



Autumn Newsletter 2015



Autumn Awareness!

As summer draws to a close and the shorter days are upon us, here is some advice to keep your pets feeling fit and healthy during the autumn season.



Autumn is a busy time for parasites:

Fleas are still very much a problem, so keep up to date with anti-parasitic treatments. As well as fleas, autumn is the peak time for **ticks**. Ticks live in long grass and woodland areas and attach themselves to passing pets. Grooming your dog after a walk enables you to remove them before they attach.



At the same time you can check for **grass seeds** stuck in the coat which can otherwise penetrate the skin and work their way in, causing pain and infection.

There are risks in the garden too – don't let your pets have access to **fallen fruits, acorns and conkers**, as these can all cause digestive upsets. Also try to stop your dog eating the last of the **slugs and snails** in the garden, since these can spread **lungworm**.



When preparing your car for winter, keep **antifreeze** well away from pets as it is palatable and deadly, and prevent access to weed killers or other chemicals.



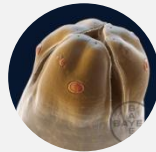
Autumn aches: Finally bear in mind that the cooler weather may unmask arthritic disease and joint stiffness. Keep an eye on your pet's weight, since it's all too easy for pets to gain a few extra pounds in the autumn and winter months.

If you are at all concerned, please book your pet in for a check up.

Make sure your pet stays worm free!

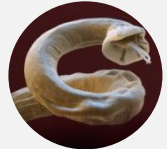
Did you know that, unless you worm them regularly, it is often difficult to avoid your pet carrying worms? Here are the major ones to treat:

Tapeworms are long segmented flat worms, living in the small intestines where they shed mobile segments containing eggs, which pass out in the faeces. The eggs may then be eaten by an *intermediate host* including small rodents and fleas. Cats catch and eat small rodents and pets swallow fleas as they groom, re-infecting themselves with tapeworms.



Roundworms, resembling white pieces of string, also live in the small intestines. They shed thousands of tiny eggs, which pass out in the faeces and contaminate the environment. Dogs and cats are re-infected by unwittingly eating eggs from the ground. These eggs also pose some risk to humans if inadvertently swallowed and **can cause blindness in children**.

Lungworm, or *Angiostrongylus vasorum*, is becoming more and more widespread over time. It only infects dogs and can cause problems ranging from heart failure to clotting problems and blood loss in infected dogs. It is also spread by *intermediate hosts* – in this case **slugs and snails** – so dogs that eat molluscs or lick the slime trail are at risk.



To control worms in your pets *and* the environment you need to: **worm your pet regularly, use regular flea control, prevent dogs eating slugs and snails and clear up faeces.**

Please let us advise you on the most suitable worming and flea control regime for your pet.

Eye problems in pets

The eyes are very complex organs and thankfully function normally most of the time. Externally the eyes are protected by eyelids and also the third eyelid (in the corner of the eye).

Tears play an important role in keeping your pet's eyes healthy, lubricating the movements of the eyelids, washing out dust particles and providing oxygen and nutrients to the cornea (the clear outermost part of the eye). Tears also contain substances which help fight bacterial eye infections.

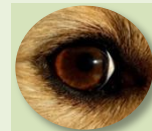
Here we take a look at some common eye problems:

Dry Eye is a condition seen fairly commonly in dogs and is caused by a reduced or total lack of tear production. There are many different signs of dry eye and these can develop over time. Key signs are a grey and lustreless eye which is often reddened and accompanied by a thick yellowish (infected) discharge. Happily, diagnosis of this condition can be made using a simple test to measure tear production. The good news is that medication for 'dry eye' usually in the form of an ointment, can improve tear production and reverse many of the symptoms, maintaining vision and keeping pets comfortable.

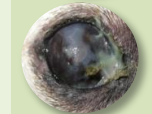
Corneal abrasions (scratches to the surface of the eye) are commonly seen in pets. In cats they are often caused by claw injuries, whilst in dogs foreign bodies (such as grass seeds) are frequently the cause. Fluorescein dye is used to show damaged areas, so that appropriate treatment can be started as soon as possible.

