



Practice News

Well, the months are flying by and let's hope we have a mild Winter ready for the joys of Spring! Hopefully you have all had a pleasant Autumn enjoying fun times with your pets – please be mindful of the hidden dangers for pets during the festive period.

Microchip

Just a reminder with regard to the new legislation that comes into force in 2016 – in England, for every dog that is currently not microchipped, you have until 6th April 2016 to get them microchipped and registered on an approved database. Then, from 6th April 2016, all dogs must be microchipped and registered by the time they are 8 weeks old.

Dog owners will need to:

- Have their dog microchipped and registered on one of the authorised commercial databases
- Register the details of any new owner before they sell or give their dog away
- Keep their contact details up-to-date on the databases.

We are currently running a promotion on our standard microchips up to this date – please telephone or ask at reception for details.

Staff News

Fantastic news – **Beth Cole** has passed her practical exams with flying colours and is now sporting her new all blue uniform as a Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) – well done Beth! All her hard work has paid off and we now have a full complement of qualified nurses here at Hedge End Vets.

We were very sorry to say goodbye to **Rosie Beadsmoore** in September after 5 years with us, although she was mainly based at our Bishop's Waltham branch, she will be missed by many of our clients and pets, as well as her friends and colleagues here at Hedge End. Rosie and her partner Alex have moved to Dartmoor and we wish them well in their new jobs and home.

We welcomed **Keith O'Donnell** in October, as Rosie's replacement – previously, Keith spent three years in Aberystwyth, Wales working in mixed practice. He is mainly based at our Bishop's Waltham branch, but will be here Monday afternoons and for holiday cover etc. We are sure he will settle in well to our combined team of vets, nurses and receptionists.

Winter fleas – don't get caught on the hop!

Fleas are a fact of life for pets and it is important to have some protection against them in place. Not only do they cause itchy bites, they can spread tapeworms and, in young pets, can cause life threatening anaemias.

During the winter months, fleas usually only breed indoors – making the most of the central heating. Adult female fleas can lay up to 50 eggs per day and these fall off your pet and onto carpets and bedding. The eggs can remain dormant for many months, but equally in warm centrally heated conditions, they will rapidly hatch out (via larval stages) into more fleas and a repeat of the problem you thought you had treated!

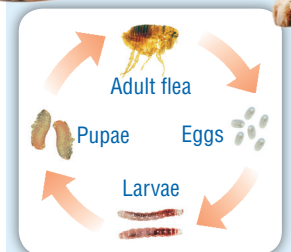
So what's the answer? Year-round veterinary flea treatment!

The advantages of our veterinary standard products are huge. They are extremely effective at killing fleas and they kill them *before* they lay their eggs, thus preventing house infestations. Some work even before they bite (vital for sensitive pets) and some can have an effect on the environment as well. Many veterinary spot-ons are multipurpose and will kill other parasites including scabies, ear mites, ticks and worms. Additionally, our staff are fully trained to be able to recommend the best treatments and formulations for your pets and their lifestyle.

But what about products from supermarkets and pet shops?

Flea products from supermarkets or pet shops are not always particularly effective. They may kill the fleas – but they often do so *very slowly*, giving fleas ample time to feed, mate and lay eggs. This is why, even though all the fleas may disappear and you think the problem is solved, they often return with a vengeance a few weeks later! Additionally, many spot-on flea treatments for *dogs* bought from pet shops and supermarkets contain **permethrins**. Whilst these are safe on dogs, they should NEVER be applied to cats – **permethrins are very toxic to cats**.

So, if you are worried about fleas or other parasites in your pets, make us your first port of call!



The flea life-cycle

Checking for fleas

Although the low temperatures make most people think 'At least I don't have to worry about fleas!', actually the opposite is the case! The winter is the worst time for parasites because by turning on our heating, we make our houses the perfect hotels!



Whilst it is often difficult to find live fleas, specks of flea "dirt" (faeces) in the coat points to a flea problem.



Winter weight alert!

The shorter days, and cold, wet weather all conspire at this time of year to prevent us and our pets getting out and about and this can have a negative impact on all our waist lines (pets and humans alike!)

It is very important to keep an eye on winter weight gain and make sure it doesn't become too great. Get into the habit of regularly feeling your dog's ribs and monitoring their body shape. If they start to look a little broader about the beam, then you should be making some changes!

It is a good idea to cut back a little on their food. Feeding fewer treats and moving to a 'light' version of their diet will help. Also, consider other activities for them. Many agility clubs train indoors in the winter, and you could also take them for a swim in the local hydrotherapy pool, or just simply put on your waterproofs and get splashing in the puddles! Please contact us if you would like any advice.