

Booster alert!

Kennel Cough – is your dog vaccinated?



As the weather warms up and dogs go out and about more, so the risk of Kennel Cough rises. This very infectious cough is most commonly caused by a bacterium – *Bordetella* – and a mixture of viruses.

Affected pets typically show signs of a very harsh, hacking cough which usually develops over 24 hours and can often last for weeks. Other symptoms may include loss of appetite and breathlessness.

Only intra-nasal Kennel Cough vaccine drops will give your dog protection against *Bordetella* and we strongly recommend that dogs are vaccinated before going into boarding kennels, or at other times when the disease is rife.

Don't forget rabbits!



Did you know that mosquitoes and biting flies can spread the deadly Myxomatosis virus from the wild rabbit population

(where it is endemic) to pet rabbits in your back garden?

However the good news is that we can vaccinate rabbits against **Myxomatosis** and **Viral Haemorrhagic Disease**, both of which can be deadly for rabbits.

If you would like more information on which vaccinations are available for your dog, cat or rabbit, please give us a call! Vaccinations against deadly diseases have made a huge contribution to the health and wellbeing of our pets, but over time the protection will wane, so DO make sure to keep your pets up to date with their boosters!

Rabbit photo: Warren Photographic

RCVS Small Animal Hospital Accreditation

Bicester Vets has been at its current location in Victoria Road since the mid 70's which make us *Bicester's most established speciality Small Animal Veterinary Practice*. After many years of improvements in facilities, equipment and staffing, we are

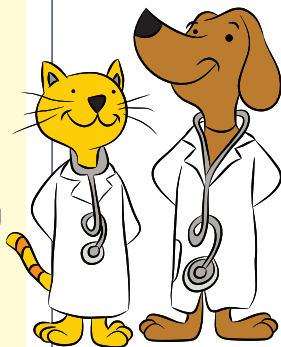


very proud to have been awarded the standard of *Small Animal Hospital*.

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) runs the Practice Standards Scheme which inspects and assesses veterinary practices. This award is a great endorsement of the high level of work performed at Bicester Vets and the constantly improving facilities, techniques and procedures.

So, Bicester's most established speciality small animal practice has become **Bicester's Newest Veterinary Hospital!**

All our Team have worked very hard over the past year and we are very proud of our achievement.



What does this mean for you?

- Clinical staff on site 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to care for our hospitalised patients and any emergencies.
- High level of equipment including: digital x-ray, ultrasound scanner, in house laboratory equipment for speedy results and dental x-ray facilities.
- Fully equipped and sterile surgical facilities with extensive monitoring equipment for safer anaesthesia.
- Continual Professional Development for all Veterinary staff, to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills.
- Strict protocols to ensure maximum cleanliness in all areas of our hospital to reduce the risk of infection.
- Isolation ward for patients with infectious diseases.
- A high level of customer service from experienced and caring staff.

We will continue to ensure we are at the forefront of veterinary work so that all our patients receive the best possible care and treatment. We hope you will join us in being proud of Bicester Vets as YOUR Local Independent Veterinary Hospital and we would be glad of any feedback or comments which will help us to continue to improve our service and care.

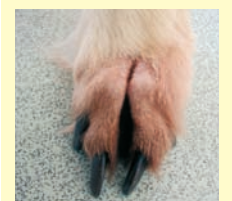
Could it be an allergy?



Skin allergies are reasonably common in dogs, especially at this time of year. Pollens from plants, grasses and trees irritate the skin. The most common places for sore spots to develop are where pollens land – typically the feet, stomach, armpits, groin and ears.

The skin in these areas will become pink and the dog will start to excessively lick, scratch or chew at them, causing more damage which often triggers bacterial infections, making the problem even worse.

The initial treatment for this condition is medication to reduce the itching, combat any infections introduced by scratching or licking, and also to reduce the exposure to allergens if possible. Longer term treatments may include attempting to identify the underlying cause of the allergy and then creating a 'vaccine' to gradually desensitise the pet to the allergy and this can prove helpful in many dogs. Please contact us today if you are worried about your pet's skin.



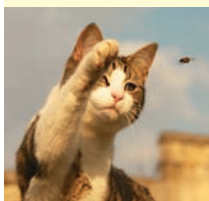
Allergic irritation and foot chewing in a dog.



Things are hotting up!

