

# Lighten the Load

*When your pet is young they are agile and ready to run a marathon on their daily walk, but as age creeps in, so do the aches and pains.*

You may notice as your cat or dog rises from their cosy bed, a slight stiffness as they walk, maybe limping a little. Has there been a reluctance to exercise, or is even climbing the stairs more difficult? These could be signs that your pet is developing **osteoarthritis**, which causes inflamed, stiff and painful joints, so limiting their mobility. Osteoarthritis, generally affects middle-aged and older pets, but some younger, larger breeds can also suffer from this condition.

## What Happens?

Cartilage helps cushion joints and protects bones, but it begins to deteriorate > the bone thickens in an attempt to protect the ends > ouch! > pain and inflammation > the thickening continues > more pain > more inflammation > restricted mobility!

The once active life your dog enjoyed of long walks and ball games, or your cat nimbly climbing a tree and chasing leaves, can become just memories for your pet.

## Help is at Hand!

Don't despair; fortunately, osteoarthritis can often be managed to help your pet lead a better quality of life again. Any signs of lameness or stiffness, then bring your pet along for a check-up. If after a full examination arthritis is diagnosed, there are options available to help 'lighten the pain load' and improve their mobility.

- A few changes to their lifestyle might be required to help your pet manage the condition.
- We may suggest medication to ease pain and reduce inflamed joints.
- Maintaining an ideal weight is important. Extra kilos mean extra strain on those sore joints! We can give advice on suitable exercise for your pet.
- Special foods containing green-lipped mussel and fish oils may help soothe joints.
- Supplements such as glucosamine, could also assist in reducing inflammation.

*If you would like further information on osteoarthritis, please do contact us.*

**Claw Care** Curved with a very sharp tip, claws are made of keratin and grow in shell-like layers, which sheds when the outer layer is worn out. If you see a claw on the floor or in the scratching post, your pet has not lost a claw, it is only the shell. Claws grow continuously, but with use and scratching, the length is maintained by your cat. Indoor or elderly cats, may require their claws trimming. The pink quick in the middle, contains nerves and blood vessels. If cut, it hurts and will bleed, so bring your pet to the surgery. We are experienced 'claw trimmers'!

Claws are very important to your cat. They are tools used for climbing, self-defence, digging, grooming and catching prey. It is a natural urge for your cat to scrape its claws to remove the old layer. Unfortunately carpets and furniture can be the victims of this, so ensure you provide a scratching post indoors and encourage your cat to use it. You may even find he or she will choose a tree or fence post in the garden to do their manicure!

**To book a claw clip appointment call our friendly reception team.**



# Your Veterinary Practice NEWS

Winter 2017/18



## Now you see me Now you don't!

Cats are mystical creatures, balancing on small ledges and jumping great heights. They appear to have life in the palms of their paws, where at the very end you will find an amazing set of retractable claws! Look closely and you should see the sharp claw tips, which many of you have probably experienced, and as vets we have certainly received the odd scratch or two!

### Clever Claws

**Cats walk on tiptoe, so are known as digitigrade animals.**

**There are five digits on each front paw and four on each back paw.**

**Claws grow directly out of the bone (phalange) of each toe.**

**A tendon tightens to extend the claws outwards and relaxes to retract them into a small pouch.**

## Your Surgery Hours

and any other items you prefer to include

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# Parvovirus Vaccination = Protection



**Vaccinating your pet** will help protect him or her against infectious diseases such as **Canine Parvovirus**. Unfortunately, cases of this potentially fatal disease have been reported in various parts of the country over the past few years. Most at risk are young puppies and unvaccinated adult dogs.

The lining of the intestine, which helps to absorb vital nutrients, is attacked by the virus, causing severe bloody and nasty smelling diarrhoea, loss of appetite, vomiting and fever. A dog will become ill very quickly through dehydration and weakness.

## Diagnosis and Treatment

Tests are available to confirm this disease. If the result is positive, a special medication may be administered alongside important intravenous fluids and antibiotics.

**As always prevention is better than cure, so ensure that your puppy is vaccinated as soon as possible. If you are unsure whether your adult dog's vaccinations are up to date, please call us.**

**How is it transmitted?** Parvovirus is a very hardy virus. It can survive in the environment for many months, and is transmitted via infected faeces and in vomit. The virus can also be spread on shoes and clothing, carpet, flooring, dog bedding and feeding bowls.

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## Fireworks....

screech and fizz in the winter night, but for some pets they do cause a lot of fright!

**Follow our Five Firework tips** and remember, we have lots of help for pets and plenty of advice for owners, so please do contact us.

### 1. Create a Safe Haven

for your dog or cat in one room of your house.



### 2. Keep Your Pets Indoors



### 3. Do Not Comfort Your Pet

A hard one we know, but it can reinforce their worry.



### 4. NEVER Punish or Scold a fearful pet.

Play a game during the bangs and whizzes, it can encourage confidence.



### 5. Use a Calming Pheromone diffuser or spray.

Put on the TV or radio to mask the noise.



## Seasonal Pet Dos & Don'ts!

**Do.....** exercise pets regularly in the winter. It may be cold, but it's part of their routine care.

Put your dog on a lead near frozen ponds.

Rinse salt or grit from paws. Both can irritate skin.

Help our feathered friends in winter and top up the wild bird feeding table.



Check that small furries living outside have plenty of warm, dry bedding, unfrozen water and ensure that hutches are draught and rain/snow proof.

Supervise pets near log burners and open fires.

Clear away **antifreeze** spills. It tastes sweet to our pets, but can be fatal if ingested!

Store chocolate, foods containing it, grapes and raisins well out of reach, as these are very poisonous to your pets.



**Don't.....** give your pet too many treats. It can cause tummy upsets and unhealthy weight gain.

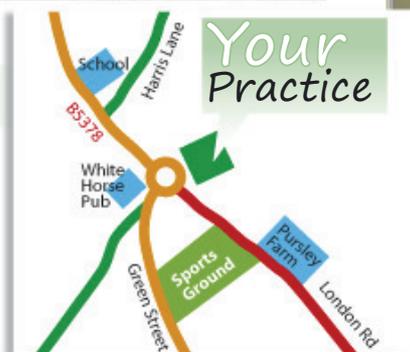
Feed turkey bones. These are sharp and can cause internal damage or get lodged in the throat.

Have real mistletoe/holly and their berries in your home. If ingested by your pet, both can cause vomiting, diarrhoea and drooling, plus blood pressure and breathing problems. Also a poinsettia's white sap is an irritant to the skin, mouth and throat causing itching and swelling.

Leave batteries or electronic cigarettes lying around to be chewed and swallowed. Both are extremely dangerous items for your pet.

Your Practice Logo

address, phone & website



## Your Photo

