

smalltalk

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

AUTUMN 2015

Dog Breeding

The responsibility of being a breeder...



Inside...

Rabbits

Rabbit preventative health top tips



Dental Disease

What is gum disease and how can it be prevented



Pet Identity

The importance of microchipping



A day in the life
of a veterinary surgeon



Excellence in
Veterinary Care



XLVets and Your Practice - what does it mean?

I was a member of our large animal department when we were one of the original independent practices to join XLVets ten years ago. Back then the focus was on how being a member of XLVets could benefit the farm and equine side of the practice, but now being a part of XLVets has benefits for all members of the small animal team too. So, when I was asked to write this article, I decided to canvass the opinions of our small animal staff to find out what being a part of XLVets means to them.

Access to country-wide expertise

All of our vets have used the 'specialist groups' which is a country wide network of clinicians within XLVets who have additional qualifications or expertise. If we have an interesting or difficult case we can contact the relevant 'specialist group' with the case information to obtain advice on diagnosis, management and outlook for the patient without the additional cost often associated with referral.

Knowledge sharing

Many members of our staff have been on one or more of the informative and useful courses run by XLVets. These can be clinical days for the vets and nurses as well as meetings tailored for our accounts, reception and managerial staff. All of these courses provide continuing professional development across the practice making sure everyone is kept up to date with the latest advances across the veterinary profession.

Teamwork

Our Practice Manager, Projects Manager and Deputy Head Nurse were all enthusiastic about being able to share and discuss ideas with a wider group of like-minded practices. For example, if we decide to buy a new piece of equipment we can find out who has used what previously, and the benefits and pitfalls of that equipment, before we invest in it. Even the workload for the production of this Small Talk magazine is a shared effort; different practices producing

different articles each quarter means we all get a professional magazine, without having to do all the work ourselves!

Value for money

We always aim to give our clients the best value for money when it comes to the medication that their pet needs. By being an XLVets member we can negotiate a better price for medicines from the pharmaceutical companies and pass this benefit on to our clients.

Being part of XLVets means that we are able to share ideas, learning, resources, and information, enabling us to feel that we are part of a large, respected and progressive organisation, whilst still maintaining our Hook Norton Veterinary Group ethos and independent approach, providing the best service we can to our clients and their pets.

**Juliet Owens MA, VetMB,
MRCVS**

Hook Norton Veterinary Group

By Holly Rees BVMS, MRCVS Allen & Partners

Microchipping



What is microchipping?

Microchipping is a quick and easy procedure which provides many benefits for you and your pet. It is the insertion of an electronic chip, around the size of a grain of rice, under the skin at the back of the neck. It can be scanned with a chip reader to reveal a unique number. Registering the chip to your name and address ensures your pet can be traced back to you. For dogs, even if microchipped, it is still the law to wear a collar with tags containing your name, address and contact telephone number.

Will it hurt?

Your pet will only feel the injection, once the chip is in place they will not feel it. For some small dogs or cats it may be sensible to place the microchip whilst they are under anaesthetic for example at the time they are neutered.

How long will it last?

The chip is a permanent implant which should function indefinitely. Usually there are

no side effects to the placement of the chip. Very occasionally the microchip may change its position slightly under the skin. It is important that the chip is scanned whenever your pet visits the surgery to check that everything is working and the chip remains in the correct place.

How much does it cost?

Contact your local practice for the latest microchipping fees. Dogs Trust centres and certain participating veterinary practices may be able to offer a reduced rate for a limited period. Currently microchipping is not compulsory, but in April 2016 (England, Wales and Scotland) it will become the law to have your dog microchipped. There is currently no compulsory microchipping for cats.

Why should an animal be microchipped?

The most obvious benefit is that if your cat or dog becomes lost, when found and taken to a veterinary practice or some animal charities, they can be quickly and painlessly scanned and their number identified.

This is linked to your name and address and you can be contacted immediately. Should your pet be stolen, even if the collar and tags are removed, the chip will still remain in place. If they are then scanned at a visit to the vets, your details will be registered with the chip, so they can be returned to you. Microchipping is a deterrent to thieves as they will find it very difficult to sell a chipped animal. It can also help the reporting of hereditary problems in pedigree dogs, and may help tackle puppy farming.

