



# Best Friends Veterinary Group Newsletter

SPRING 2010

## Vaccinations: Prevention is better than cure!

### Why should you vaccinate your pet?

The diseases we as Veterinary Surgeons vaccinate against are generally very difficult, if not impossible, to treat successfully.

They are however very easy to catch, for example Leptospirosis (Weil's disease) and Distemper have large environmental reservoirs of infection, simply coming into contact with standing water contaminated with rat urine can be enough to transmit Leptospirosis to your dog.

Similarly Myxomatosis, a disease present in wild rabbits is transmitted via biting insects, and just like our earlier example shows, your furry friends do not need to be in contact with an infected animal to become infected themselves.

#### What are pets vaccinated against?

**Dogs:** Distemper, Infectious Canine Hepatitis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza, Leptospirosis\* If you wish to board your dog: Kennel Cough

**Cats:** Cat Flu, feline Panleukopaenia (feline Enteritis) and Feline Leukaemia virus\*

**Rabbits:** Myxomatosis and Viral Haemorrhagic Disease

\* Additional vaccinations and pet passports are also required if your pet is going overseas with you.

#### How often should pets be vaccinated?

Cats and dogs should be fully vaccinated when they are about 8 weeks old which is a course of two injections 2-4 weeks apart, after that they just need a booster vaccination once a year. Rabbits at high risk of Myxomatosis may be advised to have a booster every six months, in addition to their yearly vaccinations.

#### How does vaccinating my pet protect it from disease?

Vaccination involves introducing an aspect of the virus or bacteria into the body, with pets it is introduced by one quick injection. The body's immune system then learns to recognise the bug, so when it encounters the real thing it doesn't take long to destroy it – resulting in only a mild

illness, or even no illness at all.

Vaccination does not cure disease, it helps prevent it by preparing the body's own immune system, however without vaccination these diseases can and do kill animals. It is distressing to think that pets die unnecessarily each year from something that could be so easily prevented.

There has been lots of recent publicity regarding Parvovirus – an often fatal gastroenteritis in puppies and dogs that causes severe diarrhoea and vomiting. In certain areas where few animals have been vaccinated outbreaks of Parvo occur prompting vets to re-emphasise the importance of keeping your pets fully vaccinated. It's heartbreaking for all concerned to see whole litters of puppies die from a disease that is so very easy to prevent. It's important to remember that even when many individuals in a population are vaccinated it is still very possible for unvaccinated individuals to become ill.

To conclude, I think you'll agree that we're really lucky to have such a simple system, so easily available, to help prevent these illnesses affecting our pets – prevention is definitely much better, not to mention much more cost effective, than cure!

## Special Offers



**Oral Care Month**  
15 March - 15 April  
Bring your dog in for a free dental check.

**Vaccine Amnesty**  
throughout April & May  
Any Cats or Dogs who's vaccinations are out of date or who have never been vaccinated can receive a full vaccination course for the price of a booster.

**Rabbit Awareness Week (RAW)**  
starts 26th April  
Pop in for your free rabbit check-up

## Interview with Newly Qualified Nurse Kelly Pugh

Kelly Pugh has been training to become a qualified Veterinary Nurse at our Broadway Veterinary Hospital since 2007. We are proud to congratulate her for passing her final exams in January, and thought we'd find out a little bit more about what it's like training and being a Veterinary Nurse in a busy hospital.

#### Do you have any pets of your own?

Rodney the cat and 7 chinchillas to name a few!

#### What made you want to be a Veterinary Nurse?

I originally wanted to be a vet, but after some work experience I preferred the nurses job role. It's a lot more hands on with patients.

#### What advice would you give anyone thinking of becoming a Veterinary Nurse?

Make sure you know what the job entails,

I would recommend getting some work experience before agreeing to start any courses because liking animals on it's own is not enough.

#### What's the best thing about your job?

Working at Broadway I have access to emergency critical care cases, I enjoy nurse consults and working with the in-patients in kennels.

#### What is your favourite part of your day/week?

Kennel shifts and nurse consults.

# Fleas!

**As the weather warms up outside it's not just the plants that start springing into action, flea activity will also soon be on the rise outdoors, but did you know that fleas can infest your pet all year round?**

Adult fleas feed and reproduce on animals, but when their eggs are laid they fall off into the environment where they will hatch in warm humid environments. Yes, fleas love central heating, and they are so resilient that they can remain protected in the cocoon stage for up to 30 weeks under certain conditions, before they are stimulated to hatch! This is why your Veterinary Surgeon recommends preventative treatment all year round.

All pets are at risk of harbouring a variety of parasites, either within their coats and skin, or inside their bodies. They can infest dogs and cats but your pets can also pick them up from wildlife as well as from their domesticated friends.

Flea bites usually cause itching, but some animals are hypersensitive to flea bites and will develop very sore skin quickly, even after a single bite. It is sometimes possible to see fleas moving in the animals coat or it might be possible to find black specks of 'flea dirt' (the flea poo) a sure sign of infestation.

There are a variety of good products that will prevent fleas and break their lifecycle. There are also a whole load of products that are sold as flea treatments but don't contain effective ingredients. As a Veterinary Surgeon it's always really upsetting when a diagnoses of fleas occurs in animals whose owners have diligently been applying a treatment they bought in good faith but just isn't effective.

If your pet adopts a flea from one of their chums at the park, they will carry it back home and eggs will drop from your pet onto the carpet, sofa or your pet's bed and pretty soon you'll have a whole family of fleas calling your place home. If your pet is treated with an over the counter product only available from your Veterinary practice, that lone flea will be rendered infertile or killed, and your pet and house should be safe.

P.S. Should you find your pet or any visiting pets have fleas, as well as treating the pet, the environment they live in will need treating with a household flea spray to eliminate them from the carpets and furniture.

## Pet Product Star

Kong BraidZ are designed for dogs who like to tug, shake and squeak their toys.

Their soft but strong material is tightly braided for strength, the stretchy weave also helps floss and clean teeth while playing, with a squeaker for added fun.

*Available in 3 sizes and many designs!*



## Kids Corner

March-May 2010 Newsletter

Complete the word search and send to the below address with your contact details for your chance to win a behind the scenes tour of your local surgery and a goody bag for your pet.

- FLUFFY • ROVER • HONEY • HARVEY • BUSTER • TOM •
- KITTY • POPPY • CHARLIE • TIGGER • MARMITE • JERRY •

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

## Surgery Numbers

Billericay	01277 651009	Peterborough, Broadway	
Chatteris	01354 692309		01733 562904
Chingford	0208 524 6326	Peterborough, Netherton	
Dagenham	0208 595 5818		01733 260523
Holbech	01406 426222	Rainham	01708 555788
Isle of Dogs	0207 536 7555	Romford	01708 762266
Leicester	01162 517677	South Woodham Ferrers	
March	01354 653435		01245 321717
Mile End	0207 790 4599	Shenfield	01277 221193
Milton Keynes		Sawtry	01487 830595
	01908 270144	Thrapston	01832 731731
Oakham	01572 770011	Whittlesey	01733 208090
Oakhill	0208 527 0034	Yaxley	01733 243000

[www.bestfriendsgroup.com](http://www.bestfriendsgroup.com)

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Winner to be drawn at random on 1st June 2010. Send entries to: Kids Corner Competition, 46 Huntly Grove, Peterborough, Cambs PE1 4DB