

smalltalk

Working together for a healthier future

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Antibiotic awareness

Reducing the use of antibiotics in pets

Inside...

Breeding Laws

We explain the new breeding regulations put in place by Defra in 2018

Saying goodbye

The difficulty of euthanasia and handling bereavement

Parasite control

How intestinal worms affect dogs and cats in the UK



My first kitten...





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Antibiotic

awareness



Recently the Government declared that drug-resistant super bugs are as big a threat to humanity as climate change. This announcement was given as a new five-year plan to tackle the problem was unveiled. As part of this, there has been a commitment to reduce antibiotic use in animals by 25%, from the 2016 levels, by next year.

As veterinarians we rely on antibiotics to treat bacterial infections but, with their repeated use, bacteria can evolve to become resistant. This means that we need to create new antibiotics to fight what are now being termed 'superbugs'.

The problem? We can't create antibiotics at a fast enough rate to beat bacterial resistance, and so, infections we once considered easy to treat may become a significant health issue.

How can we help prevent this?

Resistant bacteria multiply and circulate between humans and animals which means it's the responsibility of every one of us to avoid antibiotic misuse and help minimise resistance. This ensures antibiotics are still effective when they are needed the most and the veterinary profession as a whole is committed to correct prescribing. This involves using the appropriate antibiotic only when and where it is needed.

Keep in mind that antibiotics might not be appropriate for your pet's issue

Antibiotics only work against bacterial infections because the drug only targets bacterial cells. Diseases caused by other microorganisms, for instance, viral infections, cannot be cured with them. Also some infections may not necessarily need antibiotics, for example skin wounds can often be effectively treated with appropriate cleaning and management. Therapies such as topical honey are becoming more popular and are very effective.

Don't use antibiotics that were not prescribed for your pet

This includes both using antibiotics prescribed to someone else as well as re-using old antibiotics you might still have with you. There are many types of antibiotics with different uses, and they might not be appropriate for your pet's current issue. Furthermore, certain compounds are toxic to some species, and you could be giving them something harmful.

Carefully follow treatment duration

Even though your pet might be feeling better after a while, it's crucial that you give them the full course of antibiotics as prescribed by your vet. Not completing the course will often not resolve the infection and leave resistant bacteria in your pet's body, making it harder to treat.

Don't change the dosage on your own

Increasing the dosage will not make antibiotics work any better or reduce the duration of the treatment. If you feel your pet is not getting better when they should, don't take treatment into your own hands. Instead, it's better to talk to your vet about your concerns, and they will do further tests to evaluate the need to change the dosage, duration or even the type of antibiotic.

And don't forget... prevention is the best medicine! The less we have to use antibiotics, the more we can avoid bacteria developing a resistance to them.

New breeding laws explained

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As of the 1st of October 2018, new dog breeding regulations were put in place by Defra. These regulations only apply to England; Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are not affected by these changes. There are a number of significant changes to breeders in England, which are explained below.

A licence must be obtained by anyone breeding 3 or more litters of puppies in any 12-month period and selling at least 1 puppy. The previous litter threshold of 5 or more in a 12-month period has been reduced to 3 or more litters per 12-month period. This means that anyone over this threshold will have to apply for a licence, unless the breeder can prove the puppies were not sold. This also includes the sale of adult (over 6 months of age) dogs.

Anyone in the business of breeding and/or selling

puppies (including breeders who sell one or two litters in a 12-month period) may require a license if the breeder is deemed to be breeding and advertising a business of selling dogs. This is not restricted to registered businesses - individuals can also be classed as a business depending on the extent of their activities.

The Government has provided guidance on what local authority inspectors should consider when assessing whether a breeder meets the business test.



Star Rating System

The regulations include a 1 to 5-star rating system. The new system has been designed to reward high performing breeding enterprises and to help the public identify good breeders. Two factors are considered when awarding the star rating: the **welfare standards** against which the breeder is operating, and their **risk rating**, which is based on whether the breeder has a history of meeting these standards.

Animal Welfare

The Government's guidance document sets out the minimum requirements that all licensed breeders will be required to meet, and is based on the current licensing conditions for dog breeders. These conditions include:

- Suitable housing/environment
- Adequate exercise
- Suitable diet
- Protection from pain, suffering, disease and injury
- Animal handling and socialisation
- Provision for emergencies

Breeders will have to have adequate records and written procedures around the cleaning of the facilities, feeding regimes, prevention and control of the spread of disease and monitoring the health and welfare of their dogs.

