

Irritation Irritation Irritation!

Just think how much easier it would be if our pets could talk to us. With a few words of 'my leg hurts, my eyes feel sore, I have a toothache or I'm itching all over', we would immediately know they had a problem. But talking animals are only in the movies! So it is up to us, to look out for any unusual behaviour, like **excessive** licking, scratching and nibbling, as this could be your pet's way of telling you that something is up!

Nibbling the Itch If you have ever found yourself in one of those vicious circles, you will know just how frustrating it can be. The more you try sorting the problem, the worse it gets! For a moment put yourself in your pet's paws. There is an itchy patch on your leg. You have licked and nibbled to ease it, but the more you do, the more irritating it gets. You have made it very red and sore, and now the irritation has begun on the other leg too. This could be a skin condition developing, due to a number of possible causes. Maybe you have a bacterial or yeast infection, an allergy to food, house dust, or the environment. Ear disease, damp or poorly groomed coats, flea and mite infestations can also be a factor.

The Underlying Cause

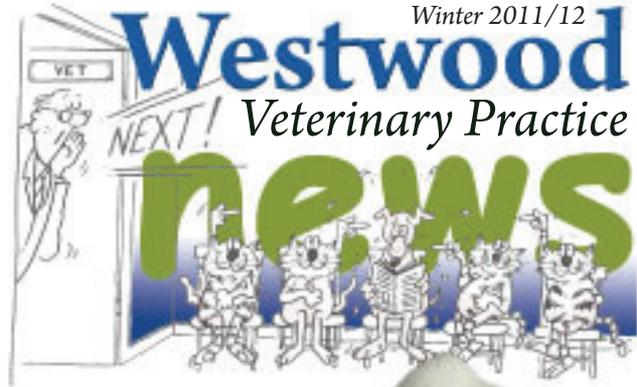
Skin conditions can develop anywhere on your pet's skin. Leaving them to continuously lick, scratch and nibble will only make matters worse, resulting in a non-stop and painful irritation for your pet. **It is important that the underlying cause is identified and treated.**

We will examine your pet, and have an in-depth chat about their lifestyle, what they eat, where they exercise etc. Skin and hair tests may also assist us in diagnosis.

Watch out for

- **excessive or constant licking, scratching and gnawing**
- **agitated behaviour**
- **redness/sore areas of skin** ● **hair loss**
- **pawing at the face or rubbing against furniture**
- **shaking head & ears**

If you notice any of the above, please bring your pet along for a check-up without delay.



Easing the Aches & Pains



As your dog or cat gets up from its cosy bed, have you noticed a slight stiffness or limping as they walk? Has there been a reluctance to exercise, or perhaps just climbing the stairs has become too difficult for them? These could be signs that your pet has developed **osteoarthritis**, which causes inflamed, stiff and painful joints. It generally affects middle-aged and older pets, but some younger animals can be affected too.

How and Why? The cartilage that helps cushion the joint and protect bones begins to deteriorate. The bone thickens in an attempt to protect the ends, causing pain and inflammation. This continues, only to cause more pain, more inflammation and gradually restricts mobility. The once agile life your dog enjoyed of long walks, or your cat nimbly climbing a tree, can become a thing of the past.

Treatment and Changes

Fortunately this condition can often be treated, to help your pet lead a better quality of life again. If they are showing signs of lameness or stiffness, then bring them along to the surgery for a check-up. After a full examination, if arthritis is diagnosed, there are options available to assist with improving their movement.

We may suggest a prescription course of treatment, to ease pain & reduce inflamed joints.

A few changes to their lifestyle could be required to help your pet manage this condition. **Maintenance on weight control** is important, as 'extra pounds' mean 'extra strain' on those sore joints. Advice is also given on correct and suitable exercise for your pet. **Supplements** such as glucosamine, may assist in reducing inflammation. **Special foods** are now available, which contain green-lipped mussel and fish oils to help soothe joints.



