

smalltalk

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

SPRING 2017

Canine nutrition

Does your dog have a balanced diet?



Inside...

Pet First Aid

Basic rules of first aid for your pet

Cancer Care

Oral tumours - a case study

Hidden Poisons

Dangers to pets that are found in the garden

Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease-2 (RHD-2)





Pet Health Schemes - the benefits

Many practices now run preventative pet healthcare schemes under a range of different names - at Wright and Morten we call ours the **Pet Health Club**.

Preventative healthcare schemes are not pet insurance. Instead, they are set up to provide a range of benefits to ensure you are doing everything you can to keep your pet healthy, whilst having the minimum financial impact. Since Wright and Morten relaunched our Pet Health Club in July 2015, it has proved very popular with both clients and staff. Below are some of the key benefits which make pet health schemes such good value.

- **All of your pet's routine healthcare.** Pet health schemes include regular examinations and vaccinations, plus flea and worming treatments for the year, amongst a range of other benefits.
- **Simple monthly Direct Debit payment.** You can spread the cost of vaccinations, flea

treatments and wormers over the whole year, so it is easy to budget for.

- **Discounted goods and services.** Aside from spreading the cost of routine healthcare, many schemes offer discounts on further items such as pet food, or certain procedures such as dental work. Some also offer discounts on long term medications.
- **Getting the right products.** It is all too easy to end up buying a flea treatment for a pet in a supermarket. The problem is they are often not very effective. Pet health schemes offer an easy way to get lasting, effective treatment for parasites, from products that are usually not available over the counter.
- **Extra check-ups.** Many schemes offer health checks every 6 months - usually at vaccination and 6 months later. Regular health checks are always sensible, but they are frequently a necessity for older pets that may be on long term medication.

- **Insurance Compliance.** Many pet insurance policies now specify that routine healthcare measures such as vaccination must be carried out. Being part of a scheme offering comprehensive preventative healthcare will help you comply with these requirements - whilst giving your pet the best chance of staying healthy.

Interested? Ask your practice today about their pet health scheme and how it might work for you and your pet.

Pete Andrew BVSc, MRCVS
Wright & Morten



First Aid for your pet

**Andrew Cornelius
BVSc, MRCVS**

Kernow Veterinary
Group



Initial assessment

A - Airway

Check that there is nothing in the mouth causing a blockage. Check airway by putting your hand in front of the nose and mouth.

B - Breathing

Feeling for air movement and checking that the chest is moving. If the animal is not breathing, start artificial respiration.

C - Circulation

Is the animal's heart beating? Place your hand on the chest just below the elbow, on the left side is easiest, to feel for a beat.

Next, control any bleeding with pressure from ideally a dressing but if not available a towel or clothing.

Make the animal comfortable and prevent heat loss by covering with a coat, cardigan etc.

Never give human medications to an animal - many will do more harm than good. Do not offer food or drink in case an anaesthetic is needed.

Contact the vet as soon as possible

Always seek advice and phone ahead so a vet can be made available and staff will be able to suggest the best immediate action. For animals that are fitting, possibly poisoned, have broken bones, suspected heat stroke, more serious fight wounds or uncontrolled bleeding seek veterinary advice immediately.

If you know the basics of first aid you may be able to prevent your or another owners' animal suffering, prevent a condition from worsening and perhaps even save the animal's life. Having basic knowledge and materials on hand can allow you to make a big difference to the outcome of an emergency situation.

Follow these basic rules of first aid:

- ✓ Be prepared - keep your kit up to date.
- ✓ Don't panic, take a deep breath and try to think logically. Assess the situation, is the animal in danger of more injury, does it need moving immediately and how can you safely help without putting yourself in danger? If the animal tries to bite you, you may need to make a temporary muzzle. You could use a looped shoe lace, sock, scarf or belt to tie around the mouth, but do not muzzle if the patient is having breathing problems or has facial injuries.
- ✓ Seek further help if a situation is severe or you are uncertain of anything.

