



AlphaPet News

Summer 2015

Exceptional Care For The Life Of Your Pet

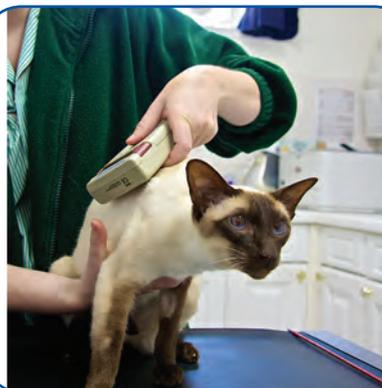
Fun Day & Dog Show: Sunday 2nd August



This year's AlphaPet Fun Day and Dog Show is a little earlier on 2nd August and we're hoping for good weather again! As usual, it will be held on the Queens Field next to our West Meads surgery with Dog Show entries from 11.30am and the Show proper starting at 12.30pm, the fun will go on until around 4.30pm. In addition to the Dog Show, we have a wide variety of other attractions for all the family including a really cool kids' corner, a bouncy castle, lots of unusual pets to see and handle. Plus we have great fun activities and competitions for all types of pet dogs including a chance to throw wet sponges at the Directors ... all for charity, of course!. There will be demonstrations from local dog training and activity clubs and refreshments available throughout the day. Don't forget that, apart from having fun, what this day is really all about is to raise some vital funds for two very worthy causes. This year, we're supporting Canine Partners and Many Tears Animal Rescue. For further information, please check out our website at www.alphapet.co.uk or ask at one of our surgeries.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE: We still need donations in the form of tombola prizes (adults and childrens), second hand pet accessories and good condition soft toys, books and teddies!

Compulsory Microchipping



With effect from 6th April 2016, all dogs in England will have to be microchipped by law. It will also be a legal requirement for all dog owners to:

- Have their dog microchipped and registered on an authorised commercial database
- Register the details of any new owner before selling or giving the dog away
- Keep their contact details up-to-date on the databases

Currently, over 30% of dogs registered at AlphaPet do not appear to have a microchip. Additionally, recent evidence suggests that at least 30% of dogs currently have incorrect details registered against their microchip.

Time is running out, so if your dog still doesn't have a microchip why not call us now and have one inserted before the deadline. It costs just £15.

If your dog is already microchipped, please contact the database provider and check that the details are correct. If you're not sure how to do this, please call us and we will let you know how.

Stray Tortoises



Recently, we have had an influx of stray tortoises. Four in a single week!

Sadly, only one of them was microchipped, so we had no way of knowing who three of them belonged to or how to find their owners.

Tortoises are fantastic creatures, but they were never really designed for the UK. Left to their own devices, they will wander extensively and will actively climb and break out of gardens. Because of the low UK temperatures (compared to the more tropical climates in which they evolved originally), many will often hibernate outside by digging down into the ground and burying themselves for several months.

Ideally, all tortoises should be microchipped (for some species, this is a legal requirement). The days of just letting a tortoise "do its own thing" in the UK and hibernating them from October to April are long gone. Nowadays, we know a lot more about how to look after tortoises properly.

AlphaPet has vets and nurses with specific interests in tortoises who will be pleased to advise you on how to look after them.

We can also microchip them too, so that if they do stray, they can be returned to you!

Staff News



Every newsletter seems to bring us more happy baby news! Both Nicky Bulbeck (vet) and Sam Seary (ANA) have given birth to healthy babies. Nicky is planning to come back to work in November, but you may see her around on the occasional “getting back to work” days. Sadly, we have lost nurses Aimee Uren (to marriage) and Amy Harrington (to join a cat only clinic in Portsmouth) but such is the progress of AlphaPet as a nurse training practice that we have existing nurses stepping into their shoes and new student nurses starting their training with us. New additions are Nikki McWilliam and Jade Weeks. On the reception side, we have Nikki Tully and Catherine Howells joining us also. It’s all change at the top too! Sarah Baldwin has decided to step down from the Head Nurse role so that she can take on more of the administrative burden of the practice. At the time of writing, we are still in the process of appointing a new Head Nurse internally, but they’re going to have to fill the big shoes that Sarah has left!

Pet Treat Scandal



Did you know that some pet treats are more calorific than human fast foods? A recent study has shown that Bonio dog biscuits contain approximately 53% more calories than a McDonald’s Big Mac! Dreamies cat treats contain around 5% more calories than a glazed doughnut! Even treats designed to help keep your pet’s teeth clean can contain very high levels of calories.