If you have any questions about microchipping, please contact your vets and they will be happy to advise you.



Responsible Dog Breeding



By Verity J Griffiths BSc(Hons) MA VetMB
GPCert(SAS) MRCVS

Southfield Veterinary Centre

I write this article wearing two different hats, that of a veterinary surgeon, but also that of a breeder of Hungarian Vizslas and owner of the affix Ulurudawn. My credentials include great success in both the show ring as well as working competitions.

As a vet I am passionate about the health and wellbeing of puppies produced from breeding dogs and take the responsibility of being a breeder extremely seriously.

It is a sad reality that there are far too many dogs ending up in rescue centres. This may often happen because owners have been sold a puppy which is unsuitable for their situation and/or lifestyle. Unfortunately there are many irresponsible breeders who won't take back a puppy they bred, or help re-home it where there is a change in circumstances. All too often we see pedigree dogs advertised on the internet needing a new home. This is often the time when the breed societies step in as sadly the 'breeder' wasn't there to help because they just don't want to take responsibility.

With the emergence of 'designer' breeds this problem could get worse because there are no controls or governance over their breeding and so health and temperament problems may be generated or perpetuated. With pedigree animals in the main, temperament and health issues are recognised in the breed and a purchaser will know how that dog ought to develop.

Although the Kennel Club Assured Breeder (AB) Scheme is falling out of favour to a degree, at least if buying puppies from an AB you will know that the parents have been health tested and screened and one would hope bred with care to promote health and wellbeing in the breed. Likewise breed club/society members also have to agree to certain guidelines if they intend to breed. For example, when I am approached to use my stud dog, not only do I limit the number of times he is used annually, I ensure the bitch has the minimum health tests as required by my breed club and society. I also check that she is not too old, of nice temperament and that the mating will add value to the breed i.e. has she done well in the show ring, is she worked regularly, does she excel in other forms of competition and most importantly does she conform to the breed standard as stated by the Kennel Club which includes good temperament?

On the continent some breed societies will not allow registration of litters unless the 'Breed Master', who governs all mating's, allows the dog and bitch only to mate after studying the pedigrees and attributes of both dogs. We in the UK 'self-govern' mating's but, the Kennel Club who registers all pedigree litters, have now developed two very useful tools, Mate Select and the Inbreeding Coefficient value. The latter serves to reduce inbreeding by working out values of a potential mating against the breed average. Breeders obviously should aim to be near, or ideally below this average value to ensure genetic diversity.

So when breeding, it can be great fun, but with it comes a huge burden of responsibility to avoid health and welfare problems for future generations.





Top Tips **Rabbit** Preventative Health

By Andrew Hooker BVet Med MRCVS - Friars Moor Veterinary Clinic

Caring for a rabbit is very rewarding and although having long been considered a 'children's pet', an increasing number of adults are also now owning rabbits. They have become the third most popular pet in the UK, and if you are responsible for a rabbit you are required to provide adequate care.

Vaccinations

Annual vaccinations will provide protection against two serious viruses - Myxomatosis ('myxi') and Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (VHD.) Both are almost always fatal. All pet rabbits are at risk, whether they are housed inside or out. A combined vaccination is now available for use from 5 weeks of age.

Neutering

The main advantage of neutering is so that two rabbits can be kept together - the ideal combination being a neutered male with a neutered female.

Males:

Castrated males are usually more relaxed, show less aggression and urine marking.

Females:

Spaying is very important as up to 60% of unneutered female rabbits will develop cancer of the uterus by the age of three. In addition to the risk of aggression, false pregnancies and pyometra (infection of the uterus) are also seen.

Dental disease

All rabbits have continuously growing teeth - up to 3mm a week. Over grown incisors are common and sharp spurs can develop on the molars which can result in reduced appetite, salivation, painful mouth ulcers and weight loss. A rabbit with any dental concerns must urgently be seen by a vet, with most dental cases requiring an ongoing commitment to veterinary care. Many dental problems are preventable with an appropriate diet.

