



## Practice News

### NEW ULTRASOUND MACHINE



We've recently invested in a new ultrasound machine to enhance our imaging capabilities. Ultrasound imaging is used most commonly to assess the heart and its function plus to look for abnormalities in the abdominal organs like kidneys, intestine and bladder. As technology improves, the detail in the images gets much better, allowing detection of more subtle changes and a more accurate diagnosis.

Vet Rachel Marsden regularly performs high level echocardiography (heart scans) to investigate things like the reason for heart murmurs and to track the progression of heart disease. We have a number of vets who are very proficient at abdominal imaging including Elliot Smith who is currently studying for a Certificate in Diagnostic Imaging.

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### NEW XRAY MACHINE



We have also recently upgraded our xray facilities. This includes a new moving table top and an almost instantaneous digital xray system. When the Xrays are taken, the images appear within a few seconds on the screen, where they can be manipulated to assist diagnosis.

The improved technology is not only faster but also more detailed. We are already seeing the benefits of these improvements in our diagnostic imaging capabilities.



## Should I have my pet neutered?



As life slowly starts to return to normal after a tumultuous year, one of the things to consider as a pet owner is the subject of neutering. In fact – as well as preventing unwanted pregnancies, there are a wide range of other benefits to neutering and we've outlined some of these below:

**Dogs:** In female dogs, heat periods (or seasons) usually occur twice a year and last

about three weeks. In both sexes, the urge to mate can lead to roaming, which can result in them becoming lost, injured or worse. There are also health benefits to neutering such as a large reduction in the risk of them developing mammary (breast) cancer if the neutering is done at a young age and also the prevention of otherwise life-threatening infections in their uterus, which occurs in around 1 in 4 entire bitches.

In male dogs, castration eliminates the risk of testicular cancer and makes prostate problems less likely as well. Also, for some it can have very positive effects on their behaviour.



**Cats:** Female cats will start their first season from as early as four months of age and may come into heat

every three weeks during the breeding season (in the spring and summer months). By neutering your cat early, as well as avoiding unwanted litters of kittens, you will also reduce the risk of mammary cancer later in life, which is often aggressive in cats.

Un-neutered male cats are more commonly involved in fights, putting them at increased risk of viruses such as FIV and Feline Leukaemia. They also mark their territory by "spraying" objects inside and outside your house with strong smelling urine.

As you can see there are a wide range of benefits to neutering your dogs, cats, rabbits and guinea pigs. Contact us for further information or to book your pet in for an operation.



### What about 'small furries'?

**Guinea Pigs** are sociable animals and should be kept in groups or pairs; males reach sexual maturity at 9-10 weeks, females even earlier at 4-6 weeks so it is essential that the male, at least, is neutered to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Housing guinea pigs with rabbits is not recommended.

**Rabbits** will also generally benefit from being neutered. Both sexes make much better, calmer pets and are also much more likely to live peacefully with others. Entire rabbits will often fight, even if related. Also over 80% of older un-neutered female rabbits may suffer with, and often die from, uterine cancer.

