

BOWRAL VETERINARY HOSPITAL

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2009

FLEA PREVENTION IN WINTER – IS IT NECESSARY ?

Many people think fleas are not a problem during winter and stop their flea prevention program. It has been a particularly bad season this summer and many eggs – up to 50 per flea per day – may have been laid in the home environment. Heated homes and any other warm areas can allow flea eggs to continue to hatch over the winter months. If flea numbers are low, pets may not appear especially itchy but there will still be an ongoing increase in numbers of eggs in the environment. Come Spring/Summer and the warmer weather this will

Hospital Hours

8.30 – 5.30

Mon – Fri

8.30 – 12noon

Saturday

Consultations

8.30-5.30

Mon – Fri

9.00-12 noon

Saturday

10.00-11.00 am

Sunday

Phone 48611 444

result in another flea plague. So, if you have had any fleas earlier this year, continue with your prevention program through winter and over spring and Summer. With persistent treatment of all pets using the newer effective flea treatments it is possible in many instances to remove the flea burden from the environment. Remember to treat all your pets and don't hesitate to ask the staff for help if you are unsure which treatment is the most appropriate for your pet.

CAN YOU WORM YOUR CAT?

Don't worry. This is a common problem for many cat owners. Cats hate pills, especially bitter worm tablets. Luckily there is now an easy alternative.

Profender is a spot-on product, similar in application to the spot-on flea products. It is simply applied to the skin at the back of the neck and will treat all worms including tapeworm. Just apply every three months and relax.

ARTHRITIS

As the weather cools many older cats and dogs will suffer from arthritis. Subtle changes are sometimes overlooked by owners, especially in regards to cats. A reluctance or difficulty rising, becoming less active, tiring on walks or a reduction in appetite could reflect the pain and stiffness of arthritis. Other

pets will lick or groom excessively especially, but not always, at the site of pain. Not all dogs will limp but may become irritable or aggressive. Cats often will only show a reluctance or inability to jump up or down. This time of year is a good chance to have older pets examined for evidence of arthritis or other illness. There are many safe and effective treatments and strategies which can be put into place to help our older pets through the cold of winter. Simple things like extra warmth at night in the form of a jacket or heated bed, good protection from the cold winds and ensuring all bedding is off the cold ground. Reduction of excess weight is an important strategy to reduce the pain of arthritis and its progression. Neuroceuticals like fish oils, glucosamine and chondroitin can help in some cases. For those pets with demonstrable pain, non-steroidal antiinflammatories and a course of cartrophin can prove very beneficial and are well tolerated by dogs and cats. Keeping up gentle, strength building exercise is very helpful. Diet is also integral to the management of arthritis. As mentioned, maintaining a healthy weight and feeding a well balanced good quality food is important. Weight loss diets are available and Hills make JD diet, a specially formulated diet for dogs with osteoarthritis. This has proved very beneficial for some of our patients.

A QUICK QUIZ FOR AGED PETS

Have you noticed any of these ?

- a change in thirst
- a change in appetite
- a change in weight
- a change in behaviour
- panting
- difficulty exercising
- bad breath
- a change in coat
- urinating more
- a change in faeces
- vomiting
- incontinence
- stiffness
- lameness

A yes to any of these symptoms could indicate one of the many problems that tend to affect pets as they age. If you have noticed any of these changes please schedule an appointment and we will give your old pet a really thorough check over. And for the months of June and July we are offering all senior pet health checks at a **discount of 50%**. This will include a **free** urine check which can provide valuable information about kidneys, liver, diabetes and other endocrine problems. Please phone reception for an appointment and peace of mind.

BARGAIN COAT SALE

It's on again. We have a number of dog coats available to warm your pooch.

Selected sizes have been reduced by a massive **50%**. So come on in and see if there a style for your dog. Reception will happily help to find the right size for you.

TO VACCINATE OR NOT VACCINATE ? THIS IS THE QUESTION

Most pet owners are aware of the need to vaccinate pups and kittens. Vaccination begins at six weeks of age (even earlier in at risk groups) and continues to the last vaccination at sixteen weeks of age.

Parvovirus in pups and the flu viruses in kittens can be serious enough to cause death and sometimes chronic recurring upper respiratory tract signs in cats. These diseases still occur with frequency in some areas. Parvovirus, in favourable conditions, can persist beyond twelve months in the environment. It is very important therefore that pets are vaccinated again at their first yearly booster (generally twelve months after their last puppy or kitten vaccination) and regularly through life. The kennel cough vaccination must be given at least every twelve months and if at risk more frequently. Older pets, like juveniles, are at greater risk as the immune system ages and should continue to be vaccinated. The more isolated a pet, the more likely they will not naturally booster their immunity and possibly will be more at risk.

As with people, there is increasing evidence that the frequency of vaccination during the middle stages of life may be reduced. While this is possible with Distemper, Hepatitis and Parvovirus in dogs and Panleukopaenia and flu viruses in cats, it does not apply to vaccination against canine cough.

As you can see vaccination is still a very important aspect of veterinary preventative medicine. However, we feel the yearly health check (that is included with every vaccination) is equally important. While most pets appear healthy through middle age, many preventable and manageable conditions can be diagnosed early as a result of a thorough physical examination and pertinent history. Chronic ear disease, dental disease, diabetes, behavioural problems and heart disease, just to name a few, can first present themselves in still quite young animals. Addressing these conditions in the early stages can often resolve the problem or greatly improve the outcome for your pet. Since pets cannot speak to us and symptoms can often be very subtle, even the most diligent owner can overlook the early signs. A yearly visit to the vet can help ensure your pet enjoys the longest and healthiest life possible.