

Companion Animal Newsletter April 2015

LUNGWORM

Slugs and snails carry the lungworm larvae, and dogs can become infected when they accidentally (or purposefully) eat these common garden pests whilst rummaging through undergrowth, eating grass, drinking from puddles or outdoor water bowls, or pick them up from their toys.

Dogs of all ages and breeds can become infected, but younger dogs seem to be more prone to picking up the parasite, and dogs who are known to eat slugs and snails are also considered at high risk. Lungworm infections can result in a number of different signs, which may easily be confused with other illnesses, but improved detection methods including blood test and poo sampling mean more and more cases are now being confirmed. The picture shows the symptoms of lungworm, treatment is available and can result in full recovery, but as this parasite can be fatal it is important to consider prevention. Preventative products are available and with regular use prevention is easy to achieve. Your veterinary surgeon can recommend a parasite control programme for your dog. If your dog eats slugs and snails or is showing any symptoms, please arrange an appointment with one of our vets.



Easter Enemies



Easter time is upon us, and with it comes an abundance of chocolate but please remember that **chocolate is toxic to your dog!!**

Chocolate contains a substance toxic to dogs known as **theobromine**. This varies in concentration according to different types of chocolate, **dark/plain chocolate having the highest concentration**. If you suspect your dog has eaten ANYTHING containing chocolate please ring the surgery and ideally have the **product ingredients to hand**. Through a rough calculation we should be able to estimate whether we think your dog is at risk of exceeding the toxic dose.

Inducing vomiting is by far the easiest way to prevent the toxic effects of the chocolate. We can do this very simply with a small injection under the skin. **HOWEVER**, ideally this must be done **within 2 hours** of ingesting the chocolate otherwise significant absorption of the toxic ingredient will have started to occur already. If enough time has passed to mean that vomiting is no longer indicated then we must start **supportive care** for the dog including intravenous fluids and management of any symptoms as they occur.

Symptoms include:

- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- hyperactivity
- irregular heart rhythms
- seizures
- coma

If untreated, in the most severe cases, **chocolate toxicity can be fatal**. The earlier you contact us the more we can do to reduce the effects and the better chance we have of saving your pet's life **So please act quickly!!**



Check out our website www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk for more information about caring for your pet, special offers, vet and staff profiles and much more!



Rabbits, Rabbits, Rabbits!

There are estimated to be around 1.7 million rabbits kept as pets in the UK. Owning and caring for a rabbit is great fun and very rewarding, but it is a big responsibility and a long-term commitment in terms of care and finances. There are many different breeds and varieties of rabbit, varying in size, body shape and personality and typically, rabbits live for 8-12 years, but some may live for longer. Here is some great advice if you are considering owning a rabbit;

Rabbits love company and should be kept with at least one other but make sure your rabbits are neutered so we don't have unwanted babies, this also keeps the rabbit healthy and reduces the risk of fighting with each other.

Home sweet home

You will need; a large shelter where they can rest apart from each other, a large secure exercise area permanently attached to the shelter where they can hop, run and dig. A place to hide when they feel afraid or want to spend time alone and protection from hazards, bad weather, high and low temperatures and predators.

Food and drink

Fresh clean drinking water must be available 24/7 and lots of good quality hay and/or grass (growing or freshly picked grass is fine but NEVER feed lawnmower clippings). Rabbits love washed leafy greens such as cabbage, broccoli, kale and mint and a daily portion of high quality pellets—about two egg cups full are enough for a medium sized rabbit s.

Habitat

Rabbits need to be able to exercise, graze on growing grass, forage, hide and dig every day. They also love lots of safe toys to play with and chew. They love spending time with people and with gentle, quiet handling they are really rewarding pet.

Health care

Rabbits should be checked for any signs of pain, illness, injury or changes in behaviour every day and if you suspect any problems to contact us here at the surgery. We offer an annual vet health check and advice that your rabbit should have the appropriate vaccinations.

It is a great idea to bring your rabbit in for free nurse checks on a regular basis too so they can check your rabbit general health such as nail length, teeth check and coat check and they can also give feeding, neutering and healthcare advice. Please contact the surgery to make an appointment.

