye examination and assess your pet's vision, allowing us to recognise and treat any problems promptly.

## Winter weather – a seasonal survival guide!



gaining a few extra pounds as we can give you some nutritional advice, since carrying too much weight has a multitude of adverse effects on the body.

When out and about, beware of hazards such as frozen ponds and when walking in the evening, use reflective jackets/collars to aid visibility. It is also the time of year when many people top up their car radiators with antifreeze and spillages can easily occur. Antifreeze tastes very sweet to pets, but most brands are very poisonous if consumed and can be fatal.

Fleas and worms remain a problem throughout winter months, therefore regular treatments are advisable! The choice of products can be bewildering, so please ask us to advise you on the best treatment regime for *your* pet!



*Toxocara canis* roundworms

Inside the house, the festive season also presents us with many hazards for pets. Items such as ribbon and tinsel are very attractive to mischievous pets and if swallowed may lead to an intestinal blockage. Similarly, make sure that turkey carcasses and string (used to tie up the carcass) are safely disposed of.

Winter is also a difficult time for animals that live outside, especially guinea pigs and pet rabbits. Ensure that hutches are dry, warm, clean and are in a sheltered position. Bedding needs to be plentiful and changed on a daily basis. Give them fresh food and water every day checking to ensure that the water in the bottle has not frozen.

If you have any queries on pet care or flea and worm control, please give us a call!