

# Food Glorious Food!

# ORCHARD VETERINARY CENTRE

  
Winter  
2019/20

# news



A big part of the forthcoming festive season is that wonderful and scrumptious side..... the food! For our pets though, there is no special time for food, as dinner is probably the highlight of their day, whatever the time of year, but are you feeding your furry friend the correct diet?

**So Many to Choose** Yes, it can all be rather confusing! Is this one right for my dog? What are those green bits in it? Will my cat like the jelly? Dry or wet food? Carbs, minerals, proteins, fats, vitamins.....help!

**The most important point is to ensure your pet is fed a balanced diet** that suits their age, breed, size and any medical conditions. This will help keep your pet active, healthy and maintain a correct weight, while still containing the vital nutrients needed.

**What do we mean by a balanced diet?** This is a correct mix of **nutrients** in the food to suit a pet's individual requirements.



**What is a nutrient?** It is an element in food that is of good value in the diet.

**Carbohydrates** are great for energy but those pets prone to gaining extra kilos, then too much may prove a rather weighty issue. **Foods lower in magnesium** may benefit cats with urinary problems, and if your dog suffers from an **allergy condition**, after a thorough examination, it might be found that a dietary change could be the answer. Weight loss, diarrhoea, low energy levels and obesity are just a few signs that may indicate your pet's diet is incorrect, however there are other conditions that can display these signs, so it is always best for your pet to have a check-up.

**Treats** Well we all like giving those to our pets, and providing there are no medical conditions prohibiting treats from their diet, it is usually okay, **BUT** these should always be of **good quality** and included as part of their daily quantity of food. There are many shops and supermarkets selling an array of treats from bones to chews, and some may be imported from abroad. Please be very careful with your choice, as there have been reports of pets becoming seriously ill after eating certain treats, and sadly some cases have been fatal.

**Prescription diets are available for many types of medical conditions, also for age, breed and size, so for more information just give our team a call so they can help you 'balance' your pet's diet.**

## Staff News

We have had a number of new staff starting with us in recent months, so don't be surprised to see some new faces at our surgeries! On reception, **Lisa** started with us in the summer, and can regularly be found at our Wednesbury branch, and usually one day a week at Oldbury.

There is a national shortage of vet nurses, with many practices relying on unqualified 'assistants', but at Orchard Vets we pride ourselves on having nurses with full accreditation from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Consequently **Paige**, who is an experienced veterinary nurse, and **Claire**, who undertook her diploma in veterinary nursing with Solihull College and is set to complete her course at the end of the year, joined the Orchard family over the summer, and may be found at any of our three surgeries. Meanwhile we've been scouting trainee veterinary nurses and have taken on two from Halesowen College: **Jenn** who works mostly at our Oldbury branch and **Lily** who is mostly at Harborne. **We hope you'll join us in extending a warm welcome to all our new staff members** should you find them attending you on your next visit to the practice.

**On the move!** We are very excited to announce that our **Oldbury Surgery is moving to a new state-of-the-art Veterinary Centre!**

The premises will offer clients spacious parking to facilitate getting animals out of cars, while new facilities include a physiotherapy room, grooming suite, separate cat and dog consultation and waiting rooms, and a large space for puppy parties!

**The new address is 410 Birchfield Lane, Oldbury, B69 1AD** and we expect to be moving around the end of the year. Watch this space (or our website) for news of the exact date!

## HOURS

Church Street  
**OLDBURY**

B69 3AF

**0121 544 0404**

Mon to Fri 8.30am - 6.30pm  
Sat 11.30am - 12noon

Home Farm  
Northfield Road  
**HARBORNE**

B17 0TD

**0121 428 1777**

Mon to Fri 8:30am - 6:30pm  
Saturday 2.30pm - 3pm

210 Holyhead Road  
**WEDNESBURY**

WS10 7DH

**0121 556 6890**

Mon to Fri 8:30am - 6:30pm  
Saturday 9am - 10am

*Student  
VN Jenn  
getting to  
know one of  
our clients!*

[www.orchardvets.co.uk](http://www.orchardvets.co.uk)

It's a busy and fun time for all, but please spare a few minutes to take note of our helpful reminders for pet happy festivities!

