

the latest

news from maven veterinary care



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all at Maven Vets!

We hope you won't need to visit us over the festive period with your poorly pets, but if you do, we are here. Contact us as normal on **0208 337 2214** and you will be able to speak to one of our Maven Team, or, if we are closed, our out-of-hours emergency provider Vets Now.

Our opening times over the Christmas period are:

Friday 24th December:

Christmas Eve: Open 8am - 7pm

Saturday 25th December:

Christmas Day: Closed*

Sunday 26th December:

Boxing Day: Closed*

Monday 27th December:

Bank Holiday: Open 10am - 3pm for emergencies and urgent appointments only

Tuesday 28th December:

Bank Holiday: Open 10am - 3pm for emergencies and urgent appointments only

Wednesday 29th December:

Resume Normal opening hours from 8am

Friday 31st December:

New Year's Eve: Open 8am - 7pm

Saturday 1st January:

New Year's Day: Closed*

Sunday 2nd January:

Open normal hours 10am - 2pm

Monday 3rd January:

Bank Holiday: Open 10am - 3pm for emergencies and urgent appointments only

Tuesday 4th January: Resume normal opening hours from 8am

***An emergency service will be running with Vets Now.**



Arthritis alert!

Arthritis is commonly seen in middle aged and older dogs and cats. Sadly, it is often made worse by cold, damp winter weather. Pets showing signs of stiffness on rising, or slowing down on a walk may both point to arthritis being a problem.

The joints most susceptible to arthritis are those permitting limb movements - called synovial joints. The ends of the bones which meet at these joints are covered by smooth articular cartilage. Arthritis develops when the articular cartilage becomes pitted and cracked. These changes are commonly due to age related wear and tear, but can also be secondary to joint trauma as well as conformational joint issues such as hip and elbow dysplasia. Secondary new bone is commonly deposited around the affected joints and may be seen on x-ray (green arrows).



The signs of pain associated with arthritis can often be subtle and hard to pinpoint, and whilst some pets will develop an obvious limp, others (especially cats) will simply slow down, be stiffer getting up and generally rest more. Weight gain, inappropriate exercise (too intense or over rough terrain), slippery flooring, and colder / damp weather can all worsen the signs.

Although arthritis cannot be cured, most pets will benefit from a wide range of treatment options. A key consideration is **weight loss** for any pets carrying excess weight, as this hugely impacts on the joints. Many pets also benefit from **anti-inflammatory medication** to reduce the soreness and pain. **Dietary supplements** (such as glucosamine and chondroitin sulphate) are also often beneficial. Many arthritic pets struggle with long walks, so little and often is the key. Additionally - simple changes at home can also make a difference: putting mats on slippery floors and providing a super supportive bed can both be of great help.

So - if your pet is showing any signs of arthritis - please come and see us for a check-up!

X-rays and arthritis

Radiography is commonly used to investigate joint problems.



X-ray of a normal elbow joint



Arthritic elbow joint in a dog with lots of "fluffy" new bone (yellow arrows) around the joint, indicative of marked arthritis.

Winter fleas - are your pets protected?



With the colder weather upon us you might be tempted to ease back on routine flea control. The advent of central heating and double glazing creates warm homes through the colder months. As a result we create the ideal environment for fleas to thrive and breed through the winter months.

Fleas can make their way into our homes in all sorts of ways; on our pets, on us, or just hopping in by themselves. Whilst fleas are present they lay eggs in protected places like under furniture or in the cracks of laminate floors and those eggs can survive for months, waiting to be activated by warm conditions (as you turn on your central heating) and the presence of pets spending more time inside. The eggs hatch out and progress (via larval stages) into adult fleas, which in turn hop on and feed on your pet and start the whole life cycle off again.

So, it is vital to protect against fleas all year round! By routinely treating your pets against fleas, you help keep them flea free, plus reduce the egg burden in your house which will in turn help eliminate future flea infestations! Come and have a chat to us about the best ways to do this and stop your home from becoming a winter flea's paradise!

Our opening hours

Monday - Friday 8am-8pm

Saturday 9am-4pm

Sunday 10am-2pm

In an Emergency day or night - call us on 0208 337 2214

www.mavenvets.co.uk

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Winter weight worries!

With winter and the shorter daylight hours there can be a trend towards pets (and their owners!) gaining some extra weight. This is a problem because whilst it is all too easy to gain weight, it isn't nearly as easy to lose it!

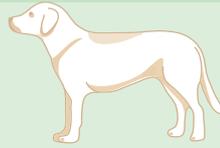
Just as in ourselves, there are many diseases that are worsened or become more difficult to manage in overweight pets. These include arthritis, diabetes, cardiac disease and chronic respiratory conditions. In diabetic cats, for example, weight loss alongside initial insulin can result in some cats going into remission and no longer requiring insulin. Similarly in cases of arthritis (see article on front page), weight loss is a key part of managing the condition.

