

# smalltalk

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

SPRING 2016

## Vaccination

Why vaccinate your pet?



Inside...

### Antibiotics

The responsible use of antibiotics

### Ear disease

Signs and symptoms of ear disease

### Painkillers

The dangers of using human medication for our pets



**Graduate**  
Development Programme



**Excellence in  
Veterinary Care**



## XLVets and Your Practice

### Small Animal Graduate Development Programme

The XLVets Small Animal Graduate Development Programme was launched in September 2015 and has been very well received. I was one of the 12 course participants and have really enjoyed and benefited from the course. The course consisted of 5 modules, each tackling a different area of veterinary practice. The participants were all recent graduates from XLVets practices throughout the UK.

The first two modules were held at Larkmead Veterinary Group in Oxfordshire. Day One focused on managing oneself - talking about our strengths and weaknesses, our fears and threats and thinking about time management and client management. It was also a fantastic opportunity to get to know each other, and to talk about our first few months in practice. The second day was all about practice finance, and involved several practical exercises to help us gain a basic understanding as to how money is spent in a veterinary practice. It really made us appreciate just how much money is needed to

run a practice, and therefore how important it is for us to charge our time appropriately.

The third and fourth modules were based at Pride Veterinary Centre in Derby, and were probably my favourite of the course. These 2 days focussed on Emergency Medicine. We discussed several common emergencies in detail, including the clinical signs, the tests needed to diagnose and how to treat animals with these common conditions. This was an extremely useful exercise. I feel that we all left that course feeling more confident in our ability to handle emergencies.

The final day of the course was held at Cain Veterinary Centre in Powys. This day focussed on all aspects of practical pharmacology; looking at the classification and authorisation of medicines, the rules on prescribing and dispensing certain medicines, and record keeping. We also talked about the use of antibiotics, a very prominent topic at present. In the afternoon we had a chance

to talk about some of the challenges that we had faced in practice, and steps that we used to overcome them. This was a very interesting and useful exercise. It was comforting to know that my concerns and experiences are shared by others!

I enjoyed all five days of the course. The XLVets course leaders were all fantastic - their enthusiasm for their subject was obvious and they made the course interesting and enjoyable.

XLVets invests in its people by supporting new graduates and helping them to progress and achieve the clinical excellence XLVets and their member practices strive for. This is always with the end goal in mind - the health and welfare of our patients.

**Carlie McMillan BVMedSci, BVM, BVS, MRCVS**

Severn Edge Veterinary Group





# The dangers of self-prescribing

By **Jade Lawrence BVMedSci, BVM, BVS, MRCVS**  
Larkmead Vets

From what I have experienced as a vet so far, most animals have a tendency to reveal themselves as ill or injured at night when the practice is closed, which can be distressing for both them and their owners. We are so used to looking online for ways to fix things, from DIY to ourselves, (Dr Google will have an answer) so why wouldn't we look for our pets?

But worryingly, 320 people in the UK type 'cat hit by car' into Google every month, and I wonder and worry about what answers they might find.

## Searching the medicine cabinet

We often will try medicine ourselves before going to see our Doctor, so it may seem logical to do the same for our pets when we worry they are in pain. However, there are some crucial differences between us and our furry friends that mean some human medicines can be deadly for them. Even giving medication that a vet has prescribed to another animal may not be suitable for your pet.

It is therefore really important for your vet to assess whether

a medication would be safe for your pet before you give it. Your vet will consider lots of different factors before prescribing, such as their age, weight, if they are on other medication, or if they have a condition where it would not be safe to take that medication.

## Before you reach for the Pain 'Killers'

- Paracetamol e.g. Calpol, Panadol, is extremely poisonous to cats. It causes damage to the vital red blood cells which carry oxygen around the body, and can cause permanent liver damage, which may be fatal.
- Ibuprofen and Aspirin e.g. Nurofen, Anadin, are very

poisonous and can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach ulcers and kidney failure.

