



Repeat Prescriptions

Whilst we like to think of our receptionists as superheroes, sometimes they need human help. We would appreciate that you request prescriptions at least 24 hours in advance so that they can be made up for you ready to collect. We have found that with two Vets consulting almost all day the receptionists are very busy without having to count out tablets at short notice and then find a vet to approve it. A little forethought may save you a long wait at the reception desk!

This is probably a good time to talk about the legalities of prescription drugs: By law, to prescribe a POM, a vet must have seen the animal recently enough to beware of any ongoing problems, hence we will insist on seeing a pet occasionally to approve a re-prescription. This is a legal requirement, and the time between re-examinations will depend on the medication and severity of illness.

Nurses and receptionists are legally unable to authorise a prescription: *This can only be done by a vet.* So, if you arrive out of the blue to get some tablets, you may be unable to get them if a vet is not around to approve the dispensing.

So, help us to help you, and phone your prescription requests early, just like the doctors!

Leominster Office hours are 8.30am – 6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.00am – 2.30pm Saturday.

Or better still, e-mail us on petorders@marchesvets.co.uk.



ONE OF the many decisions facing pet owners is that of neutering. Whilst it is generally the case that cats of both sexes are neutered, in contrast many dogs are not.

Un-neutered **female dogs** (bitches) usually come into season (heat) twice a year. Seasons may last for up to a month, and during this time they become receptive to the advances of male dogs.

Although seasons can be controlled by other means, neutering (called spaying in

Should I have my pet neutered?

female dogs) provides excellent long term control. Spaying involves the surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus under a general anaesthetic. Having been spayed, your dog won't have to suffer the frustrations associated with coming into season again *or* experience phantom pregnancies. Better still she will also be able to enjoy her normal walks all year round! In addition, the operation removes the possibility of pyometras (life-threatening uterine infections) and reduces the occurrence of mammary tumours later on in life.

Neutering a **male dog** involves the surgical removal of both testes under a general anaesthetic.

Neutered male dogs are less likely to stray (especially when a local bitch comes into season!). Neutering also reduces the incidence of prostate gland problems and can be of help in controlling excessive sexual drive and with certain behavioural problems. If you would like any further information on the benefits of neutering, please ask a member of staff!



Photos: Jane Burton

Don't get hacked off with the cough!

CANINE infectious tracheobronchitis (kennel cough) is one of the most prevalent infectious diseases in dogs and can be picked up wherever dogs congregate – for example obedience classes, out on walks and (classically!) in boarding kennels.

The disease is caused by a number of different airborne viruses and a bacterium – *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. Infected dogs typically develop a harsh dry spasmodic “honking” cough which may last for several weeks, often requiring antibiotic treatment to help resolve it.

Because the disease is so distressing to both dogs and their owners, it is much better prevented by vaccination. Although regular booster vaccinations offer protection against many of the airborne viruses, only **intranasal vaccines** offer protection against *Bordetella*. Don't take any chances with kennel cough – contact us now to ensure your dog is adequately vaccinated!



Cartoon: Gareth Davies



Some like it hot...!



ALTHOUGH the (hopefully!) warmer summer weather is wonderful for us humans, it is worth sparing a thought for our four-legged friends! Here we look at some steps you can take to avoid the summertime blues!

Slip slap slop! Cats, like ourselves, are great sun bathers. However cats with white ear tips and noses are particularly at risk from sun burn which often leads to localised skin cancer of these areas (as seen in the photograph below). This risk can be reduced by keeping them out of the sun or by applying sunblock to these areas during the summer months.



Ear tip of a cat showing cancerous changes

Bees can be irresistible to inquisitive pets and dogs like to bite at them as they are flying and as a result tend to get stung in their mouth.



Prompt veterinary attention may be required because some dogs (like humans) are allergic to bee stings.

Ticks are blood sucking parasites that are picked up in long grass. The ticks – which are initially tiny, bury their mouthparts into the skin – becoming firmly attached in the process. Their body expands as it fills up with blood that they suck from their host. Ticks are a nuisance for two reasons: firstly they can cause abscesses where they attach and secondly they can transmit serious blood borne diseases such as Lyme disease.



Fleas are by far the most common parasite in cats and dogs. Although they are often thought of as being a summer problem – they are in fact a year-round issue.

Flies are summer hazard for rabbits. Rabbit rear ends often become damp; this attracts flies which lay eggs which, in turn, develop into flesh eating maggots. During the summer months rabbits should be inspected daily for fly eggs and maggots.

Grass seeds (or awns) of the meadow grasses are a big problem for many dogs, working their way into ears, paws and other areas. In view of this a thorough coat inspection after walks is recommended.



If you would like any further information on *any* of the topics covered in this article, please don't hesitate to ask!

Finally a note about **cars!** **Never ever leave a pet in a car on a hot day.**



Does your cat drink like a fish?

IT'S COMMON knowledge that many cats start to drink more when they get older. Most spend years showing no interest in water and then suddenly you are filling the bowl up regularly and catching them at the tap, the pond, puddles... It's easy to put this down simply to ageing, but there is usually a specific reason why an older cat starts to get more thirsty, and in most cases, if we identify the problem we can initiate treatment and *give your cat a longer and more comfortable life.*

So, if you think your cat is drinking more, bring him in to us for a check and if necessary we can do blood tests to diagnose the problem. This can allow identification of problems including kidney or liver disease, an over-active thyroid gland, or diabetes. Once the problem is identified a treatment programme can be sorted out. This may just involve a change of diet, though some cats benefit from ongoing treatment with regular medication or injections.

There is no cure for old age, but we can *ease the symptoms and prevent or slow ongoing deterioration of your pet's health.* So, if you are concerned that your pet is a bit too thirsty, give us a call – it's always worth a check-up to see what we can do.

Lumps and bumps – don't ignore them!

ONE OF the "golden rules" of veterinary practice is that early detection of problems will generally give us a much better chance of sorting things out. The regular health examinations we give your pet are a key part of this approach. In addition, frequent grooming allows *you* to keep a watchful eye out for any problems as well!

If your pet develops a lump there may be several possible underlying causes. These include **allergic reactions** (such as bee stings), **abscesses**, **hernias**, and **tumours**. Tumours may be either *benign* – which tend to be slow growing and remain in one place, or *malignant* – which invade the surrounding tissues and are far more serious. If you do find a lump on your pet it is therefore *very important* that we examine it to determine the underlying cause, allowing any required treatment to be started as soon as possible. Please contact us if you are at all concerned.

