

ARK VETS NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2025



DON'T PUT OUT PET FUR FOR NESTING BIRDS, CHARITY WARNS!

Pet owners looking to help birds this nesting season should avoid leaving out dog or cat fur, warns independent charity SongBird Survival. Research from the University of Sussex, funded by the charity, has found **high levels of harmful chemicals from pet flea treatment in birds nests** lined with animal fur, leading to increased chick mortality rates.

Instead of putting out pet fur for birds, SongBird Survival is urging the public to install nest boxes to provide songbirds with a safe space to raise their young and shelter.

For more information visit: <https://www.songbird-survival.org.uk/categories/birds-and-pesticides>



As the weather starts to warm up, pet owners face a common problem—fleas and ticks. These pesky parasites can cause a range of issues, from itching and discomfort to more serious health risks.

Fleas:

Fleas are more active in warmer weather, making spring, summer, and early autumn their peak time. Central heating in homes allows fleas to survive and breed year-round, making them a potential issue even in winter. Prevention is key, and consistent flea control is recommended throughout the year.

Ticks:

Ticks are most active in the spring and autumn when temperatures are relatively warm and wet. Tick activity continues in winter but at a significantly reduced level. Being tick-aware and checking pets after outdoor activities is important throughout the year.

Prevention and Treatment:

- Regular flea and tick treatments are crucial, with options like collars, spot-ons, and tablets available.
- Maintaining a clean environment by regularly vacuuming and washing pet bedding is also important.
- Checking pets for ticks after spending time outdoors, particularly in wooded areas or long grass, is recommended.

Did you know; Honeybees use a form of "air conditioning" by collecting water and spraying it in their nest to cool it down!

Buckle up pet lovers, its allergy season!



Allergens are categorised into three main groups: flea bite hypersensitivity, food allergies and atopic dermatitis.

Flea bite hypersensitivity is the most common type of allergy in dogs and cats. When fleas bite, the saliva which is injected into the skin is what dogs and cats get sensitised to.

Symptoms: Cats may over-wash and groom themselves. Dogs will scratch and nibble at the skin. Due to this, the skin will develop little red spots known as papules.

Diagnosis: Simple tests such as coat brushings, hair plucks and skin scrapes may be carried out and viewed under a microscope.

Treatment: Regular flea treatment, vacuuming carpets and washing bedding your pet regularly sleeps on. For long term flea control the environment needs to be treated with an insecticidal product to interrupt the flea life cycle.

Food allergies can arise at any time, even if your pet has been eating the same food for months, even years. It is a reaction to a specific protein or food chemical in which the reaction manifests in the skin.

Symptoms: Cats will often scratch their head and neck but they can also overgroom elsewhere. Whereas, if a dog is considered to be itching more than "normal" and/or suffers from recurrent ear infections, they could potentially have a food allergy.

Diagnosis: The skin will need to be cleared from any infection and then a diet trial will be performed. If a food allergy is present, you should notice a reduction in any symptoms your pet previously displayed.

Treatment: The treatment for a food allergy involves keeping your dog/cat away from the food they are allergic to lifelong.

Atopic dermatitis is an allergic reaction to an environmental allergen which can either be seasonal or present all year round.

Symptoms: If the atopic dermatitis is seasonal, dogs and cats will only itch when the allergen is present (certain times of the year). But if it's all year around, the animal will constantly scratch their skin, lick and/or chew their paws and rub their face.

Diagnosis: Allergy blood tests and skin tests.

Treatment: If your pet is diagnosed with atopic dermatitis, they will require life-long management to control the condition as best as it can be. There are various treatment options available; Anti-itch medication, Immunotherapy, Antibacterial/antifungal treatments, Antihistamines, Essential fatty acids, Products to help to improve skin barrier function.



Canine pancreatitis—is your dog at risk?

Pancreatitis in dogs is potentially life-threatening — know the signs to look for.

There are a number of causes and risk factors that can bring on pancreatitis, though it often seems to appear out of the blue. It is important to know what to look for as the warning signs may not always be obvious at first, the symptoms might be mistaken for something less serious, and yet it is potentially life-threatening.

Acute Pancreatitis

An acute attack of pancreatitis means it **comes on suddenly**, with no previous appearance of the condition before. It can become life threatening to other organs if the inflammation spreads.

Chronic Pancreatitis

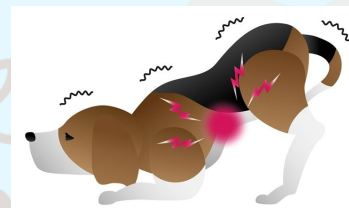
A chronic condition is one that has **developed over time, slowly, and often without symptoms**. This condition can result from repeated bouts of acute pancreatitis. Both acute and chronic forms can be either severe or mild, and **both result in pain**.

There are a number of causes and risk factors that can bring on pancreatitis such as;

- A high fat diet—this is a major cause, especially large helpings of fatty food in one sitting.
- A history of dietary indiscretion/scavenging
- Obesity
- Hypothyroidism and diabetes mellitus
- Certain medications or other toxins
- Genetic predisposition. Certain breeds or types of dogs have been associated with higher risks of pancreatitis such as Miniature Schnauzers and some of the smaller toy and terrier breeds.

Classic signs of pancreatitis in dogs:

- Hunched back/prayer position
- Repeated vomiting
- Pain or distention of the abdomen
- Diarrhoea
- Loss of appetite
- Dehydration
- Weakness/lethargy
- Fever



Treatment and management:

First and foremost, your dog's pain must be managed, and **early intervention** to prevent further complications is key. The most common treatment options are; intravenous fluid therapy in severe pancreatitis, vigorous monitoring and anti-sickness medication for vomiting (to prevent dehydration).

Long-term management includes: **vigilant monitoring of fat intake—no table scraps allowed!** Prescription diet of gastrointestinal supportive **low-fat food**, and feeding smaller, more frequent meals instead of one larger meal.



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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:

- 8:50 - 10:20am
- 11:00 - 12:30pm
- 3:00 - 4:10pm
- 5:00 - 6:30pm

On Saturdays our consulting hours are:

- 9:00 - 11:00am

Payment is required at the time of treatment

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



rapeseed concerns



At this time of year, posts circulating around social media regarding rapeseed are shared extensively and understandably worry many dog owners. Posts usually state that rapeseed is highly poisonous to dogs, and can cause signs including anaemia, blindness, damaged nervous system, digestive disorders and breathing problems.

These posts are misinformation. The signs mentioned are only seen in grazing animals, and most dogs remain asymptomatic after exposure to rapeseed. Dogs can develop gastrointestinal upset if they have ingested some of the plant, and there have been reports of skin reactions which resemble burns, but this is extremely rare and does not happen to every dog which comes into contact with it.