



# PROSPECT HOUSE

## VETERINARY CLINIC

# NEWS

SUMMER 2007

### Choosing a pet

With Harry Potter fans wanting owls and Disney lovers desperate for Dalmatians, choosing a new pet can be difficult! It can be hard to satisfy the whole family and find a pet that suits everyone, and it is easy to forget that the first priority is to choose one that you can look after properly; think about the pet's needs as well as your own. A few tips follow!

- Dogs, in particular, need a lot of stimulation and exercise as well as regular toilet trips, all of which can be quite a challenge if you work full time. If a dog is the pet for you, choose a breed that fits in with your life, in particular pick one that will enjoy the same level of exercise as *you* – some need several hours a day!

- Cats are much more independent, and, with access to the outdoors, need less attention from their owners, although most enjoy lots of cuddles! Long-haired cats also require frequent grooming.

- Rabbits, guinea pigs, small furrries and birds make great pets too, but like all pets should be checked properly at least once daily and should have access to a large exercise area.

We are here to help! If you would like any further information on choosing the right pet, please don't hesitate to ask!

### The miracle of microchips!

THE thought of losing a pet is hard to contemplate, but if the unthinkable does happen, how prepared are you? Your pet is now a stray, and – very sadly, many strays are never reunited with their owners since they cannot be reliably identified.

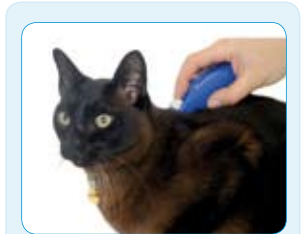


The good news is that in addition to the traditional collar and engraved tag (which don't always stay in place), you can now have your pet *permanently* identified with a tiny microchip, giving you the best chance of being reunited with your pet in



such cases. Also, any pets travelling abroad with the Pet Travel Scheme must first be microchipped to allow them to be easily identified.

A range of pets can be microchipped, including dogs, cats, small pets, birds and even fish! However, the system is most commonly used by dog and cat owners. The procedure involves using a straightforward injection to place a tiny chip (smaller than a grain of rice) under the skin of a pet, which carries a unique identification number. The number on the chip can be "read" using a special scanner, allowing the pet to be individually identified. Veterinary practices, the police, and



A tiny microchip is easily injected under the skin.



A special scanner is used to "read" the unique I.D code. This code speedily identifies your pet.

animal welfare organisations routinely scan all strays hopefully ensuring that if the unthinkable happens, you and your pet can be speedily reunited.

So – don't delay – ask us about microchipping your pet today!

### Kennel Cough: is your pet protected?

Kennel Cough (also called Infectious Bronchitis) is a highly contagious disease of dogs and is spread easily from dog to dog wherever they meet – out on walks, at training classes, dog shows and of course (classically!) in boarding kennels.

It is caused by a variety of viruses and a bacterium – *Bordetella bronchisepticum*. These infectious agents easily pass from dog to dog as a droplet infection. Affected dogs typically have a harsh dry non-productive cough with a distinctive "honking" sound. While some dogs recover relatively rapidly, others may take several weeks to recover fully and antibiotic treatment is often required. Although regular booster vaccinations offers protection against many of the airborne viruses, only *intranasal* vaccines can offer protection against *Bordetella*. Contact us now to ensure your dog is vaccinated!



Cat photo (left): Jane Burton Cartoon: Gareth Davies.

## Pet Insurance – don't be caught without it!



YOU insure yourself, your house and your car – but what about your pet? Veterinary medicine has, in recent years, become increasingly sophisticated. The good news is that we are now able to diagnose and treat many conditions which – just a few years ago – were totally untreatable.

Each year, on average 1 in 3 pets suffer illness or injury, so unexpected veterinary bills can, unfortunately, occur at any time! We often think of insurance covering treatment of broken bones or wounds following road traffic accidents, but don't forget animals can develop many long-term conditions such as skin disease, ear problems, heart disease and arthritis, (to name just a few!), for which an increasing range of treatment options are now available.

With appropriate insurance cover, we can hopefully ensure that your pet will get the best of care without the cost of treatment becoming a limiting factor. Don't take any chances, make sure your pet is insured!

## A leaky problem



DO YOU find damp patches around the home where your dog has been lying? Urinary incontinence can occur in dogs of all ages, and of either sex, but is particularly common in older female dogs.

Symptoms may occur during the day, or at night when sleeping, and may result in obvious puddles in the house, or soggy fur and a damp bed. As well as being annoying to owners, it can cause skin damage and infection, and also makes dogs feel unloved and ashamed; so it is important to all concerned to address problems of urinary incontinence promptly when they occur.

Urine is retained in the bladder by specialised sphincter muscles around the bladder neck. If these muscles relax a little while your pet is at rest or asleep, urine will leak out. Other reasons for incontinence include abnormal development, underlying bladder stones, prostate problems, or even excessive drinking, and further investigation is often needed to make a diagnosis. Once the cause of the problem has been identified, appropriate treatment can be started, and is usually successful. So – if your dog's waterworks seem a bit leaky – give us a call!

## The heat is on – summer survival guide!

WITH the onset of warmer summer weather, now is the time to ensure your pets enjoy the summer but stay fit and well at the same time.



**Cover up!** Cats are notorious sun worshipers and often make a beeline for the sunniest spot in the garden. Skin cancer is a particular risk for cats with *white* ear tips and noses. The key to reducing this risk is blocking sunlight with non-toxic high factor sun block. The earliest signs of skin cancer are a reddening of the skin – similar to sunburn.



Ear tip of a cat showing early cancerous changes. If your pet is showing any signs of skin changes, please arrange a check-up.

When out and about, **grass seeds** of the meadow grasses are another summer problem. They become easily attached to dogs' coats and can work their way into the pads, or become trapped in dogs' ears, usually causing severe head shaking. In view of this, thorough inspection of the coat is recommended following walks.



**Bee stings** are another seasonal problem. Pets are by nature inquisitive, and if they try and make friends with bees and wasps, they are likely to be stung for their efforts. Prompt veterinary attention may



be required because some dogs (like humans) are allergic to bee stings.

**Flies** pose a huge risk for **rabbits** during the warmer weather. Rabbit rear ends often become damp and this moist area attracts flies which lay their eggs there; these develop into flesh eating maggots. This is a very serious condition; during the summer months rabbits rear ends should be inspected *daily* for fly eggs and maggots. If in any doubt – please call!



Don't forget to keep treating your pets regularly against **fleas, ticks** and **worms** and remember, **never ever leave a pet in a car on a hot day.**

