

## The Vale Veterinary Centre Small Animal Newsletter

### TORTOISE HEALTH CHECKS

If you have a tortoise that has hibernated this winter then they will be waking up now. This is a critical time for tortoises as they are often weak, dehydrated and more vulnerable to infections. A healthy tortoise should start to drink, eat and urinate within 5-7 days of waking up.

Post-hibernation anorexia is a common problem and can be suggestive of serious health problems.



**Why not call the surgery now on 01884 35558 to book your tortoise in for a post hibernation health check.**

### Staff News

We have a change in our reception team, Amy House has a new job in the French Alps, which she is enjoying, whilst

also perfecting her skiing technique! We wish her all the best for the future. We welcome Caroline Bowd and Tina Walters, our new receptionists, who join the team in April.



### APRIL IS LUNGWORM AWARENESS MONTH



Please see overleaf for more details



Congratulations to Erin, one of our qualified veterinary nurses who is expecting her first baby in September.

**HAPPY EASTER TO ALL OUR CLIENTS**  
Be careful where you put those chocolate eggs, they are poisonous to dogs!!!



### DOG GROOMING NOW AVAILABLE AT THE VALE VETERINARY CENTRE, CULLOMPTON

Here at the Vale Veterinary Group we are always looking at ways to improve the services to our clients.

For this reason we are now offering a grooming service, which will be run by Jamie, one of our registered veterinary nurses and Lorraine, an experienced dog groomer.

#### Why come to the vets to have your dog groomed?

- High quality service run by qualified, experienced staff
- Veterinary nurses can advise on preventative healthcare and nutrition
- If there is any evidence of skin disease, ear problems or any 'lumps or bumps' our vets can advise on the best way to manage these conditions

**To book, phone us and speak to Lorraine or Jamie at Cullompton on 01884 35558**



## It's Lungworm Awareness Month!

**Dog owners beware.....** All dog owners should be aware of and be vigilant for signs of Lungworm infection. This is a serious disease which can be fatal if not recognised early and treated correctly. Lungworm infection is caused by the parasite *Angiostrongylus vasorum*, which is relatively common in the South West of England.

Dogs become infected through eating slugs and snails which can carry the larvae of the parasite. While some dogs will eat these common garden visitors on purpose, the hidden danger arises from small slugs and snails which can be accidentally swallowed when dogs are drinking from outdoor water bowls, playing with toys left out in the garden, or rummaging through the undergrowth.

Certain slug species appear to be more effectively surviving through the winter, meaning they become more abundant in certain areas, while our recent wet summers favour breeding conditions for slugs and snails. Experts believe these factors could be aiding the spread of the disease. Movement of foxes, which can also become infected with the parasite, may also play a role in spreading the disease.

Dogs which have picked up a lungworm infection can show a number of different symptoms. As you would expect dogs may cough or have breathing difficulties. Dogs may also show general signs of being unwell including weight loss, reduced appetite and vomiting. The most serious potential consequence of infection is persistent bleeding, both internally and externally and even from minor cuts.



**Are your pet's vaccinations up to date – dogs and cats need vaccines annually and rabbits need vaccines twice a year – contact the surgery for more details or to book an appointment**



### Hidden dangers in the garden.....

Spring bulbs can be fatal if dug up and eaten by your dog, in fact all parts of the daffodil plant can be poisonous to dogs and cats.

Lillies are extremely toxic to cats both those growing in the garden and cut flowers, they may even be fatal.

Other plants potentially toxic to your pets include cherry laurel, laburnum, yew and lily of the valley. Before you buy new plants for your garden – check whether they are poisonous.

Also don't forget slug bait, fertilisers and weed killers can all be poisonous to pets.

**The Vale Veterinary Centre.  
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### Does your cat have high blood pressure?

Hypertension (high blood pressure) is a common problem in people, often associated with smoking or a stressful lifestyle. In older cats we regularly diagnose hypertension and it is almost always caused by an underlying disease.

The most common cause of hypertension in older cats is kidney failure, but it is also seen in association with hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid gland function) and heart disease. There are also other less common diseases which can also lead to high blood pressure.

If a cat has hypertension, then the blood within its vessels is under higher pressure than normal, this can lead to bleeding or blood clot formation. If this occurs in the eye, it can lead to sudden blindness; in the kidney, it can cause or exacerbate kidney failure (with increased thirst, loss of appetite and vomiting); if bleeding occurs in the brain, then stroke-like symptoms can occur and if in the heart then heart failure can be the result. Also hypertension will generally make your cat feel rotten, he may be more grumpy than normal or may go off his food.

Hypertension is easy to diagnose – we use small inflatable cuff, just as in people, it is a rapid and painless procedure which can be done by any of our vets or nurses. This is one of the tests done by the nurses in the 'Senior Cat Clinics'. If your cat's blood pressure is high (over 180mmHg) then we will recommend further blood and urine tests to check for an underlying disease.



The good news is that hypertension is easy to treat with inexpensive daily medication. This treatment will be lifelong and we will need to perform regular blood pressure checks.