First aid kit should include:

- ✓ bandages - a roll of self adhesive or crepe bandage
- ✓ conforming/open-weave bandages
- ✓ some non-adhesive absorbent dressings
- ✓ surgical tape
- ✓ curved, blunt ended scissors
- ✓ a roll of cotton wool
- ✓ a packet of sterile absorbent gauze
- ✓ an Elizabethan collar
- ✓ a towel
- ✓ details of your local vet's address and phone number

Does your dog have a
balanced
diet ?

by **Dr Samantha Kent BVSc MRCVS**
Dr Hanako Viant Winnacker DVM MRCVS
608 Vet Practice

Never before have we been so aware of our own nutrition and it's tempting to want to transfer that concept to our pets.

The trend has led to owners moving away from commercial foods and giving a mixture of tantalisingly touted home cooked/commercial diets, complete home cooked diets or considering raw meat and bone diets for their pet. The danger with all of these options is that they are often not balanced for your pet's needs. The best thing you want to achieve for your pet's health and nutrition is a **BALANCED DIET**, appropriate to their age, lifestyle and medical needs.



What are my options ?

Home-cooked diets

It is possible to achieve a balanced home cooked diet but only with the help of your vet, or a veterinary nutritionist. The correct balance of carbohydrate, protein and fats can be difficult to achieve if not accurately calculated which can lead to long term health problems. Obtaining the ingredients and the appropriate supplements from reliable sources is critical.

Raw Meat

While there is no doubt that a raw meat and bones diet works well for some pets, the reality is that today's domestic dog is not the active wolf of generations ago who had a gut adapted to living in the wild. Raw meat has significantly higher bacteria levels, particularly harmful bacteria such as salmonella and listeria, which not only can cause significant disease in your pet (puppies and immunosuppressed adults are most at risk) but also pose a risk to in-contact humans. There are also potential hazards of bones

causing life threatening injuries, whilst simply omitting bones can lead to imbalanced vitamin and mineral ratios.

Commercial pet foods

The reason vets favour and trust these, as scientists, is that they have all been through safety testing, adhere to quality guidelines, and have had many hours of scientific research into developing a product that is entirely balanced for all your pet's nutritional requirements. They do however vary with the ingredients used and the quality of those ingredients. While cost of the diet tends to reflect better quality ingredients, do not be put off by things such as 'meat meal' or 'by-products'. All prepared diets still have to meet the same minimum quality guidelines. Additionally, with the explosion of food allergies in our pets, the best food for them may not be the most expensive but rather the food that gives your pet regular stools and a good body condition.



“The best thing you want to achieve for your pet's health and nutrition is a balanced diet”



Ultimately if your pet likes their food, has consistently firm faeces throughout the day and is in good body condition then the diet is suiting them. If not, you should be prepared to consider alternatives but always consider your vet's advice in finding a diet that you are happy with, can afford and most importantly is **BALANCED** for your pet.



Poison Prevention

By Kitty Bray BVM, BVS, MRCVS
Allen & Partners Veterinary Surgeons

As the days are getting longer and warmer it is likely that your pets will be spending more time outside; perhaps allowed unsupervised in your garden.



Whilst it is great for their health and wellbeing to exercise outside there can be some hidden dangers, even within your own garden, that you should keep in mind.

Firstly, there are some natural sources that can pose a danger to our four-legged friends. If you are a vegetable grower be aware that onions, shallots, garlic and chives can be poisonous to dogs. Ingesting the raw form, as well as cooked can cause the destruction of red blood cells resulting in a serious form of anaemia. Signs of ingestion are pale gums, rapid heart rate, weakness, bloody urine, jaundice, although earlier signs can include vomiting and diarrhoea. Care needs to be taken to restrict your dog's access to your vegetable patch.

Flowers can also pose a danger; in particular Lilies are very dangerous to cats. All parts of plants from the Liliaceae species; the stem, flower and leaves can cause kidney failure leading to serious illness and often death.

Symptoms of toxicity include; vomiting, inappetance, depression, increased thirst and urination. It is advisable not to plant any lilies in your garden if you are a cat owner.

Decomposing food waste, for example that found in your compost bin, can contain dangerous moulds which can be toxic to your pets. Certain moulds contain mycotoxins which can result in vomiting, tremors, hyperactivity, panting and dilated pupils. Be careful to ensure your dog is unable to raid your compost bin, or if it is not secure restrict their access. Prognosis is favourable if signs are mild and treatment is prompt.

