

## Noise phobias: firework fears

Early socialisation of puppies (made easier with today's vaccines which can be given to young pups) is extremely important in producing puppies that are confident and able to deal with the world around them. When puppies are young they easily acclimatise to loud and unfamiliar sounds, and this makes them much less likely to develop fears and phobias as they mature.

Those dogs that do develop noise phobias can be helped – a programme of noise desensitisation can be embarked on with the help of a special CD. Medications can be used to help reduce anxiety and a dog's response to loud noises can gradually improve over time.

Where such an approach isn't possible, short term treatment with medication that reduces anxiety may be used on and around bonfire night. Playing loud music, shutting the curtains and providing a comfy bed with lots of blankets to hide under, can all be helpful. Also, reassuring frightened dogs can encourage anxious behaviour, so in some cases it is best to try and ignore them, given that they are safe and otherwise comfortable.

If you would like to discuss puppy socialisation or noise phobias further, do get in touch.

## MOT and servicing!

IS YOUR dog up to date with his vaccinations? What about your cat? And your rabbit? We can protect pets against a number of potentially **fatal infectious diseases**, and if your pets haven't been vaccinated in the last year – then it's worth bringing them in for an appointment to discuss what is available and advisable.



At the same time we will do a yearly health check which can allow us to pick up early signs of disease, so that any problems that

have developed can be treated promptly and effectively. We can also discuss any problems that may be concerning you. This is a great time for us to check out those little niggles that crop up from time to time – we can have a look at itchy ears, assess any lumps and bumps that have developed and check out old pets' stiff joints and cloudy eyes. We can also discuss any changes in their eating, drinking, sleeping or exercise patterns that have occurred. A dental check can allow us to identify any tooth problems, and at the same time appropriate diets can be discussed and worming and flea and tick control programmes can be set up.



Don't take any risks with your pet's wellbeing! Keep them healthy with regular vaccinations and health checks. Please contact us for an appointment today!

### Vaccination against infectious diseases

We recommend you regularly vaccinate your pets against the following – potentially fatal, infectious diseases:

#### Dogs:

- Distemper
- Infectious canine hepatitis
- Parvo virus
- Leptospirosis
- Para influenza virus

#### Cats:

- Cat flu virus
- Feline panleucopenia virus
- Feline leukaemia virus

#### Rabbits

- Myxomatosis
- Viral Haemorrhagic Disease

## Holiday time - are you prepared?

HAS YOUR pet got itchy feet? With the Pet Travel Scheme in place, many more owners are taking their dogs and cats on holiday and to live in other countries with no need for a stay in quarantine on the way back.

Now is the time to start planning, as it takes around 8 months to fulfil the requirements of the scheme. Your pet will need to be **microchipped**, **vaccinated against rabies**, and have a **blood test** done to prove that sufficient immunity has developed. He may not re-enter the UK until six months later, and then only after certain **tick and tapeworm** treatments have been carried out and certified before arrival in the UK. Other treatments are also advisable to help to protect your pet against exotic diseases whilst abroad. Please ask us for more details – but don't delay if you are planning a trip for next year!



Pet photos: Jane Burton, Cartoon: Jenny Hole

# It's a joint effort!

ARTHRITIS (also termed degenerative joint disease) is a condition that sadly affects pets and pet owners alike.

The joints most susceptible to arthritis are those permitting limb movements – called synovial joints. The ends of the bones which meet at these joints are covered by very smooth articular cartilage. The joints are also lubricated with synovial fluid, allowing friction free movement.



Arthritis is characterised by a thinning or breakdown of the articular cartilage lining the ends of the bones in the joint, and formation of secondary new bone around the joint. Affected joints commonly appear stiff, swollen and painful. Pets are usually stiff on rising



made much worse by cold damp autumn and winter weather. On x-ray the new bone can often be clearly seen, as in the case shown below (see arrows).



Normal hip joint.



Arthritic hip joint (in a dog with hip dysplasia). Note the fluffy new bone (arrowed) around the joint

There are several causes of arthritis: The commonest is a lifetime of activity, simply resulting in wear and tear on the joints. Arthritis may also occur following joint trauma, or secondary to malformation of a joint as in hip dysplasia – see below left for x-rays.

Although arthritis cannot usually be cured, a range of **modern medications**, **diets** and **exercise regimes** can make life much better for affected pets. In conjunction with this, if your pet is overweight, **weight loss** can make a huge difference to your pet's mobility.

If you are concerned that your pet is showing *any* signs of arthritis, please come and see us for a check-up.

after a period of rest and may be reluctant to walk or jump onto chairs or into the car. Additionally, the signs of arthritis are often

## Keeping your Guinea Pig fit and well!

GUINEA PIGS, originating from the grasslands of South America, are very popular as pets. They are by nature grazing animals and require large amounts of grass, hay and fresh fruit and vegetables together with some commercially prepared food.

They are generally healthy pets, but they *do* require periodic check-ups just like other pets. In common with other rodents, their **teeth** grow continuously and can become overgrown making feeding difficult. Additionally their **nails** can also become very long if they are not clipped at regular intervals.



**Skin** problems may also occasionally occur; the most common of these is an infestation with a burrowing mite – *Trixacarus caviae*. The mite causes intense itching and scratching, with areas of reddened, sore and crusting skin. The photo (left) is typical of a mite infestation.

We are here to help! If you would like any further information on any aspect of guinea pig care, or if you would like a check-up for your pet, please contact us!

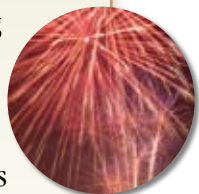


## Autumn awareness!



IT'S A shame summer's over, and winter's on its way. With cold, dark nights coming, it's important to make sure you find time for walking your dog or his mobility (and yours!) may suffer. Visibility also becomes a problem at this time of year, particularly in the evenings and early mornings – so be sure you can be seen on walks.

It is always advisable to keep pets indoors on firework night, and this is especially important for those pets that are phobic about noise. These pets may benefit from medication to reduce anxiety; habituation to loud noises over a long period of time can also be helpful. Please ask us for an appointment to discuss these options in further detail.



Indoor hazards at this time of year include sleepy wasps and bees so watch out! Also, fleas and mites often cause problems if flea control medications are stopped at the end of the summer – so **do** keep treating pets throughout the year!

Finally, when getting the car ready for winter, remember not to leave any antifreeze around – it's very tasty but extremely poisonous.



Spilt antifreeze is a deadly hazard

Please give us a call if you suspect any problems.