- Anti-inflammatory gels e.g. Voltarol, deep heat, these can be absorbed through the skin or licked off and cause the same symptoms as ibuprofen and aspirin. The gels can also cause local irritation to the skin.
- Tea tree oil is poisonous in its most concentrated form when applied to the skin or after being licked. It causes tremors, depression, drooling and vomiting.

**The safest thing in all circumstances is to call your vets and speak to them. Never give any human medication to your pet without speaking to your vet first. Vets spend up to 6 years studying to practice safely so a five minute trawl of the internet will not replace all of their knowledge and experience.**



A close-up photograph of a dog's head on the left and a cat's head on the right. The dog's ear is large and upright, and the cat's ear is also upright. The background is plain white.

# ear

## disease

in cats and dogs

By **Adrian Oliver BVSc, MRCVS, MBA**  
Penbode Vets

Every day we see dogs and cats who have ear problems.  
**What are the signs...**



## Signs include: **Diagnosis**

- Smells
- Scratching or rubbing of ears
- Discharge in the ears
- Redness or swelling of the ear flap
- Shaking of the head or tilting it to one side
- Pain around the ears

## Causes of ear disease

Dogs can have ear problems for many different reasons. When we see a dog with ear disease we need to think about the possibility of:

- **Allergies** - often with a secondary infection.
- **Parasites** - ear mites or Sarcoptic mange.
- **Infections** - bacteria and yeast.
- **Foreign bodies**, e.g., grass seeds
- **Trauma** - often self inflicted due to the irritation
- **Hormonal abnormalities**, e.g. hypothyroidism
- **The ear environment**, e.g., excess moisture and ear anatomy
- **Hereditary or immune conditions, and tumours**

Because there are many potential causes of ear problems, we cannot just say it is a bacterial ear infection, dispense antibiotics, and it will go away. Often, more work is needed. A full examination, possibly with the collection of swabs for culture, will allow the correct diagnosis and therefore the correct treatment.



## Treatment

The treatment depends on what caused the ear problem and what secondary conditions are present. Topical drops are used for bacterial and yeast infections. Glucocorticoids are often included to reduce the inflammation in the ear. Ear problems caused by a systemic disease such as a hormone abnormality or allergy must include a therapy that treats the whole dog.



## Cleaning ears

Cleaning is an important part of both treatment and prevention of ear problems. Your dog's ear is more L-shaped than yours, and debris collects at the corner of the L. To remove this debris, apply an ear cleaner into your dog's ear canal. Massage the base of the ear for 20-30 seconds to soften and release the debris. Wipe out the loose debris and excess fluid with a cotton ball. Repeat this procedure until you see no more debris. Let your dog shake his head to remove any excess fluid. Cotton bud swabs should NOT be used farther down in the ear canal since that tends to pack debris in the ear canal, rather than help to remove it. After the ear is clean, allow some time for the ears to dry. Then you can apply any ear medication that was prescribed.

**Some ear problems are so painful, the dog must be anaesthetised to clean the ears.**



# Responsible use of Antibiotics

By XLVets

Antibiotics are commonly used drugs in **companion animal** veterinary practice and many of the medicines used are the same as, or closely related to, those used in the treatment of bacterial infections in humans.

We have all seen these posters at our doctors surgeries or in hospital waiting areas.

While, until recently, the development of multi-resistant bacteria has been considered to be primarily an issue for human medicine, the emergence of meticillin-resistant staphylococci (MRSA) and other multi-resistant pathogens in companion animals has made it clear that this is a veterinary issue as well.

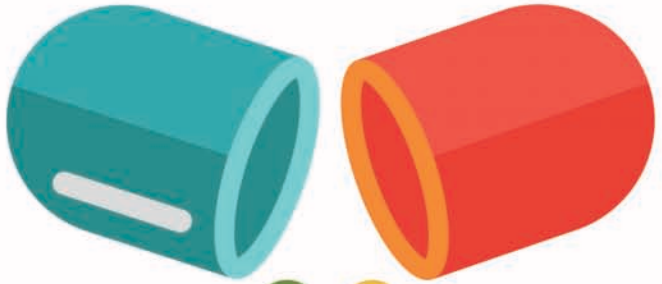


Antibiotics are essential drugs for treating bacterial infections. They have brought great benefits to humans and domestic animals by enabling the treatment of diseases that previously caused significant morbidity and mortality. Unfortunately antibiotics have become victims of their own success and their increasing usage has encouraged the development of antibacterial resistance.