Flystrike

Flystrike is an extremely serious condition. Blowflies lay their eggs on dirty fur which develop into maggots that eat the flesh of the rabbit causing serious pain and risking death within just a few hours. Therefore rabbits must be carefully checked twice daily by owners and seen as an emergency if affected. A topical product is available from your vet to prevent this devastating condition.

Environment, companionship and diet

Rabbits are most active at dawn and dusk and due to being a 'prey' species their environment must be suitable to avoid any stress. Providing hiding places is ideal, as well as large areas to exercise freely. Due to their unusual digestive system (digestion taking place in the hindgut) their diet must mimic their natural form - unlimited good quality hay and grass is best.

Rabbits are highly social animals and many common behavioural issues occur due to being kept singly. Rabbits should not be housed with guinea pigs due to the risk of injury and potential spread of infections.

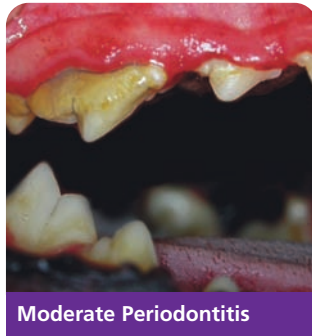


By Greg Elliott-Moustache BVSc, MRCVS Shepton Vets

DENTAL DISEASE

What is gum disease?

Gum disease can refer to gingivitis (inflamed and sore gums) or more advanced periodontitis (loss of the tooth's attachment to supporting structures). This sequence of events is the number one cause of dental disease and early tooth loss in dogs and cats. This can be caused by bacteria, or occasionally viral infections that can have serious consequences for the health of the rest of the body.



Why does it occur?

Gum disease is usually started by a development of plaque build up on the teeth. This is often due to a poor diet, and is readily associated with feeding a 'wet' diet (tinned or pouches), especially in cats.

There are also several risk factors:

- Older age
- Small breeds (under 10kg)
- Crowded teeth
- Uneven jaws
- 'Brachycephalic' (squashed nose) breeds, such as Pugs or Bulldogs





What signs may my pet show?

The first sign owner's generally notice is bad breath (halitosis) from their pet's mouth. Other features of gum disease are a lack of appetite, dropping food from the mouth, weight loss, pawing at the mouth, aggression and red, sore looking gums.

What effects can this condition have on my pet?

Studies have shown there to be a link between periodontal disease and heart, kidney and lung disease. The bacteria in the mouth can spread from the inflamed gums all around the body via the bloodstream - the liver and kidney both filter the blood, and as the heart pumps blood all around the body, bacteria present in the bloodstream can then settle in all three of these organs.

These bacteria can cause significant organ damage, and over time, their function will begin to suffer. Studies in humans have also shown links from gum disease to diabetes mellitus, arthritis and even strokes.

This evidence shows that gum disease can be far more serious than just smelly breath!

How can this disease be managed?

The best cure is prevention! It is a good idea to practice good dental hygiene with your pet from a young age, much like in humans! Again, like with us, daily tooth brushing can be very helpful, although this is not often practical, especially in the cat.

Training your pet to get used to a toothbrush and the action of brushing as a kitten or puppy can help in the long run. Human toothpaste must not be used, as the fluoride can be very harmful! Instead, special meat flavoured toothpaste can be used, or even brushing alone can help. Dental chews are often very helpful to remove plaque from the teeth, and a 'dry' (biscuit) diet is recommended.

What if this doesn't work?

If the condition is more severe, or your pet is particularly at risk to dental problems, a specialised dental diet is recommended that can help to draw the plaque off the surface of the tooth during the chewing process.

An annual dental check is recommended, especially if your animal shows one or more of the risk factors mentioned previously. A scale and polish with dental equipment at the practice will help to remove harder to reach plaque - this will require your animal to undergo a general anaesthetic.

For already established gum disease, extractions may be necessary if the area around the tooth is very loose these teeth may also be rotten and will be beyond repair. Dogs and cats can often cope surprisingly well without a few teeth and their mouth will be a lot less

sore as a result. A course of antibiotics and anti-inflammatories may also be required.





