

W I N T E R 2 0 1 0

AlphaPet News

“Exceptional Care For The Life Of Your Pet”

New Interactive Symptom Guide

Check out our new Interactive Symptom Guide on our website (www.alphapet.co.uk).

Many clients call us to find out if a problem is urgent or not. This is fine during normal hours, but what about in the evenings and at weekends? Well, to try and help you decide how urgently your pet may need to be seen, we have added an interactive symptom guide for a variety of pet animals including dogs, cats, rabbits, birds and reptiles.

Clicking on the guide allows you to choose from a range of problems for each species and then by answering a series of queries we can tell you how urgent that problem is.



Merry Christmas to all our clients

In these financially challenging times, we hope that all our clients can still enjoy a Merry Christmas and have a happy and more prosperous New Year.

Throughout the holiday period, AlphaPet will continue to offer genuine 24 hour cover from AlphaPet vets. If you need us in an emergency, you won't have to travel miles to get help at unfamiliar surgeries – we will be here to help you at our West Meads surgery.

It may be helpful to familiarise yourself with our normal opening hours during the holiday period, shown on the back page of this newsletter. We truly hope you won't need us, but just in case



Save the Date!

Rabbit Awareness Week

23rd -29th May 2011

Focusing on rabbit health and problems

Arthritis Month

January 2011

Watch out for awareness displays and promotions in practice

Tortoises

March onwards

Post hibernation check-ups at West Meads and Birdham surgeries.



Staff News

Our recent nursing exam successes include Emma Nolan who will hopefully soon be qualified having now only her final practical exam to go. Charlie Sampson passed her Advanced Award in Feline Friendly Nursing and Natalie Pink passed her first year nursing exams with merit. Aimee Uren, Aime van der Hut and Hayley Goddard are all currently awaiting the results of their recent exams.

Sadly we will be losing Adrian Ward when he moves out of general practice and into industry. However, Claire Sawyer is returning to practice after her maternity leave. A warm welcome to Sian Cullen on reception at West Meads also. We are also very pleased to announce that Paul Irvine-Smith and wife Jackie are expecting their first child in 2011.



Antifreeze Alert

In the winter months, we all use antifreeze in our cars, but antifreeze is highly attractive to both dogs and cats and is LETHAL. Last year we had several cats dying of acute renal failure following ingestion of antifreeze. Please be careful how you dispose of antifreeze and avoid leaking radiators.

VetSure Insurance

Each year 1 in 3 pets are injured or become ill and need urgent veterinary treatment. Insurance can help you cover the cost of these unexpected bills leaving you free to concentrate on helping an important member of your family recover.

AlphaPet recommends having pet insurance and have teamed up with Vetsure Pet Insurance to promote a range of pet insurance policies designed with you in mind. Vetsure works closely with AlphaPet to ensure that policies will enable us to deliver the treatments your pet requires.

Vetsure have trained our staff so they are able to provide guidance on the best policy for you and your pet. Their familiarity with the products on offer also helps to make the claim process easier.

By working closely with affiliated veterinary clinics

Vetsure are able to pay all claims directly back to us - you will only need to pay the applicable excess for eligible treatments.

Vetsure have a team of veterinary nurses assessing your claim who understand your pet's illness or accident.

You receive 10% off each pet's premium when you take out cover for more than one pet.

Vetsure are there to help when you need it most.

Visit the [Vetsure website](http://www.vetsure.com) (www.vetsure.com) for more information and get a quote or call 0844 879 7061.

Alternatively, ask a clinic staff member to arrange a call from the Vetsure team at your convenience!

Terms and Conditions apply. Please refer to the website or a leaflet for full details.





Focus on Senior Pets

Like humans, as pets age their joints and internal organs can start to show signs of wear and tear. Unfortunately, the signs of this wear and tear may be quite subtle and not always visible to the owner. Also, because they are often gradual in onset, they are frequently missed until they are at a more advanced stage when the signs are less easy to miss.