Risk Rating

The second considered factor used to award the star rating is the breeder's compliance history. This is to determine whether the breeder is a low risk or high-risk operator and whether the breeder would maintain their standards for the duration of their licence period. As well as meeting the welfare standards stated above, the breeder will also have other criteria considered, such as:

- Length of time the applicant has been in the business
- Experience
- Size of facility
- Buyer feedback
- Quality of record keeping

To obtain a low risk rating, breeders will need to demonstrate they have been maintaining acceptable standards for a minimum of

three years. Only compliance history which has been obtained either through local authority licensing or through a UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) accredited scheme, such as the Kennel Club Assured Breeder Scheme, will be considered.

At first, breeders who haven't held a dog breeding licence before, or haven't been members of a UKAS accredited scheme for a minimum of three years, will automatically be categorised as high risk and will not be able to gain the highest star rating and benefit from a three-year licence duration. In time, breeders operating to higher welfare standards and who have a history of maintaining these standards should receive a higher star rating, whilst those who are operating to the minimum standards and have no compliance history should be awarded a two-star rating. A one-star rating will be awarded to breeders who have minor failings.

Anyone breeding only Assistance Dogs or dogs intended to be used as Assistance Dogs, keeping or training animals solely for military, police or sporting purposes are exempt from needing a licence.





STOP

WORMS DEAD

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There are four types of intestinal worms that affect adult dogs and cats as well as kittens and puppies in the UK. Roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms and whipworms. Although not technically an intestinal worm, lungworm is fairly common in the UK and can cause serious disease in dogs and cats.



How does my animal pick up worms?

Puppies and kittens can pick up worms directly from their mother through eggs passed in the faeces. Or interestingly they can also be infected whilst still inside their mother (puppies only) and from the dam's milk (puppies and kittens). This means that puppies can be born with fairly established parasite infections, and kittens infected shortly after birth. It is

for this reason that your vet will strongly recommend worming a pregnant dog or cat as well as your puppy or kitten from a young age. Remember to ask your vet about specific treatments and protocols for your pregnant animal.

Another major source of infection is from contaminated soil as well as grooming themselves and each other or consuming contaminated dirt from their

coat. Eating infected animals e.g. rodents and birds can pass worms to both dogs and cats. A serious tapeworm (echinococcus) can be transmitted to dogs and cats when they ingest infected offal. Raw fed dogs can also be at risk of echinococcus if the meat is not handled correctly. For further information

regarding raw fed animals and hunting cats please discuss with your vet.

An often forgotten mode of transmission of tapeworm (diphylidium caninum) to dogs and cats is via fleas (a vector).

Ensure your dog has comprehensive flea control.

What signs of infection will I notice?

You will rarely see adult worms in your dog's faeces except tapeworm, occasionally, this is especially true for cats. The only way to detect worms in your dog or cat is to take a sample of the faeces and look at it under the microscope.

Puppies and kittens are more severely affected by large worm burdens; typically you will notice a large pot belly, failure to gain weight and can, in some cases, lead to severely poorly animals or even death.

Can worms infect humans?

Put simply the answer is yes, although uncommon, humans can be infected with roundworms or tapeworms from dogs and cats. Immunocompromised individuals, the very elderly or very young are most at risk.

How can I treat and prevent worms?

It is essential that your puppies, kittens, dogs and cats are receive worming treatments regularly.

It is critical to ensure your animals weight is accurate to ensure dosing is effective. Giving a lower dose than required could be detrimental to the efficacy of the product.

There are several different types of wormers available with varying modes of action. Specific worming protocols and frequency of administration may depend on the individual and their risk status, please ask your vet about this for up to date advice, and to ensure your animal has comprehensive worm control.



Martin Andrews BVSc MRCVS Cedar Veterinary Group

Euthanasia and handling bereavement

Parting with your pet at the end of their life is hard - they give so much joy and reward and we form strong bonds with them.



When the time comes to say goodbye to your pet...

We have their best interests at heart and, difficult though this can be, sometimes it means making decisions about their end of life care and considering if euthanasia is an appropriate course of action.

When do I need to think about this?