At the same time as antibiotics becoming less effective as a result of the development of antibacterial resistance, there has been a reduced rate of development of new drugs. These two factors mean that we need to protect the effectiveness of the antibiotics we have through responsible use and stewardship.

In the UK all veterinary antibiotics are prescription-only medicines (POM-V), therefore the responsibility for and control of antibacterial use rests with the prescribing veterinary surgeon. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) has stated that,

“ The development and spread of antimicrobial resistance is a global public health problem that is affected by both human and animal use of these medicinal products. Veterinary surgeons must be seen to ensure that when using antimicrobials they do so responsibly, and be accountable for the choices made in such use. ”



The responsible use of antibiotics does not simply mean using less antibiotics, it means justified use (based on a properly established diagnosis) of the most appropriate sensitive antimicrobial in a way optimising its clinical efficacy in the specific clinical cases. The first decision to be made is whether antibiotic treatment is appropriate in a particular case;

Once it has been decided that the use of antibiotics in a particular case is justified, the veterinary surgeon can maximise the likelihood of therapeutic success and minimise the likelihood of selecting resistant bacteria.

### Factors that may need to be taken into consideration are:

Does the condition necessitate antibiotic treatment?

Are there other options besides antibiotic treatment?

Will the potential risk of inducing resistance outweigh the benefit of treatment?

Is the proposed treatment likely to work against the pathogen involved?

Are there any risks to public health when this is done?

Is the pet owner aware of the need for compliance with dosing instructions?



By Luke Dutton BVSc, MRCVS  
Cliffe Veterinary Group



## Do you do all you can to protect your pet...

# Vaccinating your pet: why bother?

### How does vaccination protect my pet?

Vaccination is one of the only effective ways of combating infectious diseases in both humans and animals. Vaccination works by injecting

a dead or inactivated form of the organism into the animal, which then mounts an immune response with antibodies. On first encounter with a new or 'novel' organism, the body takes some time to produce antibodies. If the body

overcomes the infection, it produces 'memory' to the specific organism it was infected with. The next time this organism is encountered, the immune response and antibody level rises much more rapidly, reducing the window



of opportunity for the virus/bacteria to replicate. In essence, the vaccine aims to 'prime' the immune system and produce this memory, so that the body can respond more quickly to subsequent infection.

## My pet has always been very healthy, why do I need to vaccinate?

When an animal is infected, even if it does not look ill, it can still produce more viral/bacterial organisms into the environment and infect other animals. The more animals that are 'infectious' the more opportunity the organisms have to spread around and infect more animals. Vaccination reduces the rate of spread of disease and in some cases can even bring the level of disease down to such a low level that it is hardly ever seen by vets. For this to work however, the vast majority of the population of cats and dogs must be vaccinated. Therefore it is not only important for your own cat/dogs health but it also benefits the health and welfare of the rest of the animal population. This is known as 'herd immunity'.

## Do I need to vaccinate my animal every year?

In 2016 the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) reviewed and updated its guidelines for the vaccination of dogs and cats (JSAP, 2016). In these global

guidelines, it advises that all animals should be vaccinated with 'core vaccinations'. These are for severe, life-threatening diseases, which are distributed throughout the world and include canine distemper virus, parvovirus and adenovirus for dogs, and feline parvovirus, calicivirus and herpesvirus for cats. Additionally non-core vaccines should be given when the geographical location and population indicates that they would be beneficial. Within the UK, most dogs are also vaccinated against a bacterium called *Leptospira*, which causes leptospirosis, as dogs within this country are considered to be at high risk of encountering the bacteria.