In older cats, kidney failure and over-active thyroid glands are very common. Both conditions are life-threatening but both can be effectively treated if caught early and such treatment can significantly prolong the life of your cat. Any cat over 8 years old that is noticed to be drinking more than normal, losing weight, losing or gaining appetite or vomiting should be suspected. Blood tests can be performed to confirm the conditions to enable treatments to be started.

Arthritis is another disease, often with a slow onset,

but which can seriously adversely affect your pet's quality of life. Dogs and cats suffering from arthritis rarely make a fuss about it. They rarely cry out in pain, except in the advanced stages. More commonly, you will just notice a general stiffness on rising after they have been lying down, perhaps appearing to get better with exercise. They may not be able to jump up onto furniture or into car boots as well as they used to. Occasionally, they may appear to limp and may just appear to be slowing down, which many owners mistakenly believe is just an ageing effect. However, all of these signs can indicate your pet is in significant discomfort and could benefit greatly from treatment.

AlphaPet provides a range of services that aim to optimize the length and quality of life for all our senior pets. If you have an older pet, look out for the signs above, and if you see them, please let us help.

Homemade Xmas Treats

While we are all enjoying our Xmas feasts, why not make something special for your pets too?

2 cups of cooked chopped turkey
 2 cloves garlic
 4 teaspoons grated cheese
 2 medium eggs
 2 cups whole wheat flour
 2 tablespoons brewers yeast
 2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Mix the turkey, garlic and cheese thoroughly. Beat in the eggs and pour over the turkey mixture. Add the flour, yeast and oil. Stir until all the ingredients are thoroughly mixed and coated. Transfer small portions into a greased baking tray. Cook for 20 minutes at 180°C until brown. Store in a fridge.



Firework phobia?

Fear of fireworks is a very common problem in cats and dogs and can cause great distress. Dogs may become very agitated and can be noisy or destructive. Many dogs & cats will hide in fear. If this fear is not addressed then it will worsen year on year and it can generalise to other loud noises. Alphapet can advise you on how to help your pet through the stress of the firework season but the best option for your pet is to teach them to cope with loud noises by first teaching relaxation and then associating the noise with the fun things in life. This can be done at home with time and patience. **Alphapet would like to help our pets cope better with firework fear so we are holding an evening meeting on Wed 26th January** to explain this process of desensitisation and counterconditioning and help pets be better prepared for the next fireworks season.

Please call one of our surgeries for further details.

Travelling Abroad?

If you are travelling abroad with your pet under the PETS Scheme, please remember to have your pet's microchip checked before you go.

Recently, a dog was detained in quarantine following failure to be able to read the microchip. You can read the full story at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-11371288>

Spare a thought for Brent Lodge

Brent Lodge Bird & Wildlife Trust needs your help. They are the main local wildlife charity in this part of West Sussex. They rely entirely on donations, fundraising and bequests to carry on their essential work. Like many other charities in these difficult financial times, they are feeling the pinch. Please visit their website (www.brentlodge.org) and see the great work they do for wildlife. And what about buying one of their 2011 calendars, or maybe donate some spare dog/cat food and maybe even leave them something in your will to help ensure they can continue their work for many years to come?

Christmas & New Year Opening

Xmas Eve: 8.30am – 5pm

Xmas Day: Emergencies only

Boxing Day: Emergencies only

December 27th: 8.30am – 5pm West Meads only

December 28th: 10am – 1pm & 5 - 6pm West Meads only

New Year's Day: Emergencies only

January 2nd & 3rd: 10am-1pm & 5 – 6pm West Meads only

All other days: Normal opening hours

24 Hour Emergency Number:

01243 842832

Website: www.alphapet.co.uk

West Meads Surgery

11-17 The Precinct, West Meads,

Bognor Regis, PO21 5SB

Telephone **01243 842832**

Kingley Surgery

Oldwick Farm, West Stoke Road

Lavant, Chichester PO18 9AA

Telephone **01243 528899**

Birdham Surgery

Northleigh Farm, Main Road Birdham, Chichester PO20

7BY

Telephone **01243 513514**

