

Summer 2017



Keeping your rabbits fit and healthy is vital to ensure a long and happy life. Rabbits are prone to some health issues which can often be easily prevented if you know how. Good care, appropriate feeding and other appropriate measures such as vaccination are key.

Book your rabbits FREE health check throughout the month of June.

Rabbits and other small pets can be susceptible to flystrike which is a very nasty and potentially fatal condition that occurs when flies land on a rabbit and lay eggs. A range of preventative treatments are available and small pets should be checked at least twice daily and any soiled bedding removed immediately. Rabbits with faeces stuck around their back ends should see a vet immediately.

"85-90% of a rabbit's diet should be fresh, high-quality feeding hay and/or grass every day!"

Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease

We would like to remind our rabbit owners of the importance of vaccination. There is a new strain of Viral Haemorrhagic Disease and sadly there have been several deaths reported locally. If your rabbit has not been vaccinated against VHD2 please contact us so we are able to schedule this vital vaccination.



What is Brachycephalic syndrome?

Bulldogs, French Bulldogs, Pugs and other 'flat-face' breeds are increasingly popular pets and with good reason – they are often lovely dogs. However, they do have certain breed associated problems, especially a condition called Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS), sometimes just known as Brachycephalic syndrome. Brachycephalic refers to the shape of the head, being short and broad relative to the length. The skull shape gives dogs and cats the characteristic flattened face and short nose. Breeders have selected dogs with shorter and shorter noses over the years to maximise "cuteness" and increase sales. And it's worked. The popularity of these breeds continues to increase but we are seeing more and more animals with associated health issues. These include skin, eye and breathing problems and a poor ability to tolerate heat.

What breeds are affected?

The types of breeds most commonly affected are; Bulldogs (including French), Pugs and Boxers, Shar Peis, Boston terriers, Pekingese, Lhaso Apsos and Shih Tzus and some of the smaller breeds coming through where crosses between these breeds have occurred. In cats, Persians and the lesser known Himalayan breeds are affected.

"Ownership of French Bulldogs has risen dramatically in the past 10 years. They are now over 30 times more popular than in 2007."

What problems can occur?

Respiratory system: Although the skulls of these breeds have been getting smaller and smaller over time, the amount of soft tissue in the nose and throat has remained the same. These soft tissues include the soft palate, cartilage inside the nose (turbinates) and the tongue. There is very little bone in the nasal area to support this soft tissue so we end up with small nostrils and squashed airways which are not wide enough to allow the proper passage of air. At best, this causes the snoring, snuffly sounds typical of these breeds and at worst, can mean they can't breathe properly. This is called Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS) and requires specialist surgery to rectify.

'Excessive exercise in hot weather can kill these dogs, so it is vitally important to walk brachycephalic breeds in the cool of the morning and evening rather than run around in the heat of the day!'

Skin: The fact that the skull is shorter than it should be means there is an excess of skin. This has to go somewhere and generally gathers into 'folds' across the nose and face. Whilst this means a cute, crinkly look this also means a warm, moist environment where bacteria and yeast infections can thrive causing inflammation and various skin complaints. Of course, we can use antibiotics and other medications to control infections but it is common for the infections to recur. It is sometimes necessary to remove excessive skin folds surgically to treat the condition properly.

Eyes: The flattening of the skull causes the eye sockets to become shallow which causes the eyeballs to protrude quite significantly. This means that the cornea (outer surface of the eye) is more exposed and can become dry, leading to ulcers and infections, and also make the eyes more susceptible to direct trauma.

'Your local caring vet'





HERE COMES SUMMER.....

No dogs should ever be left in a car for even the shortest time. Sadly, dogs continue to die every year as a direct result of being left in cars.

WARM WEATHER PET SAFETY: HOW HOT IS YOUR CAR?

VEHICLE TEMPERATURE	
OUTSIDE TEMP (C)	INSIDE TEMP (C)
21°	32° after 10 mins, after 30 mins 40°
24°	34° 43°
27°	37° 46°
29°	40° 48°
32°	43° 51°

Even with windows cracked, the temperature inside your vehicle can increase within minutes. When in doubt, leave your pet at home.



Source: harsbipetals.co.uk



It is perfectly fine for your dog to stay home alone for a few hours after a nice long walk, with a fresh bowl of water and a cool comfy bed to snooze in on a hot summer's day. This is especially true for brachycephalic breeds who can struggle to get enough air even in cooler weather. Dogs should not really be walked in very hot weather. Time your walks for early morning or late evening. In addition to the hot air temperatures causing discomfort, pavements can also become surprisingly hot and cause serious burns to the pads of the feet.

Cats are generally pretty adept at finding cool, shady places and should be left alone to do so. Always ensure fresh drinking water is available and accessible.



GDV

GDV or Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus is a condition in which the stomach fills with gas (sometimes called bloat) or fills with gas and then twists, which is called a gastric torsion or volvulus. It is a very serious, potentially fatal condition that requires immediate medical attention. In fact, without medical treatment death is virtually inevitable. Even with treatment, fatalities still frequently occur. Therefore, this is a condition that is best avoided at all costs.

What causes GDV?

GDV is often seen when a large meal is eaten or following a large drink of water in one go, particularly if they have been exercised within 2-3 hours of either event. We see GDV more commonly in large breed, deep chested dogs such as Great Danes and Dobermans. Age also appears to be a factor as the risk increases with the age of the dog.

What symptoms will I see?

Some of the symptoms can include **behavioural changes*increased breathing rate*drooling*vomiting*enlarged abdomen*pale gums*collapse* but the most common is *NON-PRODUCTIVE VOMITING, or retching without bringing anything up.*

It is important to remember that any of these symptoms can indicate a number of different conditions, although we would suggest you contact us immediately if your dog shows any of these signs.

What happens to my dog?

The bloated stomach will start to enlarge and press on the diaphragm affecting the lungs' ability to gain enough oxygen to transport around the body. This obviously quickly leads to oxygen deprivation, collapse and potentially death. When the stomach twists, this will affect the blood supply to the spleen and other organs and they will start to fail, again quickly causing collapse and death.

What should I do?

Seek medical attention immediately. It cannot be stressed how dangerous this condition is and it is vital to your dog's chances of survival that treatment begins as soon as possible. Initially, once diagnosis is confirmed, often with an ultrasound scan or X Ray, emergency measures will be taken to stabilise the patient's vital signs. Medical treatment includes fluid therapy, pain relief and deflation of the distended stomach, usually by way of a needle inserted into the stomach through the skin or a tube passed directly to the stomach via the oesophagus. Once we are confident the patient is stable enough for surgery, a procedure called a gastropexy will be performed to untwist the stomach and secure it to the abdomen wall to prevent further torsion.

How can I prevent it?

There are several things you can do to minimise the risk of GDV.

- Feed at least twice a day rather than one large meal (even 3-4 times daily with very large breeds). Little and often is far better.
- Do not allow dogs to 'hoover' their food. There are feeders designed to slow down the rate at which a dog swallows his food.
- NEVER exercise your dog within at least 2 hours of eating especially large breed dogs.
- After exercise, dogs shouldn't gulp vast amounts of water while they are still panting. Most dogs will usually lie down and pant and not attempt to drink. This is their way of cooling down. Offer small volumes of water in a bowl they have free access to but don't force them to drink.