Other potential poisons found in the garden include chemicals which may have been used unknowing that they can be harmful to your pet.

Slug pellets and rat poison are of most concern, both are often brightly coloured and so may be attractive to inquisitive noses.

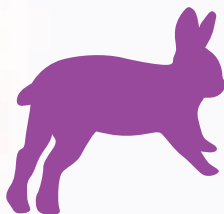
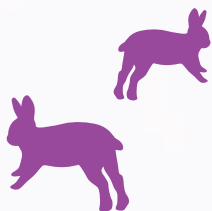
Slug pellets contain metaldehyde, which if ingested can cause rapid effects often within 30 minutes. Muscle spasms, tremors and seizing are the commonest signs. Prognosis depends on the severity of convulsions, and again the quicker the treatment the better the outcome is likely to be.

Rat poisons work by causing break down of the natural clotting factors in an animal's body. This means that if ingested it can lead to serious bleeding issues, anaemia and potential death if left untreated. Although clinical signs will often not become apparent for 5-7 days after ingestion it is vital that early diagnosis and preventative treatment are initiated. This involves a 3 week course of vitamin K. It is advised not to place slug pellets or rat poison anywhere in your garden that your animal has access to, and be aware to store them well out of reach in your shed or garage.

If you suspect your pet has ingested a poisonous substance, or is showing any signs of being unwell, seek advice from your vet immediately.

Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease-2 (RHD-2)

Vaccinating your rabbits is an essential part of keeping them healthy and protecting against disease. Historically we have vaccinated rabbits against Myxomatosis and Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD).



In recent months a new variant of RHD has emerged in the UK, known as RHD-2. The normal vaccine is unfortunately not fully effective against RHD-2 so extra vaccinations have been developed.

As more cases of RHD2 are being seen and awareness of this new condition increases, this article aims to debug some of the rumours and answer the most commonly asked questions about RHD2 and protecting your rabbits.

How is RHD-2 different from RHD-1?

RHD-1 and RHD-2 are related viral infections. RHD-1 has been present in the UK for many years. It is sadly fatal in 100% of animals affected by the disease. RHD-1 has a very rapid progression and often infected rabbits die without showing clinical signs. By contrast RHD-2 is a new disease to the UK and progresses more slowly than the RHD-1. It is fatal in 25-50% of affected animals.

What does RHD-2 look like?

RHD-1 often does not show any clinical signs other than sudden death. However signs can include unusual bleeding and seizures. The disease progresses very quickly. It is usually fatal.

RHD-2 however, progresses more slowly than RHD-1. Clinical signs can be vague and include unusual bleeding as well as weight loss, stopping eating and high temperatures. Later on in the disease process jaundice (yellowing of the skin and mucous membranes) and seizures, can be seen. This variant is only fatal in between 25-50% of affected animals but can cause lasting liver failure.

How can my rabbit catch the disease?

The disease is spread by a virus which can survive for a long time in the environment.



As with any vaccination, neither vaccine guarantees 100% immunity to these diseases. However they dramatically decrease the risk of contracting the disease and reduce the seriousness of the infection.

The virus can withstand freezing and temperatures up to 50°C. It is spread by contact with infected rabbits' bodily fluids and faeces, as well as on clothing, bedding and shared food bowls. It is thought that wild foraged plants can carry the virus from wild animals but this has not been proven yet. Insects and faeces from animals that have eaten infected tissue can also spread the disease.

Do I still need to get my rabbit vaccinated with their usual vaccines?

Yes. The vaccine for RHD-2 does not protect your rabbit against myxomatosis. Myxomatosis is a very commonly seen and usually fatal disease of rabbits. Sadly we see many cases of myxomatosis in pet rabbits every year, many of which could be avoided by being vaccinated.

Can my rabbit have both vaccines together?

No. In most cases there needs to be a minimum period of 2 weeks between each vaccine.

How often does my rabbit need vaccinating against RHD-2?

Unlike the Nobivac Myxo-RHD-1 vaccine, which is usually given every 12 months to ensure full protection, the Filovac vaccine needs to be given ideally every 6 months. Your vet will be able to advise you of the risk to pet rabbits where you live.