Westwood hours
Consultations by appointment only

Boston Spa
01937 842210
Monday to Friday 8.30am - 6pm
Saturday 8.30am - 1pm

Garforth
01132 320085
Monday to Friday 8.30am - 6pm

**24 Hour 7day
Emergency Service**
by our own Vets for
Pets Equine and Farm

Free FRONTLINE Combo Pipettes

During the month of October 2011, take advantage of our special offer 1 free pipette with every cat and dog 3 pack or 2 free with every 6 pack



What did the flea say to his wife when they came out of the movies?

Shall we walk home or take the dog?!

Remember, fleas are a year round problem that require regular and effective treatments to keep those nippy creatures at bay



Look a Little Closer...at your Cat

Do you think they have lost weight despite having a huge appetite? Are they behaving anxiously or appear agitated? If you answered yes, then a check-up might be in order for your cat, as they could be suffering from **hyperthyroidism** (over-active thyroid glands). This is a common condition, which we see in middle-aged and older cats.

The thyroid glands are found on either side of the trachea (windpipe). Their function is to regulate the body's metabolism by producing a hormone. If too little is produced everything slows down. If too much, the body's processes speed up. So it is very important that these glands function correctly to enable the body to run normally.

Hyperthyroidism is generally easy to diagnose through a combination of clinical signs and blood tests. In most cases, the imbalance can be rectified by medication or surgery. If you would like further information or have any concerns, please contact our surgery for an appointment.

Fireworks screech and fizz in the winter night,
But have you thought they may be causing a fright
To pets who are hiding under tables and stairs,
Nervous and bewildered at the sudden flares.

Spare a few moments to prepare a quiet place,
With toys, treats, blankets and a friendly face.
Play a game, be happy don't scold fearful pets,
And remember help and advice are here at the vets.



Staff in the Spotlight

We are very pleased to welcome three new staff members, who all joined the Westwood Team during Summer 2011.

Hazel Cathay Nursing Assistant
Hazel is settling well into her new role within our nursing team at Westwood. She is currently training and enjoying the hands on experience of caring for all our patients. Hazel has a great interest in the behavioural side of the canine world, and in childhood days, was known as the dog walker in her community, and at local animal rescue centres. Now with three pet dogs of her own to walk Doodles the Labradoodle, Cody a Border Terrier Cross and Cara a Border Collie, she also enjoys competing in dog agility classes, or as Hazel put it "my daughter competes and I try!"



Vicky Mitchell BVSc MRCVS
Veterinary Surgeon

After eight years of study, Vicky is now very happy finally doing the job she has always wanted, caring for animals. Qualifying from Bristol University in July 2011, she travelled from her home in Dorset to join our veterinary team. Vicky enjoys treating the wide variety of animals that visit our surgery, along with experiencing their varied personalities too!

Growing up on the family dairy farm, pets were large dogs like English and Bull Mastiffs, and although the species has now changed the size has not! Three alpacas Pacal, Groucho and Henry, a goat Misty and three cows Apricot, Gypsy and Fizz, all reside in Dorset.

In the past she has worked for the well-known animal charities RSPCA and PDSA. At Westwood she enjoys all aspects of her job, from chatting with our clients to being part of a team. She likes the great outdoors and camping. Walking, shopping, cooking and generally pottering around, are her relaxation hobbies, and if you see any new pictures on our surgery walls, they might be Vicky's, as she loves oil painting.



Alice Kutarski BVM&S MRCVS Veterinary Surgeon

Qualifying from Edinburgh in July 2011, Alice has a particular interest in dogs, cats and the equine side of veterinary work. During her final year of vet school Alice spent a month in Paphiakos, Cyprus at an animal spay/neuter charity clinic, which in her own words "was a brilliant experience and a great break from the Scottish winter!" Now back on British soil, Alice is enjoying all aspects of the varied days at the practice, which at times has her operating in the morning, and just a few hours later carrying out an equine consultation at the stables. Looking ahead, she would like to gain more experience and improve her skills in medicine and surgery. Outside of work, Alice likes baking and other hobbies include skiing, dog walking and running, the latter coming in very handy, as she has recently acquired a rescue whippet called Bertie.



www.westwoodvets.co.uk

Westwood

Veterinary Practice

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Everyday*