The good news is that, even without scales you can easily check your pet's body condition score at home. Generally pets should have the ribs palpable under a thin layer of fat. Dogs should have a nipped in waist just behind the rib cage when looking from above. Cats shouldn't have a 'mouse pouch' when looking from the side, but instead should be tucked up neatly.

If you are worried about your pet being overweight then please get in touch. There are many ways we can help. The starting point may be a food diary so that everyone in the house becomes aware of who is feeding what and when. Additionally we advise measuring their meals out every day, feeding a diet designed for their lifestyle (for example, neutered pets and older pets need fewer calories), keeping treats to a minimum and absolutely no table scraps!

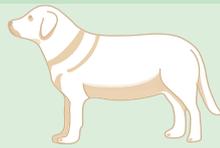
Best of all – as your pet loses weight, the benefits of increased healthiness and vitality are usually seen quite quickly. So, if your pet has gained weight, or seems to have slowed down, then why not give us a call – we are here to help!

IDEAL WEIGHT



Outline of ribs can be easily felt through a slight fat cover

OVER WEIGHT



Ribs difficult to feel through a moderate to thick fat cover



Brrr - it's Winter!

With the onset of winter weather, we take a seasonal look at some top tips to keep your pets fit and well at this time of year.

Winter walks: With the colder, wetter and darker days to come, it's still essential to make sure your pets get adequate exercise. However, it's also important to ensure pets are well prepared: an older arthritic dog will benefit from a warm, waterproof coat to reduce the cold on the joints – which can worsen the problem. Similarly, short coated breeds like greyhounds and whippets, will benefit from wearing coats. Make the most of the shorter days by playing games whilst you are out to give your pet mental as well as physical stimulation. On snowy days, remember to check your pet's paws after walks and give them a good wipe down. Snow clumps up painfully between toes, especially on fluffy feet. Grit and salt can also be very caustic.

Festive alert: The festive season can pose a huge range of very tempting toxic hazards for our pets! **Chocolate** is a festive favourite, but as little as 50g of plain chocolate can be fatal in small dogs. Any cake or pies containing grapes, sultanas, raisins or nuts should also be avoided! Flowers too are often gifted, and of special note are **lilies** and cats. All parts of the lily are poisonous and even a small amount of lily pollen can be enough to cause kidney failure.

Continuing our look at festive hazards, over indulging in **fatty foods** can cause tummy upsets, and sometimes pancreatitis in dogs, which can make them very unwell. **Tinsel and other decorations** need to stay on trees – there is a risk, if eaten it can cause a linear foreign body, which involves painstaking surgery to sort out and can be fatal. If your pet swallows anything unusual please contact us at once!

Outdoor pets: Make sure rabbits and guinea pigs have well insulated hutches, plenty of bedding to snuggle down in, and check their water twice daily to ensure it hasn't frozen. Also – consider moving them somewhere warmer in cold weather.

For further information on any of the topics covered in this article, please speak to a member of our team.

Keeping your cat safe and happy this winter time...



Fireworks This can be a very stressful experience for cats, loud bangs that light up the sky...is not what they see as entertainment. Ensuring your cat is kept indoors in the warm with a safe place to hide will make them feel safe. Keeping windows closed, closing curtains and having a radio or TV on to block out the noise will also reassure them they are in their safe place. Cats are very good at picking up our emotions so if you are feeling anxious or worried for them, they will know. Try to keep as calm as you can. The use of pheromones is also advisable such as feliway or pet remedy to help relieve signs of stress. Ideally have this plugged in the room your cat spends most of their time and start 4 weeks before any stressful event to benefit from its full effect.



Christmas is the best time of the year but any different changes at home can be a big worry to your cat. The tree that suddenly has appeared in the living room, could provide endless fun for your cat. Tinsel and dangly decorations can be very appealing to your cat to play with but be careful these don't get ingested! Christmas lights can also pose a real danger if they decide to chew on any electrical wiring, battery powered LED lights are good option instead and ensuring lights are switched off at the mains when you are not around to supervise your cat. Lots of family and friends visiting can also be very

overwhelming for your cat, moving furniture around to make space for guest's changes their normal environment and this can be very stressful in the eyes of your cat. Ensure they have somewhere they can escape to, a space of their own where they can escape a busy day will be very beneficial to them. Cats like to be up high where they can look down on their surroundings, so just placing a blanket on top of a wardrobe will give them a secure area of their own. The use of pheromones plugged in will also provide a calmer and more relaxed atmosphere for your cat. Please do speak to a member of our team if you need any further advice on this.



Festive plants The traditional poinsettia is a favourite addition to homes at Christmas but this is toxic to cats if eaten causing stomach irritation. Berries from holly and mistletoe as well as amaryllis plants are also dangerous and veterinary attention should be sought ASAP if ingested.

Tasty food Another serious danger to your cat is meat string. Any string can be a real risk to cats due to blockages it can cause in the intestine, but string laced with tasty meat juices can be very appealing!

Should you experience any of these issues or wish to have a chat with a member of our team please call the practice on

020 8337 2214 By Gemma Hewitt RVN