The WSAVA recommend that the vaccines are boosted at their minimum duration of immunity (DOI), which is the length of time that immunity to that pathogen has been tested to last up until, but may last longer. For leptospirosis, the DOI is as short as one year, so this should be given annually. This means that in the UK, most dogs are vaccinated annually, but the constituents of the vaccine changes from year to year. Feline core vaccines for the respiratory viruses (calicivirus and herpesvirus) have a less robust immunity, and therefore it is recommended that in high risk cats (those that go outside or contact other cats) should be re-vaccinated annually. In low risk cats (single indoor cat), this can be extended to every three years.



## The annual health check

It may be useful to move away from thinking 'my pet is going for their yearly booster' and more towards 'my pet is going for their yearly check-up'. This takes the emphasis off the single vaccination and on to the individual animal. Many diseases and illnesses may be picked up at the health check with a vet, which may not have been apparent to the owner. Common conditions often noticed are dental disease, heart disease and arthritic problems, as well as others. The sooner these are noted and treated, the longer and happier the life your pet may live. One can also discuss the vaccination protocol for the individual animal, thus targeting non-core vaccinations at high-risk groups of animals.

## Conclusion...

Vaccination provides a relatively safe, effective method for protecting domestic species against life-threatening diseases. Dog and cats must be vaccinated with at least the core vaccines, against globally important diseases, and should be vaccinated using non-core vaccines when deemed necessary.

# smalItalk

LATEST NEWS

## Dog walkers are being warned about the risk of a potentially fatal infection affecting pets that have come into contact with filthy floodwater.

Article from the Cheddar Valley Gazette - January 26th 2016

Some veterinary practices are urging owners to make sure they thoroughly wash their dogs to stop them contracting severe bacterial infection leptospirosis, also known as Weil's disease, if they have been paddling in stagnant water.

Rats are the main carriers of the disease, and the leptospira bacteria is transmitted through urine that contaminates water

and can remain infectious in soil for up to six months. Dogs pick up the bacteria through a cut or break in the skin when they come into contact with contaminated water or soil, or when they drink the dirty water.

Symptoms can include fever, muscle pain, vomiting and diarrhoea, loss of appetite, lethargy, and blood in the urine, although many dogs with mild leptospirosis don't show any symptoms at all.



## wordsearch



AGILITY

FLEAS

TERRIER

TRAINING

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

TREAT

CAT

GOLDFISH

GERBIL

## Client Feedback

# smalltalk survey

This questionnaire has been designed to obtain your views on 'Small Talk'. You can fill it in by going to the link below, or fill in and hand to reception. This questionnaire is completely anonymous.  
[www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PDNW2X3](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PDNW2X3)

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey to help us develop the magazine going forward. **Thank you.**

### 1. Please tick one of the following boxes

- I read all the articles in the magazine
- I only read the articles relevant to me and my pet
- Other (please specify)

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### 2. What do you think about the content of Small Talk? You can tick more than one box.

- The articles are useful and informative
- The articles are interesting
- The articles are engaging
- The articles are practical and educational
- The articles are thought provoking
- Other (please specify)

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### 3. What would you like to see more of in Small Talk?

- More news (such as the item on the opposite page)
- More focus/current affairs features (such as Antibiotic Awareness)
- More general information features (such as Ear problems in dogs and cats)
- More case studies
- Others (please specify)

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### 4. Currently, Small Talk is published every 3 months (4 times a year). Do you think this frequency is,

- About right
- Too much
- Not frequent enough
- What would you suggest?

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### 5. What do you think about the length of Small Talk?

- It's about right
- It's not long enough and doesn't give enough detail
- It's too long
- Other (please specify)

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### 6. What do you think about the design and format of the magazine? You can tick more than one box

- The design is bright and engaging
- It's easy to read and to find information
- The design is hard to read and confusing
- I like the layout and format
- I don't like the layout and format
- What would you change?

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