

Itch itch itch

ORCHARD

VETERINARY CENTRE



Summer
2018

news

Nibbling, licking, scratching and general grooming are just part of your pet's daily cleaning routine, much like our morning shower. However, if the grooming is a constant action of excessive scratching and nibbling, this could be a sign that something is not quite right!



Irritation

Your pet has an itchy area on the leg, but licking and gnawing to ease the itch has actually made it worse! More nibbling, more licking is required in an attempt to ease the irritation, but it is now red and sore, and the other leg is starting to itch too. This could be a skin condition developing due to a number of causes. Possibly an ear disease, damp or poorly groomed coat, even a flea or mite infestation. Bacterial or yeast infection, a food, house dust or environmental allergy may also be a factor.

Watch out for

- Excessive or constant scratching
- Red/sore skin
- Agitated behaviour
- Hair loss
- Ear and head shaking
- Pawing at face or rubbing against walls and furniture

The key is to identify the underlying cause

A full examination and in-depth chat about their lifestyle, e.g. what they eat, where they exercise, which shampoo you bath your pet in, will help us in the diagnosis, as will skin and hair tests if we feel they are necessary. Skin conditions can develop anywhere on your pet's body and just leaving them to continuously scratch, lick and nibble, will result in a non-stop painful irritation for your pet. Sometimes treatment is as simple as changing their food, so let us check out the itch on your pet.



Vaccine anxieties

Concerns over pet vaccinations made their way onto Good Morning Britain earlier this year, with the suggestion that dogs can 'get' autism (they can't). We also had a client enquire about vaccine-associated sarcomas (tumour growth) in cats. There are suggestions that anxieties about side effects are causing a decline in vaccination rates: **a report by PDSA last year showed 25% of dogs, 35% of cats and 50% of rabbits had not received a primary vaccination course.**

All medicines have potential **side effects** but in the case of vaccines these **are extremely rare** (the most recent study of sarcomas puts it at less than 1 in 30,000 doses), and are far outweighed by the benefits in protecting against disease. Moreover the British Veterinary Association have suggested that failing to vaccinate a pet could constitute a breach of the Animal Welfare Act since 'pet owners have a duty to protect their animals from pain, injury, suffering and disease'.

So if you have concerns, we would urge you to discuss them with your vet rather than abandoning a programme of vaccinations for your pet.



Data protection Data protection rules are changing, and although these have little impact on print, we thought this was a good opportunity, firstly to remind you that you are receiving this newsletter because we believe we have a legitimate interest in using your data to inform you of developments that may be relevant to you, and to educate you on the best practices of pet care to help maximise the welfare and happiness of animals. Secondly, that you can always choose not to receive this newsletter by writing to us, emailing at newsletter@orchardvets.com or by contacting us through one of the branch numbers on the right.

HOURS

Church Street
OLDBURY

B69 3AF

0121 544 0404

Mon to Fri 8:30am - 6:30pm
Saturday 11.30am - 1pm

Home Farm
Northfield Road
HARBORNE

B17 0TD

0121 428 1777

Mon to Fri 8:30am - 6:30pm
Saturday 2.30pm - 3.30pm

210 Holyhead Road
WEDNESBURY

WS10 7DH

0121 556 6890

Mon to Fri 8:30am - 6:30pm
Saturday 9am - 10.30am

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Wear and Tear

Cats, infamous for long snoozes and relaxed lifestyles, do actually lead very busy lives, defending territory, eating, tree climbing, checking the shed for mice, teasing the dog next door and ensuring plenty of attention is received from their owners!

All this activity can take its toll over the years and as your pet ages, subtle changes may take place, which are not always visible. Joints can become a little stiff, hearing not so sharp and internal organs may not function so well. In older cats, kidney failure is common, as these organs have to work very hard throughout their lives. Special nephrons in the kidneys help filter the blood and remove waste products. These gradually disappear over time and are not replaced. With this loss, the kidneys then fail to function correctly.

Watch out for signs

- Excessive Water Drinking
- Urinating Frequently
- Loss of Appetite
- Vomiting
- Weight Loss

Blood and urine tests can be done to confirm the condition and although incurable, there are ways to help your pet cope with the problem. The type of treatment will depend on the level of kidney failure. We may suggest a change in diet, medication or possible hospitalisation for care. If you are concerned that your cat could be showing signs of kidney failure, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We offer a full health check and blood screening, which will help to show the start of more hidden conditions such as kidney disease.

Rabbit Talk

Summer and with it buzzing flies, which pose an enormous threat to our bob-tailed friends. **Flystrike** is a serious and life-threatening condition that can affect rabbits very quickly. Flies are attracted to wounds, sore skin, moist and soiled hindquarters of a rabbit, where they lay eggs. The result is hatching maggots literally feeding on the rabbit's skin and underlying tissue!



In warm weather, please check your rabbit at least once a day

- Ensure they are clean, egg and maggot free.
- Remove soiled bedding and waste daily.
- Clean hutches frequently.

At higher risk are unhealthy, less active and elderly rabbits, plus those that cannot groom properly due to obesity or overgrown teeth and claws.

If you suspect your rabbit has FLYSTRIKE this is a real emergency, so contact us immediately!

Humans in Hot Cars!

If you are thinking of taking your human out in the car today, remember the summer months produce cloudy, humid and sunny days, which mean your car will reach oven-like temperatures!

DO NOT leave your human in your parked car not even in the shade, not even for a few minutes or even with the windows open, as they will literally cook! Sadly last year, even with all the

warnings and sad stories in the media, humans were still being left to die in hot cars. Either leave your human at home with plenty of fresh clean drinking water and access to cool areas of your house, or if you have to take them with you, ensure that your two-legged friend is not shut inside the car and left..... at any time!

Chips for Cats?

In 2016 microchipping a dog became law, and although not so for cats, I decided to research the importance of a cat being microchipped. On interviewing vets, I saw lost and found books bursting at the seams, and was told that rescue centres are full of cats waiting for new homes, or for their owners to hopefully turn up. Apparently some were chipped, but the owners new details had not been updated, for example after moving house. This makes it very difficult to reunite lost cats with their owners when they have no current identification! If only they had microchipped their cats and ensured the contact details were correct.

Felines are very independent creatures and can wander far and wide.....a little too wide sometimes, and are unable to find the way home. Even 'indoor only' cats can escape through that one open window. Unfortunately some, on their quest to get home, can be involved in road traffic accidents and require urgent medical treatment. Not being able to contact their owners becomes a very sad situation indeed. At times such accidents can be fatal, and if a cat is microchipped it means the owner can be informed of their loss. Albeit very sad news, but at least there is closure.

Just to prove how beneficial microchipping your cat can be; just recently a cat was taken into a veterinary surgery, as it had been living rough outside a coffee shop. When scanned, a microchip number was found. A few phone calls later, the owner was located and said that her cat had been missing for many months, and thought she would never see her pet again. Both were happily reunited!

So easy conclusion..... microchipping is a must for cats. It's a simple and permanent means of identifying your much-loved pet.



Carrie Cat
Reporter
extraordinaire

