Welcome to the summer 2013 edition of our newsletter, bringing you seasonal and topical information and updates. This season is all about being outdoors and active, so we hope you will find the articles useful.

Keeping your rabbit healthy and fit.

Making sure you maintain a good care routine care for your rabbit is vital to their well-being.

Diet and dental care – Providing your pet rabbit with a well-balanced diet is perhaps the most important element of your care. Due to their digestive system and rate of dental growth, rabbits need a very high fibre diet (at least 70% hay/grass) and very little carbohydrate (starchy food) or fat. A rabbit’s teeth grow at 3mm a week!! and so they need the constant wear and tear of grinding their food. A natural diet of abrasive grasses and plants prevents overgrowth which could otherwise cause infection, abscesses and dental disease.

Flies - In the warmer months, a little more vigilance may be required in order to protect your rabbit from flies. Not only a general nuisance over the summer, flies can be a particular problem for rabbits if they have soiled bottoms as this offers an attractive spot for the flies to lay eggs. The eggs hatch into maggots and these feed on the rabbit’s skin and flesh. This can be both painful and potentially life threatening if left untreated. Prevention is better than cure, so check your rabbit’s bottom daily to make sure he/she is clean, and maintain a daily hutch cleaning routine. If you are concerned your rabbit may be suffering from fly-strike, please call us immediately.

A shady spot to rest – if your rabbit is in an outdoor run over the summer, make sure they always have a shaded area out of the sun to use to prevent overheating and sunburn.

Vaccinations – Rabbits are vulnerable to two potentially deadly diseases – myxomatosis and viral haemorrhagic disease. Your rabbit can be protected by a single annual vaccination, so do check with us to make sure your pet is up to date with their boosters.

Staff News

We are very pleased to welcome Dr. Samantha Holland, MRCVS, to join the team as a third vet at Mounts Bay Vets. Having worked in companion animal practice in Norfolk for the last three years, and before that in mixed practice in Devon, Sam has a broad base of experience and expertise. She is enjoying getting to know the beaches and moors along with her rescue dog, Drifter. Sam will also join our out-of-hours’ team of nurses and vets in providing emergency care from Longrock for all our customers.

Do check our waiting room noticeboards for information and updates next time you visit – especially note our new ‘who’s who’ display!

Introducing our new Puppy and Kitten PLUS PACKS.

We have put together this amazing bundle of puppy and kitten care essential for those first weeks to help you ensure the health and well-being of your new pet. The PLUS PACK is designed to give you both peace of mind and excellent value.

Each pack costs just £55.00 and includes:

+ Primary course vaccination
+ Kennel cough for dogs
+ Microchip
+ One month’s worming treatment
+ One month’s flea treatment
+ 4 weeks’ pet insurance
+ Free bag of puppy or kitten food
+ 10% discount voucher for kitten and puppy diet.

Vaccinations included protect your pet against these infectious diseases:

Dogs:

✓ Para influenza virus
✓ Distemper
✓ Parvo virus
✓ Infectious canine disease
✓ Leptospirosis disease

Cats:

✓ Cat flu virus
✓ Feline leukaemia virus
✓ Feline panleucopenia virus

Too much sugar (often added to commercial food as syrups or molasses) may also cause tooth decay and gastric problems. However, there are high fibre, no sugar commercial diets available to help ensure your rabbit gets enough daily fibre..
TOP TEN Facts about Fleas!

1. A female flea can lay 30 to 40 eggs per day.
2. The lifecycle of a flea is approximately one month, from egg to larvae, to pupae, to adult flea.
3. The pupae can remain dormant in the environment for up to 9 months waiting for heat and vibration to indicate good conditions for feeding and reproducing.
4. Flea pupae are so tough they can even survive a household fire.
5. There are over 2000 different species of flea in the world, ranging in size from about 1-8mm long.
6. Fleas can jump over 100 times their own height.
7. When it jumps, the flea accelerates roughly as fast as the Apollo space rocket (in proportion to its size).
8. Flea bites are the most common cause of an allergic reaction in the host’s skin.
9. There are about 10 species of house flea in the UK; the most common is the cat flea, *Ctenocephalides felis* which infests both dogs and cats.
10. The musical instrument the ‘ukelele’ is a translation of ‘dancing flea’ in Hawaiian. Local people likened the fingers of a sailor playing a small guitar to dancing or jumping fleas.

Top tips - How to Deal with a Flea Problem

If you think you have found fleas on your pet, you will also need to check the environment, i.e. places where your pet sleeps and rests.

Firstly treat your pet with a Prescriptions Only Medication flea treatment to kill any adults on them. Monthly spot-on treatments are designed to halt the lifecycle by killing the adult on its first feed.

Your pet should quickly recover from any itchiness caused by flea bites which may have been causing them to bite and scratch at the affected areas.

If you suspect you have fleas in the home, first vacuum the whole area - this will encourage any pupae (dormant adults in cocoons) to awaken in response to the heat and vibration; you can then use a recommended environmental spray to eliminate them. Don’t forget to check outdoor areas too and sweep out leaves and grass etc. where possible to minimise the chances of your pet becoming re-infested. Maintain a monthly treatment programme to ensure that no adult fleas are able to reproduce in your pet’s coat.

If your pet is suffering from a severe skin reaction and you suspect an allergy, do give us a call and get some advice!

Puppy socialisation and early training

A young puppy can greatly benefit from gentle and gradual exposure to new sounds and environments in the first three months of life. These early experiences can be very helpful in preventing the development of fears or anxiety in your puppy and support positive behaviour. Take advantage of your puppy’s natural inquisitiveness to make a range of environments become familiar, rather than threatening.

A week or so after your puppy has received a full course of vaccinations and has developed immunity, your puppy is ready to get out and about meeting other dogs and other animals. It’s a good idea to develop his/her horizons as soon as possible. Even before vaccinations are complete, you can build up your puppy’s confidence. Encourage him to explore the garden, different rooms in the house, perhaps introduce and familiarise him with the wider world on short car trips e.g. to the supermarket, the beach/seaside, school.

For more information on socialisation and behavioural questions, do ask us; we also have details of local puppy training classes.

DOG WALKING IN PENWITH
Where to walk your dog over the summer

During the summer months, the choice of beach walks available to dog owners can be quite limited, although there are some beaches, such as, Longrock and Wherrytown in Penzance, and Riviere and Mexico beaches off the Hayle Towans that remain open to dogs all year round.

However, as the beaches get busier, listed below are some suggestions for alternative coastal and inland walks:

- Rinsey Head, (turn off the A394 in Ashton) has a lovely walk along the coast to Trewavas Head or onto the beach. (National Trust free parking.)
- Porthkidney Sands, reached via Lelant Church.
- St Erth –Hayle river walk: starting at the bridge in St Erth, the path runs all the way to Relubbus.

Be aware of snakes wherever you are and keep your dog on a lead near cliff edges.

For further information, try www.visitcornwall.tv/ or pop into the practice for a map of the Penwith beach guide.

For further information on these or any other topics, please contact us on 01736 330331

We hope you find these articles useful. Please note, the information provided in the newsletter is of a general nature and not intended to deal with specific cases of illness or injury where the advice of a veterinary surgeon should be sought.