

the latest

news from maven veterinary care



Spring has Sprung!



It's time to get out and about and enjoy the spring sunshine, but watch out for lurking spring time dangers.

It's great to exercise off the winter blues, but build things up gradually and avoid over-exertion as excessive exercise can result in injuries, for you and your dog. So rest any lame legs and get them checked out promptly.

Avoid playing with **sticks** as they can cause throat injuries, that may necessitate emergency treatment. Specially designed dog toys are always a much safer option.

Remember to keep **flea** and **tick** control up to date (ask us for more advice on the best products available) as parasite numbers are building up now, and also be aware that levels of **pollens** and plants that can cause allergic skin disease and itchiness, are increasing too.



Out in the garden, be aware that **slug pellets**, **bone meal** and **weedkillers** are common sources

of poisoning and try to ensure that pets don't dig up **spring bulbs** and eat them – since many are poisonous. Seek immediate veterinary advice if any case of poisoning is suspected.

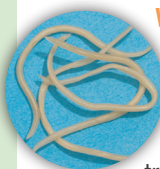


Try to avoid growing or displaying **lilies** if you have cats, as the pollen can be very toxic, and enjoy your Easter **chocolate**, but don't let your pets share it! Chocolate can be very dangerous to pets and might necessitate emergency treatment. Finally, we hope you enjoy your spring safely and have fun!

Getting off to the best start!

Introducing a pet into the family is a lot of fun and also a big responsibility. So – to help keep your new arrival fit and well, here is a short "to-do" list!

Vaccinations: In the very early stages of life, puppies and kittens gain immunity against disease from their mother's milk. This protection starts to fade when they are around six weeks of age and without vaccinations, they are left vulnerable to some potentially deadly diseases. This is why it is so important to have your pets inoculated as soon as they are old enough. Regular booster vaccinations, combined with a health check, are the best way of protecting your pet, plus at the same time we can keep a watchful eye out for any emerging problems.



Worming: It is very important to treat puppies and kittens for roundworms since they can acquire these from their mothers early in life. As they grow up, they are susceptible to infection with both roundworms and tapeworms and will require regular worming treatment. Additionally, lungworm is a problem for many dogs (see overleaf).

Fleas: Most puppies and kittens will arrive with a fair number of fleas, so it is a good idea for us to give them a check over on arrival! Spot-on treatments are ideal for treating your pets, whilst household sprays are great for treating your home.



Life-stage diets: We can now offer pets a tailored series of diets from kittens and puppies, through adulthood and into their senior years. The good news is that these diets can make a real difference to the health and well being of pets.



Neutering: Cats should be ideally neutered by six months of age, if they are not to be bred from. The situation for dogs is more complex and the timing of neutering, and if it is required, is very dependent on your dog and your situation.

Our team will be very happy to discuss this with you.

Pet insurance is also highly recommended, covering your pet against those unexpected vet bills! Finally, we are here to help, so please don't hesitate to ask us for further information on any aspect of caring for your pets.



Vaccination against infectious diseases

We recommend you regularly vaccinate your pets against the following, potentially fatal, infectious diseases:

Dogs are routinely vaccinated against: parvovirus, leptospirosis, hepatitis and distemper.

Cats are usually vaccinated against cat flu, panleukopenia, and feline leukemia virus.

Photos: Warren Photographic

Easter Opening Times!



We hope you won't need to visit us over the Easter 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 our Maven Team, or, if we are closed, our out-of-hours emergency provider Vets Now.

OUR OPENING TIMES OVER THE EASTER PERIOD ARE:

GOOD FRIDAY Friday 7 th April	We are Closed*
Saturday 8th April	We are Open as normal 9am – 4pm
EASTER SUNDAY Sunday 9 th April	We are Open as normal 10am – 2pm for urgent and emergency appointments only*
EASTER MONDAY Monday 10 th April	We are Closed*

*An emergency service will be running with Vets Now

Normal opening hours will presume from 8am Tuesday 11th April

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

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609-613 London Road, North Cheam, Surrey, SM3 9DF



Lungworm alert!

As we get out and about, enjoying the lovely spring weather, it's worth being aware of lungworm since cases will rise as the snail population grows with the warmer weather.

Lungworm or *Angiostrongylus Vasorum*, is a parasite that can affect dogs and also local foxes. It can cause significant disease and in some cases, be fatal. Unfortunately, cases are becoming more common throughout the UK and Ireland and it is therefore very important to understand how you can help protect your pet.



Dogs can be infected with lungworm larvae carried by **slugs and snails** (which are intermediate hosts).

Slugs and snails can be inadvertently eaten in grass, soil or whilst playing with toys in the garden. The disease is commonest in young dogs that eat or play with slugs and snails, and in dogs that eat or drink outside and may have had slugs or snails in their bowls.