Working with Pets

A day in the life of a **Veterinary Surgeon**

By **Stuart Brown BVSc, MRCVS**
Glenthorne Vets

My typical (honestly there's no such thing...) day starts when I arrive at the practice at 8.00am. However, today I am going to be there early to try to clear some of that growing pile of paperwork that has accumulated on my desk.

However, as I pull into the car park there are two cars parked up, one of which belongs to my younger colleague. Being naturally inquisitive I poked my head round the prep room door and asked if I could help. The next thing I know I have a puppy in a towel thrust into my hands for resuscitation having literally just been delivered by caesarean section. With quite a healthy bit of encouragement the puppy suddenly takes a breath and begins to squeak.

Within minutes the new mum is stitched up and ready for recovery. With modern anaesthetics I am constantly amazed at how quick and calm recovery is. Less than 10 minutes after her last stitch was tied she is licking her puppies (all 6 of them!) and ready to go home with her brood another 30 minutes later.

So that wasn't quite the start I had in mind, but the paperwork isn't going anywhere!! The next half an hour is spent with in patients from yesterday's list and any patients admitted overnight by my colleague. One such patient is Sam, a lovely little female Lhasa Apso who had been passing blood in her urine for several months. We had done some special contrast x-rays a week before and ascertained that she had a small mass in her bladder. I operated to remove this under anaesthetic yesterday but she was a little distressed so stayed in overnight for observation. The good news is that she is much happier and ready to go home this morning.

After morning rounds we see appointments every 10 minutes until about 10.00am. This can be a mixed bag; from routine inoculations, to lameness with a



few skin and dental problems thrown in. By 10.20am we are just about finished and its time for a well earned cup of tea before joining my colleague to work through the ops list. Generally we have a few routine procedures such as spaying and castration (from dogs and cats, to rabbits and ferrets!). Inevitably we will have diagnostic investigations, including x-rays and ultrasound, and usually some dental work to do after these 'clean' operations. These procedures are left until the end to minimise contamination to the surgical cases.

After ops are completed and a very quick sandwich it's back to consultations for pretty much the rest of the afternoon. Hopefully without any late emergencies it will be time to go home around 7.00pm.



Puppy Smugglers Reaping Rewards of High Demand

Taken from an article by Holly Kernot. Veterinary Times, August 3rd.

The increasing demand for puppies in the UK means smuggling is on the rise, but prison sentences for the criminals and owner education can help to break the cycle. Mr Martin, a vet in Shropshire, estimates 800,000 puppies are needed annually to meet UK demand and attributes the problem to not having enough decent breeders to satisfy the

desire for home-bred, properly cared for dogs.

Smuggling outfits have become more sophisticated, moving from selling puppies out of cars at service stations to looking like genuine breeders, to take advantage of the financial rewards on offer. These dealers have a massive turnover of puppies. They buy a load of puppies at the beginning of the week and they've all gone by the end of the week, making up to £40,000 for the dealers for

that one week. They don't want to be keeping puppies because they get sick, they need food and they need caring for and that cuts down their margins. Their aim is to get the puppies in and out before they die.

Dogs Trust veterinary director Paula Boyden said: 'The implications of the puppy smuggling trade are huge - for consumers who are being duped and the puppies that suffer horribly, plus the risk of disease that is kicking at our shores.'

wordsearch

B	G	R	O	O	M	I	N	G	L
R	K	G	C	V	O	D	G	X	W
H	G	E	I	Y	U	I	A	T	O
I	X	F	N	K	S	U	M	E	B
W	M	U	B	N	E	O	F	K	L
A	N	Y	L	S	E	K	X	S	J
O	Z	V	N	G	K	L	T	H	T
D	S	A	E	L	F	E	D	H	G
K	K	J	X	U	V	R	X	C	X
E	M	H	Y	P	V	C	F	Z	M

MOUSE

LEAD

BOWL

SNAKE

VETS

FLEAS

GROOMING

KENNEL