Unlike human foods, very few pet food manufacturers list calorie content on the packaging of pet treats which makes it very difficult for pet owners to make informed choices.

Many of the pets we see at AlphaPet are overweight. As with humans, this can have serious consequences for their overall health and how long they live. Being aware that many pet treats are very high in calories means it is easier to account for them on your overall pet’s diet. Treats are important for both training and encouraging positive behaviours, but we all need to be careful that this doesn’t come at the price of obesity.

Star Patient



This is Peaches. She is an 18 month old Chihuahua. One day in April, her owner came home to find her collapsed and bleeding in the garden. We think she had been attacked by a larger dog which had got through the fence. She only weighs 2.7kg so she came off very much the worse and had sustained severe wounds to her neck and elbow. When she was rushed in, we weren’t sure if she would survive.

After emergency treatment, we managed to stabilise her, and although she was understandably very scared when she came in, she seemed to know we were there to help her and gradually, she grew in confidence.

Once she was out of immediate danger, she had to have complicated and extensive surgery to repair her wounds, but 11 days after her ordeal, she was able to go home with her owner and she has gone on to make a great recovery.

Oh, but that wasn’t all. Throughout all of this, Peaches had been pregnant! And despite everything, she managed to give birth to 6 puppies (although one sadly died shortly after birth).

Perhaps, if you only weigh 2.7kg, you have to be made of something stronger than the average dog just to survive, but Peaches seems to have courage and tenacity in spades. A true star patient who, if she were a cat, would definitely already have used up a few of her lives in her short life so far!

Mycotoxins



The high temperatures of summer are often associated with things decaying and going mouldy more quickly. This is fine, as long as your dog doesn’t decide to eat that slightly mouldy sandwich or raid the compost bin.

Unfortunately, mouldy food items often contain poisons called mycotoxins which can be very dangerous and even fatal.

Rotting food, the contents of dustbins, compost bins, mouldy cheese and mouldy sandwiches are all common sources of mycotoxins. Many dogs seem oblivious to the dangers and will scavenge, what appears to us, the most disgusting things!

Signs of mycotoxin poisoning are usually rapid in onset (within 30 minutes) and can result in vomiting and diarrhoea, muscle tremors, hyperactivity, seizures and sometimes even death. So, it is very important to first try to make sure that dogs don’t have access to sources of mouldy food items, but if they do then don’t delay. Call us immediately so we can get treatment on board as soon as possible.

Heat Stroke



We all know how hot it can get for us in summer, but just imagine what would happen if you couldn't sweat and were forced to wear a thick coat as well? This is what many of our pets have to endure. They have almost no sweat glands and have to rely on getting rid of body heat by panting. And they can't just strip down to bare skin when it gets hot - they have a fur coat to cope with all the time!

It is therefore little surprise that it doesn't take much to cause pets to overheat on a hot day. Sometimes, even just doing their normal exercise during the hot part of the day is enough to cause them serious problems. Cars and conservatories can quickly become like ovens (check out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQIQKYfyVug>). And if your pet is overweight or has heart or breathing issues, they can become even more quickly affected by heat.

Every year we see cases of heat stroke, including very sadly some fatalities.

Please think before allowing your pet to exercise in the daytime during the summer. Always make sure they have access to water. NEVER leave them in cars or conservatories for any length of time during the day. And if you suspect heat stroke, don't delay. Call us immediately and get them to AlphaPet ASAP.

Fly Strike



Flies are always a nuisance for us in summer. They buzz around and can spread disease, but for some of our pets, they can be far more dangerous.

Flies are attracted to smelly things like wounds and faeces. They lay their eggs very quickly and their larvae (maggots) hatch out within hours and start eating whatever is around. It doesn't matter if what is around is dead or alive. So every summer, we see many cases of pets being brought in that are literally being eaten alive by maggots - a condition called "fly strike" or "myiasis".

As you can imagine, this is an incredibly painful condition, and without rapid treatment can easily prove fatal.

It is vital that all owners make sure that any wounds are treated promptly and appropriately. All pets should be checked daily to make sure that they do not have faeces building up around their bottoms. Whilst this is most commonly a risk with pets like rabbits, older dogs and cats can also be affected.