When a pet's quality of life has deteriorated, euthanasia is a choice that we can make to relieve their discomfort or debility. Your pet will not understand what is happening as they become incapacitated. Sometimes a pet can have an acute crisis that is unresolvable, and a decision to euthanase is fairly clear cut. We may know that an animal with a terminal or chronic painful illness will need to be put to sleep, but it is sometimes difficult to know when. Your vet will be able to discuss your pet's quality of life and help you know when.

Preparation

Spending a little time thinking about options helps make the process a little less traumatic. Consider where you would like this to happen. Most euthanasia consultations happen at the surgery, and your surgery will often try to make an appointment away from busy times, or put you in a separate room on arrival. Home visits can usually be arranged and this may be appropriate if your pet has mobility issues or finds going to the surgery stressful.

Consider who you would like to be there, and what you would like to do with your pet afterwards. Home burial is possible, but most clients opt for cremation, with or without return of ashes. If the latter, you may wish to enquire regarding services provided, and arrangements can usually be made via your vet.

Process

The process itself usually involves an intravenous injection of an overdose of an anaesthetic type drug. Administration of the injection is a painless procedure, and the drug takes effect quite quickly.

Support

However 'right' the moment is, this will be an upsetting event. The grief is significant and there are often feelings of loss, loneliness and guilt. Friends and family can be a great comfort - they will have known the pet too and will understand what you are going through. Pet organisations such as the Blue Cross have a support line for bereaved pet owners.



My first kitten

Rosemary Ginn MRCVS BVM BVMedSci
Allen & Partners Vets



I've got a new kitten, now what?

Choosing a Kitten

When choosing your kitten you should look for a bright, confident healthy looking animal with bright eyes, no discharge or crusting and a glossy coat. Make sure all the kittens in the litter look healthy and check for signs of diarrhoea or a pot belly. The kittens should have been regularly handled by their breeder, this will mean that your pet will be much more confident, friendly and less afraid.

Your kitten should be able to join you in your home at 8 weeks old.

What will I need when I bring my kitten home?

- Litter tray and cat litter similar to the litter used in the kittens old home (preferably more than one tray)
- Separate food and water bowls
- Kitten specific food
- A pet bed for your kitten
- Toys for your kitten to play with

- A Feliway adaptor. Feliway adaptors release a hormone which reduce anxiety in cats. These adaptors may be useful to make your kitten feel calm and relaxed as they settle into his or her new home.

Food and Water

Kittens need to be fed little and often as they have small stomachs which cannot absorb the nutrients they need if fed large infrequent meals. Kittens between 2-3 months should be fed 4 times a day and kittens between 3-6 months can be fed 3 times a day. Kittens can be switched to adult cat food at around 6 months. Check the label for feeding guidelines to know the amount to give. Your new kitten should not be given milk, only water, cats are in fact lactose intolerant!

When can my kitten go out?

Kittens should not go out until 2 weeks after their 2nd vaccinations. It normally takes a cat at least 2 weeks of staying

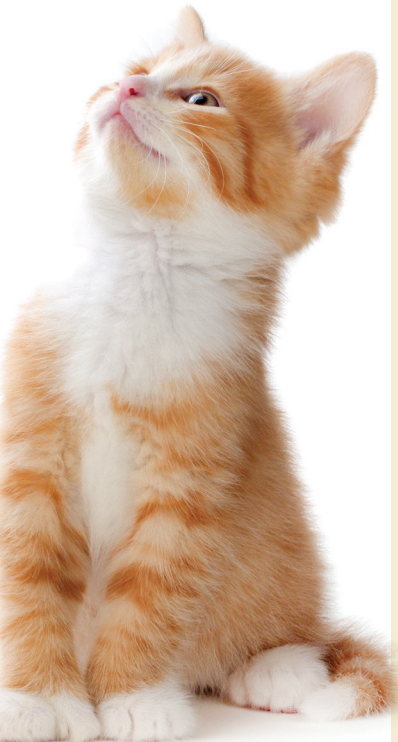
inside until they will return to your home when they are let outside. It is advisable not to let your pet out until they have been neutered at 6 months old in order to prevent unwanted pregnancy and fighting.



Keeping your kitten indoors at night decreases the risk of your kitten being involved in a road traffic accident.

My kitten and other cats

Cats are often happiest living on their own in a single cat household. Cats get stressed by being in the territory of other cats so it is important to provide enough resources for each pet. Each cat should have their own beds, food and water bowls, preferably in different locations around the house and you should provide a litter tray for each cat plus one extra tray.