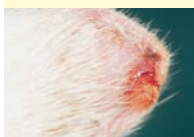
Woo hoo – the summer is here! But when the heat turns up, the dangers to pets increase too. To keep your dog, cat and other furry friends safe, make sure you are prepared. To help you we've put together some top summer survival tips:

Summer walks: When walking your dogs, do try to avoid the hottest times of the day. Heat stroke is a real risk for many breeds but particularly those with shorter noses or who are overweight. However, this doesn't mean they can't enjoy the great weather – just make use of the light evenings and go out when it is cooler.



UV Alert! Just like us, sunburn can cause problems for our pets. Cats are natural sun bathers, but cats with white noses and ear tips are particularly vulnerable to sun burn and subsequent skin cancer.

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 early (reddened) cancerous changes. If your pet is showing signs of skin changes, please call us at once.

Summer shade: Guinea pigs and rabbits need an area of shade so that they do not overheat – guinea pigs in particular are unable to regulate their body temperature and both they and rabbits are vulnerable to sunburn.



Flystrike is a very serious problem at this time of year. Rabbit rear ends often become damp and this moist area attracts flies, which lay their eggs there. These eggs hatch out into maggots which can cause life threatening infections. Rabbit rear ends should be inspected daily for fly eggs and maggots, and soiled bedding should be cleaned out daily. Call us immediately if you are worried.



Bee and wasp stings are another seasonal problem. Some pets are allergic to their stings and may need prompt veterinary attention.

So – do enjoy the summer and remember to check your pets' coats for pesky **grass seeds** which can get trapped and cause problems. And finally – **NEVER leave pets in cars. Even on dull days, they can heat up and become ovens.**

Brushing up on dental care!

Did you know that poor dental hygiene can be a source of long term pain and discomfort for many pets? Worse still, without regular check-ups, dental problems in pets are frequently overlooked as pets usually tolerate the pain – suffering in silence.

In order to prevent dental problems in our pets, it is helpful to understand how and why they arise.

Pets are usually born with healthy mouths, with shiny white teeth and pink (or pigmented) gums. However, over time the accumulation of plaque bacteria on the surface of the teeth leads to inflammation of the gums – termed **gingivitis** (or gum disease). This is often accompanied by very bad breath and also the accumulation of calculus (tartar) on the tooth surface.

If the gingivitis is not treated at this stage, the plaque will start attacking the underlying tooth supporting structures, resulting in gum and bone loss, dental pain, marked bad breath and eventually leading to tooth loss. This condition is termed **periodontitis**.



As well as gum disease, cats may also suffer from one or more **tooth resorptive lesions** usually found at or below gum level. These are unique to cats and still not fully understood.

They are very painful, however, and again most cats will not show obvious pain.

Regular dental check-ups (as part of the booster visit) are a key part of monitoring for dental disease. The good news is that if gum problems are identified at an early stage (where there are signs of gingivitis), a combination of a Scale and Polish and ongoing Home Care can make a real difference to your pet's oral health.

Please contact us today for a dental check-up and to find out more about caring for your pet's teeth.



Gingivitis with inflamed gums



Periodontitis with gum loss



Tooth resorptive lesions
Typical lesion (arrowed). The tooth is progressively destroyed and is usually very painful.



Scale and Polish: Removing the calculus using an ultrasonic scaler, followed by polishing, is a very effective form of treatment

Terrier photo: Warren Photographic

Stick to balls!



If you have a dog who loves to play fetch, but you forgot to take a ball with you on a walk (or you threw it and they lost it!), it is tempting to use a stick instead. After all, there are always plenty lying around and who hasn't seen a dog with one in their

mouth's, looking very pleased with themselves?!

However, throwing sticks can be extremely dangerous and they have the potential to cause some very nasty injuries. If your dog runs onto it while it is pointing upwards or catches it by one end rather than the middle, it can easily rip into the soft skin and tissue of the throat, leading to massive damage and bleeding. Less dramatically, splinters can dig into the gums and lips, causing pain and abscesses, some of which aren't always obvious and our dogs end up suffering in silence.



This is a typical stick injury – in this case the stick has become lodged in the dog's throat.

Photos: courtesy Bath Veterinary Referrals

Most vets and veterinary nurses have seen 'stick injuries', the most serious of which can be extremely difficult to fix or potentially even be fatal. Certainly it is far safer and also cheaper to buy a new ball for every walk – rather than resort to a stick!