

# SPRING

2017



## Ticks and Seresto collars



Every silver lining has a cloud, right?! Well Spring may arguably be everyone's favourite season with longer days and (hopefully) warmer weather but it's also time for those pesky ticks to start annoying us again. Ticks are much rarer over winter, but we would definitely advise that now is the time to come and collect your Seresto collar if you haven't already done so. Seresto is an innovative flea and tick collar which acts as a tick repellent, as well as killing any ticks that have already found their way onto your pet. The unobtrusive, safety collar lasts for 7-8 months and reduces the risk of your dog or cat becoming infected with tick-borne diseases such as Lyme disease and Babesiosis, both of which can be fatal. They also kill fleas, though we still recommend that dogs are also treated regularly with Advocate to kill other parasites such as the potentially fatal lungworm.

**OFFER 10% off**

## Melissa

We would like to welcome our new nurse Melissa who joined us at the beginning of 2017. Melissa qualified in New Zealand but has been living in the UK for 13 years. Melissa will be doing most of the nurse consults, so if you have any concerns regarding parasite control or would like to take stock of your pet's weight then please ring for an appointment. All our nurses are fully qualified, and nurse consults can include 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccinations, post-op and post dental checks, nail clips and tons of preventative healthcare advice.



## Itchy and Scratchy

Being kept awake all night with your cat or dog scratching, gnawing, pacing restlessly and generally feeling thoroughly uncomfortable? Just imagine how much worse it is for him. Having itchy or pruritic skin is very unpleasant. It is a complex area of veterinary medicine but reasons for having irritable skin can be, very broadly, divided into 5 main areas.

- **Seasonal allergy** – during springtime, pollen and grasses can cause problems and irritability just as they can for humans. Moulds can cause a similar problem in autumn.
- **Environmental allergy** – includes house dust mites. We all have them and they are a common allergen. Usually more prevalent in warm, humid environments.
- **Dietary sensitivities** – another form of allergy. If present, dietary allergies are not to particular brands of food, but to certain ingredients within the food, so simply switching foods will not usually resolve the situation. It is also a misconception that simply switching to a 'grain-free' diet will always help. In fact, although any type of carbohydrate can cause an allergic reaction, it is often a protein that causes the problems.
- **Parasites** – prevention is much better than cure. We STRONGLY recommend using a veterinary prescribed medication to interrupt the breeding cycle of the flea and prevent an infestation. Once fleas take hold in the environment they are difficult to get rid of. Flea allergy dermatitis is especially common in cats and is particularly unpleasant. There are also a few different types of mange mites that can cause problems, including the fox mange mite.
- **Infections** – a number of different types of infections, both fungal and bacteria, can be the cause of sore, itchy skin. Some of these infections, such as Ringworm, can be passed onto humans. It is therefore especially important for these conditions to be diagnosed quickly. A lot of the time, bacterial skin disease is secondary to another underlying condition e.g. parasites or allergy.

*"Excessive itching is the second most common reason for people bringing their pets to the vets"*



What can we do about it?

Well, firstly, it's important to know that we CAN do something about it. There are a wide range of options available to us, depending on the type and cause of the skin condition. It could be that a simple short course of anti-biotic or anti-fungal medication is all that's required. There are also topical treatments available such as shampoos and ointments to help alleviate discomfort and itching and our vets may recommend a combination of topical treatments and additional medication such as antihistamines or steroids to help manage the situation.

The most important step is to identify the cause of the itchiness. Strict parasite control is important in any itchy animal (as fleas are such a common cause), and we may wish to run certain tests such as skin scrapes to look for mites living in the skin. With dietary sensitivities, we may suggest a food elimination trial to try and establish what particular ingredient is generating an allergic reaction and then we can tailor your pet's diet to their specific needs. There are also several types of general hypoallergenic food available. Actual allergies cannot be 'cured' but with the right treatments in place, your pet's skin condition can be effectively managed and any discomfort can be minimised.

*'Your local caring vet'*



## Find us on Facebook!

Following on from our customer satisfaction survey, we would like to invite you to our new, re-vamped Facebook page. Our aim is to keep you up to date with the latest news here at Banstead Village Vets and to provide you with current, relevant information regarding your pet's wellbeing. You will also be able to access information about seasonal topics which may affect you and your pet and in response to feedback from our survey, there will be regular short articles about diseases and the symptoms to look out for. We will also be posting "How To"...instruction videos on routine healthcare, such as ear cleaning.

Other topics of interest will include;

- **Promotions and offers.** Be the first to know about money saving offers.
- **Monthly Braveheart award.** We will choose a patient each month who has shown outstanding bravery during their treatment and we will give them pride of place on our bravery wall!
- **Loyalty cards.** Did you know we offer a range of loyalty schemes in relation to certain products and diets that you may already be using? Find out more and save money.
- **Quizzes.** Just for fun but spot prizes may be awarded!
- **Fun facts and furry photos.** Learn fun facts about animals from all over the world and send us your favourite photos of your furry friends.
- **Product information.** Find out more about our range of toys and grooming products.

We are more than open to suggestions and would love to hear from you if you have any ideas or specific requests about what you would like to see on our Facebook page or in the newsletter.

## Satisfied?..... Well, yes actually!

After reviewing the results of our Customer Satisfaction Survey which was distributed last year, we are very pleased to report that over 83% of our clients who responded are satisfied or very satisfied with the service we provide. With all the information collated and analysed, Banstead Village Veterinary Surgery's **Net Promoter Score** was 83. The lowest possible Net Promoter Score is minus 100 and the highest possible is 100, with zero being in the middle. Anything over 50 is excellent, so our score of 83 suggests we are keeping the vast majority of our clients very happy, which makes us very happy!

As previously advised we will be donating £1.00 per completed survey to be distributed between Epsom Canine Rescue and our local Cats Protection branch. You have raised a total of £106.00. Thank you for taking part and giving us such lovely feedback!

Check our Facebook page for updates!



## Help us to help you

We know you have expectations of us when you come to visit. You expect a clean facility and personal attention in a safe, friendly environment and the highest quality care for your pets. Did you know however, that there are things you can do to help us to deliver the first class care you have every right to expect.

- Provide proper restraint for your pet. - All pets must be appropriately restrained. Cats should arrive in a carrier and dogs with a well-fitted lead and harness/collar. Small furrries should be in an appropriate enclosed carrier. The waiting room at the vets can be a stressful place for any pet, and even the most sociable animal can behave out of character.
- Be aware of your pet's behaviour. - If your pet has a history of being aggressive or overly enthusiastic with other pets or people, let us know immediately. We can schedule your appointment with this in mind or seat you elsewhere. Not all pets appreciate being approached by other animals, especially if they are feeling unwell. Please use the separate, dog free, cat waiting area for your cats. Dog owners – your dog may be fine with cats, but a lot of cats most certainly aren't fine with dogs!
- Be prepared to describe your pet's symptoms. - You would be surprised how many times pets arrive with a handler who has no information about what is going on with the animal! Please ensure that whoever is attending the appointment knows what symptoms are occurring, what and how much the pet is eating, what the pet's toileting habits have been like, and any recent changes in the pet's environment or routine. The more information that we have, the more quickly (and cost-effectively!) we can arrive at a diagnosis.
- Make payment arrangements before your visit. - We do expect payment at the time of service, regardless of who is bringing the animal in. We are able to take cash, debit cards and most major credit cards. If you anticipate needing to make payment arrangements, please call or ask ahead of time so that we can discuss your options with you.