A Trip to the Vets

Once you have brought your kitten home you should register with a vet practice and take your kitten in for a check up. Your vet will listen to your kittens heart, check the gender of your kitten and check that your kitten is healthy and well.

They can also advise you on several things:

Flea and Worm Treatment

Your kitten should be regularly treated for fleas and worms, as these little creatures aren't just annoying, they can cause serious health problems for you and your pet!

Fleas can cause flea allergic dermatitis, anemia, and can also live in your home in your carpet and soft furnishings.

Worms can cause vomiting and diarrhoea in your kitten and certain species of worm can infect people as well causing serious health issues.

Fleas and worms can be prevented by monthly treatment in the form of a spot on and/or a tablet. There are many different flea and worm treatments out there. It is best to buy flea and wormer directly from your vets as treatments sold in pet shops often aren't strong enough to kill the parasites or may contain medications that the parasites are resistant to.

Ask your vet which flea and routine they recommend for you and your lifestyle.

Vaccinations

Cats are vaccinated against many diseases which may be harmful or deadly. The diseases we routinely vaccinate against are, Feline Panleucopenia, Feline Herpes Virus and Calicivirus, Feline Chlamydia and Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV). All these diseases are vaccinated against with one injection.

Your kittens first vaccinations will be at 9 weeks old with a second set of vaccines 3 weeks later. After the second set of vaccines it will take 2 more weeks for immunity to develop so your kitten should be kept inside. After the second set of vaccines cats will need booster vaccines once a year.

Microchipping

A microchip is a tiny chip which will be inserted under the skin of your kitten. It contains a number which is unique to your kitten and the microchip will be registered to a database meaning that if your pet is lost, stolen or injured the microchip will identify that your kitten belongs to you and you can be contacted.

Should I Neuter my Kitten?

Neutering is typically done at 6 months old and is a routine surgical procedure which involves removing the testicles of a male cat or the uterus of a female cat. It is a surgery performed regularly by vets and has many benefits.

Males: Neutering reduces the chances of your tom cat spraying in the house. A neutered tom cat will be less likely to get into fights with rival males which can injure your cat and spread diseases such as FIV. It also reduces wandering behaviour. Unneutered males often wander many miles in search of a mate which increases the risk of them getting lost or getting into an accident on the roads.

Females: An unneutered female cat and her kittens can be responsible for producing thousands of kittens. A female cat becomes fertile at 6 months and can have up to 3 litters a year so neutering is a must if your pet is going to be allowed outside where they may meet other cats.

What to expect: Neutering is a routine procedure and your pet can typically go home on the same day that they have the surgery. They will be sent home with pain relief and may initially be a bit sleepy from the anesthetic. You will need to keep your kitten quiet after the surgery and female cats will be seen for a post surgery check up a few days after the operation to check that she is healing well.

Insurance

You should consider pet insurance for your kitten in case they become ill or need long term veterinary treatment in the future. Insurance will mean that you can provide the best quality care for your ill pet without the worry of money.

Your vet can advise you on what to look for in an insurance policy. You should look for a policy that

- Provides adequate veterinary fee cover - remember an illness or accident can cost hundreds or thousands of pounds!
- Has life-long cover for your pet
- Does not have a limit on how long you can claim for each illness.



Dog food made from insects to go on sale in UK for first time

Taken from an article in [The Guardian online](#), by Rebecca Smithers. Thurs 10th Jan 2019

The UK's first dog food made from insects went on sale in January, which its manufacturers say could help reduce the environmental damage caused by the massive volumes of meat routinely fed to dogs and cats.

Globally, pets consume about 20% of the world's meat and fish, a number set to rise with the trend for consumers to

feed them human-grade meat. Pet food is also estimated to be responsible for a quarter of the environmental impacts of meat production in terms of use of land, water, fossil fuels, phosphates and pesticides. Insects provide a relatively high 40% of the protein in the new product. They are dried and ground with oats, potato and 'natural botanicals'. The current version comes in the form of dried pellets, although the manufacturer says it hopes

to launch a 'wet' version later in the year.

Environmental experts have long recommended insects as a relatively sustainable food source that could help end world hunger and reduce the damaging environmental impact of meat production. Insects are also very nutritious, containing essential proteins, fats, minerals and amino acids, and are easy for animals to digest.

