

ARK VETS NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2024



Crazy for catnip

Catnip is a herb from the mint family. Nobody quite understands why it causes strange effects in cats, scientists believe that the brain interprets them as cat pheromones which causes their behaviour to go haywire.

It also acts as a natural mood enhancer, which may explain why cats like catnip so much!

Why do some cats not react to catnip?

Catnip's effects on cats can be different, about 30% of them don't have any reaction to catnip. Both kittens and senior cats are less likely to be affected as well.

How to give catnip to your cat

Catnip can be used to encourage good behaviour. If your cat needs extra exercise, you can make playtime more exciting by tucking catnip in their favourite toy. Catnip can encourage your cat to interact with certain toys. If you want to use a scratching post to sharpen their claws and keep them away from furniture, you can rub some catnip into the post or sprinkle some at its base. The catnip's effect on cats means that they'll pay attention and want to discover what this new toy does. If your cat adopts the sedated reaction (as opposed to the hyperactive response) you can also use catnip for cats that are anxious about traveling in the car. Sprinkle catnip in their carrier to help them make it through the journey stress-free.



SUGAR & SPICE & ALL THINGS NICE

Most pet owners are now aware that chocolate is toxic to dogs, but how many of you know that raisins, currants, sultanas and grapes surprisingly can cause renal failure in dogs, and it is possible that cats are susceptible too?

Dogs ingesting grapes or any of their dried fruits should ideally receive an anti-sickness injection asap and a dose of activated charcoal. Any dog with vomiting and late presentation after ingestion, should be admitted and assessed for kidney injury.

So please watch out for those foods left over from the Christmas feast, including mince pies, Christmas cake, Christmas pudding and Stollen.

Peanuts (including monkey nuts) and macadamia nuts can also cause gastro-intestinal problems.



DID YOU KNOW; a Polar Bear's skin is black and their fur is transparent, it appears white because of luminescence!



The facts about vaccinating your pet

Why do dogs and cats need vaccinations?

Vaccinations and booster vaccinations play an important role in protecting your pet from dangerous and potentially fatal diseases. Vaccines work by giving your pet a small amount of the bacteria or virus to be vaccinated against; this is usually a modified or dead strain, which is completely harmless. Doing this exposes their immune system to the virus or bacteria and trains their system to recognise and attack it. This means, should they ever encounter it in the future, your pet's immune system will be able to successfully fight it off, keeping them safe and healthy. Your vet will assess your pet's individual lifestyle and environment to decide which vaccines are essential to keep them safe and healthy.

What if my pet has missed their vaccination?

If your pet's vaccination is late or overdue, please talk to your vet as soon as possible. There is a short period of time that can pass before some vaccinations will need to be re-started. Your vet will be able to advise the best option for your dog.

Booster vaccinations for dogs

Many owners believe that once their pet has had their initial round of vaccinations, they're protected for life. Unfortunately, this isn't true. Annual booster vaccinations are needed throughout your pet's life to maintain their protection from harmful disease.

Some boosters are required every year, while others are needed every three years; this is because the protection they offer becomes less effective over time.

Do older animals still need boosters?

Older pets still need regular booster vaccinations to protect them from potentially fatal diseases, particularly as their immune system can weaken as they get older.



All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth..!



Animals get dental disease, just like we do, and this can affect their well-being and require treatment. Dental treatment is routinely carried out under general anaesthesia as it would be a lot to ask a pet to tolerate this procedure while they're awake!

Whilst under general anaesthetic, all the teeth will be checked, including under the gums using a probe, and a chart of your pet's mouth will be made. Missing teeth will be identified, and any teeth that are not working (loose, broken, retained or rotten) will also be noted as these will be painful to your pet. Dental x-rays can be used to examine deeper, checking the health of the tooth roots.

Your vet will want to remove any teeth that are causing pain or are deteriorating. In animals where the teeth are worse than initially thought, this may mean having some extractions, and/or further dental work at a second procedure.

All healthy teeth are scaled using an ultrasonic scaler. This removes tartar, scale and bacteria from the teeth and from under the gums. The teeth are then polished, smoothing the surface of the teeth, discouraging plaque and bacteria from adhering.

Why is it important to keep teeth clean?

Plaque on pet's teeth causes gum inflammation (gingivitis). If your pet has gingivitis, the edges of the gums may look red or darker pink than the rest of the gums and they may bleed when your pet chews on something or has their teeth brushed.



WINTER WARNINGS!



- ✦ **Salt and grit** used on roads in winter can irritate pets' paws. Wash paws if they come into contact with this. You can apply paw butter to your dogs' pads to help protect them from cracking.
- ✦ **Snow** can build up on dogs' paws causing discomfort. Keep hair between pads trimmed, so there's less hair for snow to gather on. Check in-between dogs pads for snow build up. You can soak any snow off in warm water.
- ✦ Cats often **shelter under cars** in cold and wet weather, or even climb inside bonnets to be next to a warm engine. Always check your car for visitors who may have climbed up inside.

Gradually, the gums shrink back, away from the plaque, but the plaque keeps creeping up towards the gumline. Plaque produces the hard material we call tartar, or dental calculus. The calculus is laid down on the surface of the teeth as the gum recedes and the plaque sits on top of it.

Gradually, the gums recede so much that the attachments between the tooth and its socket break down and this gum disease leads to loose and diseased teeth and an animal in pain and discomfort.

What are the signs of dental problems to look out for?

Your vet will check your pet's teeth at their annual health check, however it's a good idea to keep an eye out for these signs of dental problems in between visits;

- Bad breath which can be a sign of periodontal disease
- Red, inflamed or bleeding gums
- Excessive drooling
- Loose teeth
- Build-up of tartar (grey/brown substance on the teeth)
- Receding gum line
- Reluctancy to eat
- Pawing or rubbing their face
- Behaviour changes such as being less playful or not grooming as much.



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OPENING HOURS

We are open between
8.30am-6.30pm on Weekdays with
a late night opening to 7pm on Tuesdays
and 8:45am-midday on Saturdays.
Consultations and Nurse Clinics are by appointment.

On Monday to Friday consulting hours are:

- 8.45-10.30am
- 2.30-3.30pm
- 5.00-6.30pm (7pm Tuesdays)

On Saturdays our consulting hours are:

- 9.20-11.00am

Payment is required at the time of treatment

We provide 24 hour emergency cover, just phone the usual telephone number

Pet care over Christmas

Keep the number of an emergency vet on hand (**EVES—01392 284217**) in case of accidents or if your pet eats something they shouldn't.

If your pet is on medication, remember to stock up before the holidays so you don't get caught out!