Electron micrograph of an adult lungworm

Lungworm are swallowed as tiny larvae, which migrate into the circulation of the liver and travel to the right side of the heart. Here they develop into adult worms (see photo left) which can build up in the heart and where the adults mate and produce eggs. The eggs hatch into larvae and then migrate into the lung tissue. These larvae are coughed up and are passed out into your dog's faeces to re-infect molluscs. When in the body the larvae cause significant lung tissue damage, often causing a cough, breathing troubles and lethargy. This can result in bronchitis, heart failure and spontaneous bleeding. Affected dogs often become weak and lethargic, go off their food, and may cough, vomit, or pass blood. The disease can be so severe as to be fatal but, if diagnosed early, can be treated successfully. Blood or faecal testing can give rapid diagnostic results.

Lungworm is best prevented rather than cured, so do call us to discuss what protocol is most appropriate for your pet.

Can you pinch an inch?!

The dark winter months may have taken their toll on your pet's waistlines since it's very tempting to stay warm and cosy rather than go on that wet wintry walk. This is a problem because while it is all too easy to gain weight, it isn't nearly as easy to lose it!

With obesity becoming increasingly common, it is wise to look objectively at your pets and see if they are overweight or not. In a healthy pet with an ideal condition score, the ribs should be able to be felt but not seen, and there should be an obvious 'waist'. By contrast, if you can pinch an inch or more, and if your pet's tum sags down and bulges out, then a diet may be in order!

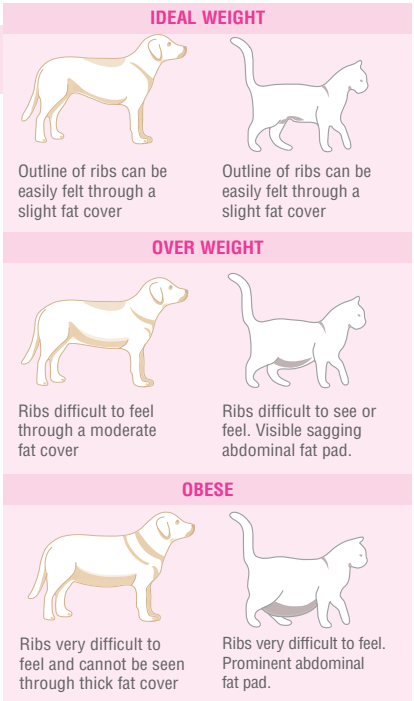
Carrying extra weight places extra demands on virtually all the organs of the body. Long term, this can have health risks since carrying excess weight can cause or worsen a range of conditions including skin, heart, respiratory and joint disease. Your pet may also be more prone to develop problems such as raised blood pressure, diabetes and pancreatitis.

Given the health problems associated with excess weight – it is important to address it, and it is here that we can help.

If you feel your pet is getting a little portly we are happy to weigh him or her and advise you on their ideal weight. We will also examine your pet to check for any *medical* conditions (such as an under-active thyroid gland in middle aged dogs) that may result in weight gain.

To achieve weight loss, pets need a combination of a specially formulated calorie controlled diet (often down to around $\frac{2}{3}$ their previous calorie intake) and more exercise. All pets need regular exercise, and increased walks, more frequent play, or increased access to outdoors are all of help.

The good news is that 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!



Cat Friendly Corner

Spring has finally sprung... but there are a few considerations regarding your cat and their wellbeing to be aware of in the next coming months:

POISONOUS PLANTS AND FLOWERS

We all love to see springtime flowers but there are some flowers such as lilies, daffodils and azaleas that can be very harmful to your cat. Lily poisoning can be a big concern, even your cat cleaning the pollen from their coat can cause serious illness. Cats that eat lilies or the pollen can become very unwell very quickly causing kidney problems and require immediate veterinary attention. The bulb of the daffodil is the most toxic part to the cat, however if you suspect your cat has ingested any part call us straight away. Cats so have a habit of eating grass but they can run the risk of getting the blades stuck in their nose or throat. This can cause sneezing, nasal discharge and even breathing issues.

THINKING OF A SPRING CLEAN IN YOUR HOME?

It's the perfect time to get ahead with those house chores but it is important to be mindful of the products you are using around your cat. Many household disinfectants contain the detergent benzalkonium chloride, which is an irritant and can cause adverse effects in cats. As well as ensuring the disinfectant is sprayed well away from your cat, it is important to make sure surfaces/floors are dried before your cat walks over them. Cats can also lick food from a surface and can ingest disinfectant this way.

SEASONAL ALLERGIES

Fleas, ticks and worms all grow in numbers as the weather warms up so it is important to keep your pet up to date with their parasite control. Wasp and bee stings can also be an issue at this time of year. A flying wasp can provide great entertainment for your cat but less so if they get stung. Veterinary attention may be required if your cat is showing signs or discomfort or any reaction.

Should you have any concerns regarding any of these issues throughout the next couple of months and would like to speak to a member of our team, please do not hesitate to call us on **020 8337 2214**.

By Gemma Hewitt RVN.

This Newsletter is provided as an education service to our clients. All news and other items in this newsletter are for information only and should not be treated as a substitute for veterinary advice. For all images, the copyright is the property of the photographer.

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