

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of the Vale Veterinary Centre Small Animal Newsletter

My Pet is Scared of Fireworks - What Can I Do?

What with Bonfire night, Christmas and all the New Year Celebrations, this time of year can be very stressful for your pets. If left untreated fears can get worse with time and may escalate into a generalised noise phobia.

There are a few things you can do to help calm an anxious pet.

- Firstly create for your pet a comfortable den in a dark place
- With lots of bedding to dig and hide. Your pet needs to see their den as a safe and happy place so introduce them to it well in advance of fireworks night with lots of play and treats.
- On the night, make sure that dogs have had a good long walk and feed them before the fireworks start so that they feel more sleepy.
- Feed cats and make sure they are shut indoors.
- Shut all windows and curtains before it gets dark but leave the lights on to mask the flashes. Make sure there is some sort of background noise. Music with a strong beat is ideal.
- Most importantly carry on your normal routine, ignoring any attention seeking behaviours. This means not talking to, touching or looking at your pet as they may see this as you being scared. Any attention is rewarding their inappropriate behaviour.

Certain drugs, natural remedies and pheromone diffusers or sprays may help to make your pet less anxious, enabling them to cope better during these stressful times

In the longer term we can start to train an animal to respond differently to firework sounds. We do this by using a recording of similar noises played at a very low level. We can then teach your pet that the noise is actually a part of normal life. Introduction of rewards for calm behaviour helps pets to learn to associate the noises with good things. This can also be done for young puppies with lots of different sounds so they grow up to be much less scared adults!

COME IN AND PICK UP YOUR FREE 'FIREWORKS PACK' FOR LOTS OF PRACTICAL ADVICE
And if you have a phobic pet, please come and talk to one of our vets or nurses.



STAFF NEWS

EXAM SUCCESS

Gemma Summerhayes and Erin Wheeler passed their final examinations to become **Registered Veterinary Nurses**. Carly Fowler achieved a first in her BSc degree in Veterinary nursing science. She takes her final nursing exams this autumn.

Abi Dart succeeded in her first year nursing exams and enters her second year.

Congratulations to them all and to our team of nursing assessors who helped them!



NEW STAFF

We welcome Kate Bevan to the role of drugs manager, she oversees the supply and stock of medicine across the whole of The Vale Veterinary Group. Kate is familiar with the practice having worked in the office at our Tiverton branch. She takes over from Laura who is pursuing a career in the ambulance service. We wish Laura all the best.

FIGHTING THE FLAB THIS WINTER!



With the nights drawing in, it can be more difficult to find the time to walk your dog and your cat may prefer to settle down in front of fire, rather than go out and about.....

This doesn't help them if they are prone to weight gain, with exercise being an important part of keeping your pet fit and healthy. Unfortunately gradual weight gain may be missed by many owners and with over one third of our pets being overweight – it is a common problem.

Obesity is well known to be associated with many health problems in pets, these include arthritis, diabetes mellitus, heart disease, breathing difficulties and skin problems.

*Don't let the problem get worse over the winter months..... We can help! Book an appointment with one of our nurses for a **'free weigh-in'** plus exercise and diet advice appropriate to your pet!*

Fatal Attraction: Antifreeze is a Sweet But Deadly Poison for Pets

Ethylene Glycol, the main ingredient in almost all brands of antifreeze, has a sweet smell and taste, often tempting animals and children to drink the highly poisonous substance.

It only takes a few tablespoons of highly toxic antifreeze to poison your pet. Unfortunately a large number of animals that ingest antifreeze do not recover.

The first signs of poisoning may look like your pet is 'drunk' – your pet maybe really thirsty, urinate a lot more than normal and be a bit wobbly on their legs. The ongoing consequences of toxicity may include seizures, breathing difficulties, heart problems, coma and eventually irreversible kidney failure and death.

Ethylene Glycol is quickly absorbed by the body and once this happens even the most intensive veterinary care may be unsuccessful. It is absolutely vital that your pet is seen by a vet as soon as possible after ingesting the poison.



Congratulations to
Kate Fairclough, Cert. S.A.M.,
one of our partners, who has been awarded the

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
Certificate in Small Animal Medicine.

This is an incredible achievement requiring several years of extra study and hard work. The certificate demonstrates her experience and expertise in this area of veterinary medicine. She will be available for both internal and external referrals on a Thursday morning at Cullompton. Please phone to ask for an appointment.

Better still is to avoid the risk of poisoning by following this advice:

- Keep your pets out of the way when filling up your radiator/wash bottle
- Clear up any spilt antifreeze immediately and flush the area with lots of water
- Fix any leaks straight away
- Do not leave bottles of antifreeze where your pet can reach them
 - ✓ remember cats can climb up high and are very inquisitive!
 - ✓ do not leave bottles of antifreeze in the boot of the car if this is where your dog sits!
 - ✓ keep out of the reach of children for their own safety as well as that of your pets
- Consider switching to a brand of antifreeze that contains propylene glycol instead of ethylene glycol, which is less toxic to pets, but can still cause toxicity
- Don't let your dogs wander unattended near driveways, roads or garages where they may come into contact with antifreeze
- Some other products contain ethylene glycol too – such as paint and cosmetics and novelty snow ornaments.

BEWARE..... in the autumn and winter we usually see an increase in cases of antifreeze poisoning in dogs and cats, take care and avoid the risk!

Food for thought...



Small furries such as rabbits and guinea pigs make great pets. Like dogs and cats, they enjoy being stroked, groomed and being made a fuss of!

Unfortunately, a poor diet is all too often linked to health problems, such as overgrown teeth, obesity, fly strike and bladder stones. By taking a little bit of time in selecting a suitable diet you can help to keep your rabbit or guinea pig healthy, enjoying a long and active life.



We recommend that the majority of your RABBIT'S diet is made up of hay & grass. Small amounts of vegetables can be offered as a treat. 'Muesli' type mixes can lead to selective feeding, this then means your rabbit is getting an unbalanced diet, usually high in starch and low in fibre & calcium. This can be avoided by feeding a product like Burgess Supa Rabbit Excel, this food is made up of nuggets containing a balance of vitamins, minerals, fibre and calcium. There is also a diet specially formulated for over weight/rabbits prone to weight gain, and one for Junior/Dwarf rabbits. Don't forget to ensure a plentiful supply of drinking water too!



GUINEA PIGS need a diet high in fibre. In addition to this, they need high levels of Vitamin C. Guinea pigs will enjoy the addition of vegetables in their diet, so vegetables such as kale, broccoli and carrots can be added in moderation. To ensure your guinea pig is provided with the essential levels of fibre and Vitamin C, we recommend feeding Burgess Supa Guinea Excel as well as plenty of hay, grass and fresh water.



We stock all of the products mentioned above, plus some extra tasty variations!

10% off all Burgess Products in
October and November
Quote reference 'NEWS 10' for
your discount

- Timothy Hay with Dandelion & Marigold, 1kg. £3.93
- Supa Rabbit, 2kg. £4.37. (4kg £7.27)
- Supa Rabbit Tasty Nuggets with Oregano, 2kg. £5.13
- Supa Lite, 2kg. £5.03
- Supa Junior & Dwarf, 2kg. £4.99
- Supa Guinea Pig, 2kg. £4.62 (4kg £8.19)
- Supa Guinea Pig with Blackcurrant & Oregano, 4kg. £5.34