If you are worried about RHD-2 and your rabbits, or want to know more about vaccinations, speak to your vet today.



By Simon Thompson
BVet Med Cert SAS MRCVS RCVS Charter Vets

Cancer Care

Oral Tumours

A Case Study



Many types of cells, all over the body, are dividing continually as tissues are replaced or repaired. If, for some reason, a dividing cell makes a mistake, it can go on and copy that mistake developing into a tumour.

Cancerous tumours are malignant, which means they can spread into, or invade, nearby tissues.



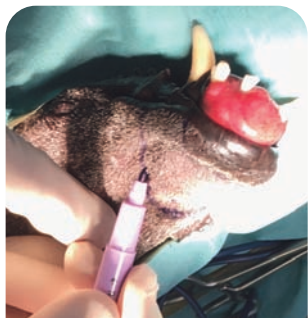
In addition, as these tumors grow, some cancer cells can break off and travel to distant places in the body through the blood or the lymph system and form new tumors far from the original one.

Even a benign tumour can be locally compromising, or present a life threatening or welfare challenge if it arises in a critical part of the body.

Harvey is a 9 years old Labrador, with a mass on his lower jaw. A biopsy confirmed this to be a cancerous tumour known as squamous cell carcinoma.

The tumour made it difficult for him to eat, causing a lot of drooling, bleeding when rubbed, and developed a bad smell due to secondary infection. Almost certainly it was also a source of discomfort, which none of us want for our pets or patients.

Blood tests, ultrasonography and radiographic imaging did not find any evidence of the tumour having spread to other sites.



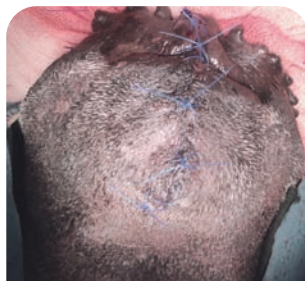
Lower jaw prepared for surgery

When dealing with cancers surgically, we try to remove a margin of cancer-free tissue in all directions. This can sometimes mean removal of quite large areas of tissue.

Harvey underwent a mandibulectomy procedure to remove the front half of his lower jaw. As well as opioid and anti-inflammatory pain relief we give these patients nerve blocks, which last for 6 - 8 hours keeping them as comfortable as possible in

recovery. Within 12 hours of his operation, Harvey was drinking water on his own, and starting to eat 3 cm meat balls, offered by hand. As much as he enjoyed being hand fed, he was able to eat soft food, on his own, within 3 days.

Dogs tend to cope incredibly well with a mandibulectomy, and unlike cats, rarely require a feeding tube in the recovery period. Studies suggest that 91% of dogs with this type of tumour should survive more than 12 months with a range of between 6 months to 7 years.



Reconstructed lower jaw after tumour removal

Surgical removal of oral tumours is usually the treatment of choice and can often be curative. Surgery is sometimes, but not always, used together with anti-cancer medicines (chemotherapy). Radiotherapy can also sometimes be an option, but availability can be difficult. The owners wanted Harvey to have surgery and naltrexone medication, which is an unproven drug, albeit seemingly with minimal side effects, suspected of slowing the progression of cancers in man.



Side profile after mandibulectomy

Tougher dog breeding licensing rules welcomed by profession

Article Vet Times February 13th 2017

‘Plans unveiled by the Government on 2 February to crack down on backstreet breeders have been described as a “step in the right direction” by the BVA president.

The plans to toughen up laws around selling pets and breeding dogs will come into force in 2018 and make it completely illegal to sell puppies younger than eight weeks old,

and require anyone breeding and selling three or more litters of puppies a year to apply for a formal licence. Irresponsible breeders who don't stick to

these rules face an unlimited fine and/or up to six months in prison, said Defra.’ (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs).



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PUPPY

MOUSE

HAMSTER

COLLAR

K S Q D M K R O U K
N F M M O U S E Y G
D C R V B B B O Q M
K Q Y P P U P W D K
H A M S T E R E R N
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PARROT

CAGE

LIZARD

CHEW