Eyelid tumours are another condition seen commonly in older dogs. They occur on the margin of the eyelid and have the potential to cause marked corneal irritation.

Early diagnosis is vital with eyes; for example prompt evaluation and treatment of dry eye can make a real difference to the vision of affected dogs. Without appropriate treatment, eye diseases can progress quickly as the eyes are particularly delicate and can be slow to heal and recover. Don't delay! If your pet is showing any signs of eye problems, come and see us for a thorough health examination.



Healthy eyes should be bright, clear and free of excessive tears



Dry eye with a dull lustreless eye and mucoid discharge



Foreign bodies in the eye such as grass seeds cause intense irritation and need prompt

removal or corneal damage can occur



Eyelid tumours are commonly seen in older dogs



'Your local caring vet'



Introducing the new **surefeed pet feeder** - now available. This is a pet feeding bowl incorporating a special sensor designed to recognise either a special collar tag (supplied with each individual unit) or, more commonly, your own cat's microchip number. When your cat approaches the feeder the number is recognised and the feeder's lid opens automatically.



- Perfect for multi-cat households to stop pets stealing each other's food.
- Sealed bowl allows cats to graze safely throughout the day whilst keeping food fresh.
- Ideal solution for pets on a weight management programme or specific prescription diet.

The **sure feed pet feeder** is compatible with all identification microchips worldwide and is suitable for dry or wet food.

For more information ask a member of staff for a demonstration or go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 2xEmMmYfBs>



Special offer price of £84.99 during September to November!!!! (RRP £99.99)

Pet of the season... Aero

Our pet of the season this autumn is Aero, a 10 year old, neutered male chocolate Labrador.



Aero was brought into the surgery by his owners in November 2014 as he had some lumps that they were concerned about. After a consultation with Andy it was decided that it would be best to remove the lumps, which would need to be done under general anaesthetic. The problem was that Aero was hugely overweight at 48.3kg and this would greatly increase the risks of the general anaesthetic. The average weight for an adult Labrador is 25-34kg. Although the lumps needed to be removed, it was decided to first put Aero onto a diet and therefore reduce the anaesthetic risk.

Aero was booked into see our wonderful Veterinary Nurses for weight clinic appointments. Aero's ideal weight was calculated and he was started on a prescription weight loss diet. It was really important that his owners stuck to his new feeding regime. Aero was not to have any treats, titbits or human food, he was to have water only to drink and was to be encouraged to exercise as much as possible to aid his weight loss.

Aero's owners embraced all of the changes and brought him to the surgery for monthly weight checks with the nurses. The whole family was committed and their hard work paid off as Aero began to lose weight and continued to do so.

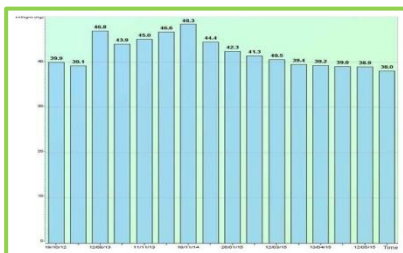
By the beginning of May 2015 Aero had lost enough weight to safely have a general anaesthetic to enable us to remove the lumps. However Aero still had a little way to go to reach his target weight.

In mid-June, Aero reached his target weight of 38kg. In 7 months he had lost an amazing 10kg and was the picture of health. His owners had noticed that he was so much livelier and happier since losing the weight.



Aero and his owners did a truly amazing job and we are very proud of them all. Aero will always need to watch his waistline but now his owners are aware of this and know what to do should the weight start to creep on again.

We will encourage them to continue to bring Aero in to the surgery for regular weight checks and we will be happy to offer any advice should it be needed.



Aero's weight chart

Just like people, dogs can quickly put on a few unwanted pounds, especially as they get older and exercise less. In fact, a staggering 35% of all dogs in the UK are overweight - and most owners don't even realise it until they take their pets to the vet for a related illness. Overweight and obese dogs are much more likely to develop obesity-related health problems such as diabetes, respiratory conditions, arthritis and even behavioural problems. So it's easy to see why monitoring your dog's weight and body condition carefully is important.

If you are at all concerned about your pet's weight, please contact us at the surgery to make an appointment.



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