If you find fly eggs or maggots on your pet, do not delay. Call us. This is an emergency situation and the sooner we get to see a fly-struck pet, the better the chance we have of saving them and relieving their pain.

Travelling Abroad



It's summer and more and more of us are going abroad for our holidays and more and more of us are taking our pets with us.

The good news is that the legal requirements have been reduced making it easier for us to take our pets abroad. The bad news is that the diseases they can catch abroad haven't reduced, so you need to plan and take appropriate precautions.

In the UK, we are privileged in that we have very few nasty pet diseases to worry about. Abroad however, in addition to Rabies, which everyone is familiar with (a dog died of Rabies in France in May this year), there are several other common diseases which can be just as fatal to your pet unless you guard against them. Prevention is always better than cure so if you are uncertain about what precautions you should be taking, please contact us and speak to one of our vets who can give you appropriate advice.

Slug Bait Warning



Many of us are keen gardeners and slugs and snails can be real pests. Slug baits can often seem to be the answer but not if you have pets!

Many slug baits contain a substance called metaldehyde which is highly toxic to both dogs and cats. Even ingesting relatively small amounts (a few grams of pellets for a 20kg dog) can be toxic and require treatment.

Signs of toxicity vary depending on the amount that has been eaten, but can include restlessness, twitching, tremors and fitting. Severe cases can result in death from respiratory failure.

So, even if you prize your garden, please prize your pets more and consider using one of the widely available, pet friendly alternatives to metaldehyde slug baits such as the ferric phosphate containing products or nematode biological control products.

Just Because We Can

Veterinary medicine and surgical techniques are advancing at a tremendous rate. Many of our pets are living longer as a result and whilst these advances, as with human medicine and surgery, come at some considerable costs sometimes, many of us have pet insurance to help finance these treatments. There is another aspect to these technological advances that needs to be considered. Just because we can now do something new, doesn't automatically mean that it is the right thing to do, especially for our pets who can't tell us whether they are happy with something or not.

Such decisions need a huge amount of thought to make sure that whatever we are doing is the right thing for our pet and not just ourselves. Sometimes, it is very difficult to know what is the best thing to do. Giving too much treatment to a pet can sometimes be worse than not giving enough - carrying on too long and subjecting pets to treatments and surgical procedures that are not really in the pet's best interests. Discussion between owner and veterinary surgeon is vital to ensure that the right decisions at the right times are made.

At AlphaPet, we strongly believe that our role is to inform and guide clients through the many choices available to them to help them make the best choices for their pets. Our aim is to make sure clients are aware of what is available for their pets, and then help them come to a decision based not just on what we can do, but on what we should do for that individual, very precious pet. In most cases, this involves asking ourselves what we would do if it was our pet and that doesn't always mean going for the latest, fanciest, (and most expensive) treatment option!

Out Of Hours and Emergency Service



As a registered client of AlphaPet, you can rest assured that we will be there for you at any time of the day and night, should you need us. Unlike most other local practices, AlphaPet provides a 24/7 Emergency Service from our own premises. Many other local practices require their clients to travel to Portsmouth or Worthing to receive treatment in an emergency outside of their normal hours. Unlike most other local practices, we don't shut up shop at the end of a day for a better personal quality of life. Our patients always come first. AlphaPet believes strongly that having access to your pet's clinical notes, being able to be treated at an AlphaPet practice by fully trained AlphaPet staff, at reasonable cost, at whatever time of the day or night, is essential to providing an appropriate level of care to your pet.

Check out our website at
www.alphapet.co.uk

We also have a very lively Facebook page, so why not check it out and follow us?



West Meads Surgery

11-17 The Precinct, West Meads
Bognor Regis PO21 5SB
Telephone **01243 842832**

Opening Hours

Mon-Fri: 8.30 - 7.00pm
Sat 8.30-6.00pm
Sunday: 10.00-1.00pm & 5.00-6.00pm

Kingley Surgery

Oldwick Farm, West Stoke Road
Lavant, Chichester PO18 9AA
Telephone **01243 528899**

Opening Hours

Mon-Fri: 8.30-6.30pm

Birdham Surgery

Northleigh Farm, Main Road
Birdham, Chichester PO20 7BY
Telephone **01243 513514**

Opening Hours

Mon-Fri: 8.30-6.00pm

Don't forget:

We are open on **Saturdays** and **Sundays** for routine appointments
We are also open until at least 7pm at our West Meads surgery every weekday

