



*"Caring for your pets
as we do our own"*

NEWSLETTER

Christmas 2011



Seasons greetings! Christmas time at the practice seems busier than ever this year, so we have lots of news to share. And of course, those all-important tips on keeping your pet safe during the festive period. We would like to wish all our patients and their families a great Christmas and New Year.

Shepton Vets Small Animal Team xx

In this issue...

- Your pet's diet
- Brand new xray machine
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- New faces

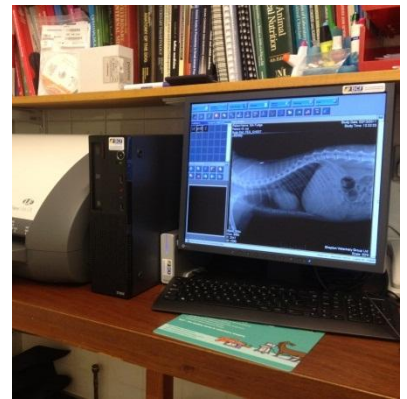
Digital radiography arrives at the practice

We all felt like Christmas had come early when our brand new xray machine arrived in the practice on the 1st of December. Our new system means that we are now equipped with up-to-the-minute digital radiography, for a better and more efficient clinical service.

Digital radiography represents a major advance on the traditional system. With no requirement for developing, images are received almost instantly and can be analysed and augmented on screen to ensure that we have all the information we need. This means that xray procedure times are much shorter for the patient – a real benefit when you consider that most pets need sedation or anaesthesia to have their xrays taken.

Furthermore, the images produced are higher quality which will help give us much more information when we are diagnosing and assessing your pet. And should we need to send xrays externally, such as to a referral service or for BVA scoring schemes, we can do so by email rather than post, cutting down on the wait.

So far, the new equipment is living up to all our expectations, making a huge difference to the service we provide for our patients. So if your pet ever does need radiography, you can at least rest assured that they getting as much as possible from the procedure.



**Don't forget to like
us on Facebook!**

Hello and farewell

In this newsletter we have a few new faces to welcome to the practice, and sadly, wave goodbye to some more familiar ones.

Newly qualified veterinary nurse Alex Lomas has made the decision to move to a practice in Bristol to develop her skills. We would like to thank Alex for her hard work during her time with us and wish her the very best for her new role. Filling Alex's shoes is our new student veterinary nurse Laura Pickford who will be training with us and has already fitted well into the team.

Our small animal department has recently expanded with the arrival of our new vet Greg Elliott-Moustache. Greg studied at Bristol Vet School and was really keen to settle in the



New small animal vet Greg

Somerset area, so we were delighted to welcome him to the practice.

We also have a new little face to welcome. Our Head Nurse Georgina Vernoum had a little baby girl in November so huge congratulations to her and the new family. While Georgina is busy on her maternity leave, Emma Neale will take on Head Nurse responsibilities, Carolyn Powles will manage nurse training and new nurse Kate Edgecock joins us as maternity cover, so welcome to Kate.

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Food for thought – are your pets what they eat?

We all know nowadays how much our diet can influence our health. So it is no surprise that we are just starting to learn that diet can help support optimum health in dogs and cats too. The most advanced canine and feline diets on the market now offer a concept known as tailored health nutrition – not only meeting basic nutritional requirements but incorporating health nutrients selected for individual specificities, to help maintain dogs and cats in the very best health and condition.

At the practice, we feel that helping you keep your pets healthy is just as important as being there when they are ill, and providing the best possible nutritional advice is just one part of this. So we now offer the Royal Canin Vet Care Nutrition range of lifestage diets for healthy dogs and cats.

Royal Canin is a globally successful brand but have their UK base just down the road in Castle Cary. They produce super-premium diets for dogs and cats, formulated to the best standards of quality, and specialise in tailored health nutrition.

The entire Vet Care Nutrition range is highly digestible, supporting digestive health and good stool quality, and has superior palatability, to ensure that your pet loves it. In fact, they offer a full palatability guarantee! Royal Canin's patented complex of antioxidant nutrients, included in all the diets, helps to support natural defences and cellular health.

The ranges are centred around the nutritional specificities of dogs and cats during each of their lifestages, from growth through to senior years, and particularly focuses on the changes brought about by neutering.

Although neutering is widely recommended for any dog or cat which will not be bred from, it does result in some metabolic changes which should be accounted for through diet.



In both species, neutering increases the risk of obesity, doubling the chances that a dog will become overweight. So it is vital that energy intake is reduced, by around 30% in dogs, as soon as neutering takes place, to help avoid excess weight gain and its detrimental effects on health and wellbeing. But this can be really difficult to achieve, especially as a neutered pet is likely to have a bigger appetite. So a diet formulated especially for a neutered pet can really help to reduce energy consumption whilst satisfying appetite.

What is more, the canine range accounts for the nutritional needs of different sizes of dogs – considering the differences in growth rate, life expectancy, energy needs, digestive capacity and health sensitivities.

In the feline range you will find a diet tailored to your cat's needs, but regardless of which is right for your cat, all adult diets benefit from a formulation to help support urinary health, dental hygiene and control of hairballs.

For more information about the Vet Care Nutrition range, or to make an appointment to speak to one of our nurses about your pet's nutrition, contact the practice.

For further information or advice on any of the subjects covered in this newsletter please contact the practice



KEEP YOUR PET SAFE THIS CHRISTMAS



Nobody wants any extra stress or hassle this Christmas, so take a quick look at our top tips to help avoid any hazards during the festive season.

- Ensure decorations are well-secured and out of reach. They are not designed as toys and can cause injury. And it's surprising what some pets choose to swallow, so digestive foreign bodies are unfortunately a frequent complaint at this time.
- Holly, mistletoe and poinsettia can be poisonous to pets so ensure they are kept in a safe place and clear away any fallen berries.
- Chocolate and raisins are actually poisonous for dogs so avoid giving these as treats. Make sure chocolate is not kept under the tree for your dog to discover and that they cannot raid the Christmas cake or pudding.
- Defrost your turkey somewhere safe. Raw meat poses the same infection risks to your pet as to you and ingestion of bones can be dangerous.
- Stick to your pet's normal diet and avoid giving too many extras. Dogs and cats are not equipped to cope with sudden diet changes, especially with rich foods, and this can result in severe digestive upsets. Treat them with lots of extra attention and perhaps a new toy.

Each year, we see these problems at the practice far too commonly. Take a moment to consider how to keep your pet safe during all the festivities to help make sure that everyone in the family has the very best time this Christmas.