**M**AKE sure your dog is on a lead when walking close to frozen ponds and rivers.



**E**XERCISE pets regularly over the festive season, it's part of their routine healthcare.

**R**OCKETS & fireworks can cause some pets much distress but we have plenty of help and advice.

**R**ECHARGEABLE and regular batteries are extremely dangerous if chewed or swallowed by your pet.



**Y**OUR fairy lights are very pretty, but watch out for pets chewing at wires and plugs.

**C**HOCOLATE contains theobromine, which is poisonous to dogs and cats. Store it out of their reach.

**H**ELP our feathered friends in winter. Keep the wild bird table topped up.



**R**EMIND visiting guests who are on medication to store it carefully. While you eat your turkey dinner, your pet could be munching Aunt Ethel's pills!

**I**F your pet falls ill when the surgery is closed, call our emergency service.

**S**UPERVISE all pets near open fires and log burners.

**T**URKEY carcass bones are sharp when broken and can get lodged in the throat and stomach. Please do not feed them to your pet!

**M**INCE PIES contain raisins, which can be toxic to dogs if ingested .....grapes too.



**A**NTIFREEZE for cars tastes sweet to pets but is potentially fatal if swallowed. Please clear away any spills and don't let your pet drink from puddles.

**S**MALL PETS living outside require extra warm dry bedding, regular checks and unfrozen drinking water. Ensure hutches are rain and draught proof.

## Rabbits Don't Just Eat Carrots!

Overgrown teeth are no fun for your rabbit. They might have been okay for cartoon character Bugs Bunny, but in real life, this condition can be very painful for your pet!



**Bunnies' teeth grow continuously!**

The grinding, chewing and rotary action of the upper and lower teeth while eating, help wear down the length.

If fed an incorrect diet or the teeth are misaligned, problems can occur.

An important part of your rabbit's diet is **hay and grass**, which help grind down the teeth and provide a high source of fibre to assist the digestive system. Feed your rabbit an all in one pellet too, as this will stop your pet picking out just the tasty bits from a mix and leaving the essential nutritious bits behind!

A limited amount of fresh fruit and veg is okay, but if you would like advice, pop your bunny along for an appointment where we can check the teeth, and also discuss what is the best diet to help stop dental problems occurring. **If you have noticed any signs of weight loss, unable to chew, not eating, nasal discharge, runny eyes, or drooling then we need to look at your rabbit without delay.**

## Bad Behaviour?!

Our pets give us great joy and happiness, but if a behavioural problem occurs, the pleasure can turn to desperation. No matter what you do, nothing is working! The behavioural problem escalates and you are at the end of your tether! In your pet's view, they are not too happy either, as behavioural issues can mean that your dog or cat is struggling with a problem. Humans can talk through their worries, but our pets show their feelings through behaviour, like wagging their tail when they are happy. When something is wrong, the 'behavioural speech' displayed can sometimes be misunderstood, and labelled as 'bad behaviour'.

What are they trying to tell you? Behind a behavioural problem, there can be an underlying cause. The key is to identify and understand what triggers it to help rectify the actions.

The Wrecked Living Room!  
Torn Cushions - Soiled Carpet  
Paintwork Scratched  
The dog is panting and agitated.  
This destructive behaviour could be the signs of 'separation anxiety'.  
The pet has become very dependent on one person, and when he or she goes out, the fear of separation is too much.  
Panic triggers a complete melt down, resulting in the living room disaster!



Oh No! A cat sprays to mark out their territory. Outside this is acceptable behaviour, but indoors it is not. Cats do not like change, they prefer a safe routine lifestyle. When this is threatened, anxiousness sets in. An attempt is made to defend their safe territory and life by spray marking. Is there a new cat on the block? Moving house, or a new baby can also upset your cat's routine.

Help is Available Behavioural problems can be just ripping cushions to major aggression, but there is no need for you or your pet to suffer. Discussing the difficulties will be the first step forward to resolving the problem. Please call us for further information.

### Order Early

For some the festive plans are underway, so just a reminder that if your pet requires medication or other pet supplies over the holiday season, please do order well in advance. The surgery and our suppliers' opening hours vary during this period, so please call us with your order to ensure a full cupboard before Christmas Eve!