

Lighten the Load

When your pet is young they are agile and ready to run a marathon on their daily walk, but as age creeps in, so do the aches and pains.

You may notice as your cat or dog rises from their cosy bed, a slight stiffness as they walk, maybe limping a little. Has there been a reluctance to exercise, or is even climbing the stairs more difficult? These could be signs that your pet is developing **osteoarthritis**, which causes inflamed, stiff and painful joints, so limiting their mobility. Osteoarthritis, generally affects middle-aged and older pets, but some younger, larger breeds can also suffer from this condition.

What Happens?

Cartilage helps cushion joints and protects bones, but it begins to deteriorate ➤ the bone thickens in an attempt to protect the ends ➤ ouch! ➤ pain and inflammation ➤ the thickening continues ➤ more pain ➤ more inflammation ➤ restricted mobility!

The once active life your dog enjoyed of long walks and ball games, or your cat nimbly climbing a tree and chasing leaves, can become just memories for your pet.

Help is at Hand!

Don't despair; fortunately, osteoarthritis can often be managed to help your pet lead a better quality of life again. Any signs of lameness or stiffness, then bring your pet along for a check-up. If after a full examination arthritis is diagnosed, there are options available to help 'lighten the pain load' and improve their mobility.

- A few changes to their lifestyle might be required to help your pet manage the condition.
- We may suggest medication to ease pain and reduce inflamed joints.

- Maintaining an ideal weight is important. Extra kilos mean extra strain on those sore joints! We can give advice on suitable exercise for your pet.
- Special foods containing green-lipped mussel and fish oils may help soothe joints.
- Supplements such as glucosamine, could also assist in reducing inflammation.

If you would like further information on osteoarthritis, please do contact us.

New Legislation...

Some important legislative changes are taking place that will affect anyone who breeds, boards, sells or provides day care for dogs in England. These regulations are about improving the welfare of animals so we would encourage both existing and potential dog owners to be aware of them.

From 1 October 2018 owners will be able to check whether boarding kennels, breeders, day-care providers, and anyone selling dogs they did not breed themselves has a licence, and also the rating they have been awarded on a scale of one to five.

Licences and ratings will be issued by Local Authorities. There will be financial penalties for anyone operating without a licence.

We would encourage anyone buying or selling a puppy to use the free puppy contract available online at puppycontract.rspca.org.uk, which will help to reduce the chance of buying a puppy from an irresponsible breeder.

If you or someone you know are thinking of buying a puppy (or indeed any pet), please come and talk to us first so that we can advise you about whether it's a good idea, and help you find your ideal companion.



Staff and clients at one of our Wednesday classes

...and New Vet

The latest addition to the Orchard family is a new Veterinary Surgeon who started with us over the summer. **Jordan** graduated in veterinary medicine from the University of Nottingham and will, for the most part, be working between our Oldbury and Harborne surgeries. We hope you'll join us in welcoming him!

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

Parvovirus Vaccination = Protection



Vaccinating your pet will help protect him or her against infectious diseases such as **Canine Parvovirus**. Unfortunately, cases of this potentially fatal disease have been reported in various parts of the country over the past few years. Most at risk are young puppies and unvaccinated adult dogs.

How is it transmitted? Parvovirus is a very hardy virus. It can survive in the environment for many months, and is transmitted via infected faeces and in vomit. The virus can also be spread on shoes and clothing, carpet, flooring, dog bedding and feeding bowls.

The lining of the intestine, which helps to absorb vital nutrients, is attacked by the virus, causing severe bloody and nasty smelling diarrhoea, loss of appetite, vomiting and fever. A dog will become ill very quickly through dehydration and weakness.

Diagnosis and Treatment

Tests are available to confirm this disease. If the result is positive, a special medication may be administered alongside important intravenous fluids and antibiotics.

As always prevention is better than cure, so ensure that your puppy is vaccinated as soon as possible.

If you are unsure whether your adult dog's vaccinations are up to date, please call us.

Fireworks....

screech and fizz in the winter night, but for some pets they do cause a lot of fright!

Follow our Five Firework tips and remember, we have lots of help for pets and plenty of advice for owners, so please do contact us.

1. Create a Safe Haven



for your dog or cat in one room of your house.

2. Keep Your Pets Indoors



3. Do Not Comfort Your Pet

A hard one we know, but it can reinforce their worry.



4. NEVER Punish or Scold a fearful pet.

Play a game during the bangs and whizzes, it can encourage confidence.



5. Use a Calming Pheromone

diffuser or spray. Turn on the TV or radio to mask the noise.



Now you see me Now you don't!

Cats are mystical creatures, balancing on small ledges and jumping great heights. They appear to have life in the palms of their paws, where at the very end you will find an amazing set of retractable claws! Look closely and you should see the sharp claw tips, which many of you have probably experienced, and as vets we have certainly received the odd scratch or two!



Clever Claws

Cats walk on tiptoe, so are known as digitigrade animals.

There are five digits on each front paw and four on each back.

Claws grow directly out of the bone (phalange) of each toe.

A tendon tightens to extend the claws outwards and relaxes to retract them into a small pouch.

Claw Care Curved with a very sharp tip, claws are made of keratin and grow in shell-like layers, which shed when the outer layer is worn out. If you see a claw on the floor or in the scratching post, your pet has not lost a claw, it is only the shell. Claws grow continuously, but with use and scratching, the length is maintained by your cat. Indoor or elderly cats may require their claws trimming. The pink quick in the middle contains nerves and blood vessels. If cut, it hurts and will bleed, so bring your pet to the surgery. We are experienced 'claw trimmers'!

Claws are very important to your cat. They are tools used for climbing, self-defence, digging, grooming and catching prey. It is a natural urge for your cat to scrape its claws to remove the old layer. Unfortunately carpets and furniture can be the victims of this, so ensure you provide a scratching post indoors and encourage your cat to use it. You may even find he or she will choose a tree or fence post in the garden to do their manicure!

To book a claw clip call our friendly reception team.