



# Newsletter

Endell Veterinary Group, 49 Endless Street, Salisbury, SP1 3UH • 01722 333291

Autumn 2013

## Focus on Allergic Skin Disease

*Allergic skin disease is a relatively common condition in cats and dogs and can cause a variety of problems. The skin becomes inflamed in response to exposure to the allergen and this is itchy in itself. In addition it provides a warm place for bacteria and yeast to multiply. These secondary infections are also often very itchy and pets will scratch and lick, often damaging their skin and allowing further infection.*

The most commonly seen complaint is flea allergic dermatitis (FAD). These cats and dogs are more sensitive than the average pet to flea saliva and a single bite can cause their skin to break out in multiple tiny scabs. This is intensely itchy and affected pets will scratch and over-groom. Cats in particular are quite private about grooming and this may only occur when they are alone so is not always seen.

Control of FAD revolves around minimising the number of flea bites the affected pet receives. This means trying to prevent any fleas from entering the home and quickly killing any the pet picks up outside. This is most effectively achieved by using a monthly prescription flea control on both the affected pet and all other cats, dogs and rabbits that live with them or regularly visit. Any of our staff are happy to advise on the different options available.

More commonly recognised in dogs, although also seen in cats, are allergies to certain foods or things in the environment. These allergies

can be seasonal eg: just in the summer months when a particular grass pollen is around, or may occur year round eg: in reaction to a protein in the food or to house dust mites.

Food allergies require strict diet trials to diagnose which can take some time but once identified it is often possible to completely eliminate the offending food substance and get the skin disease well under control.

It is nearly impossible to completely prevent exposure to grass and tree pollens or house mites as people with allergies well know. For pets with mild allergies, control of secondary infections with medicated baths may be enough to keep them itch free despite their skin being mildly inflamed at certain times. For those with more severe allergies short or long term courses of drugs, to suppress the immune response to the allergen, are often necessary as well as treatment for any secondary infections.

Blood sampling and intradermal testing is available to try and identify the allergen responsible for a pet's flare ups. There may often be more than one pollen or mite responsible and most are also sensitive to flea saliva so good parasite control is always important. Once the allergens have been identified it is possible to produce an immunotherapy vaccine specifically for that individual pet's needs. This can either be given under the tongue or as a monthly injection. In approximately one third of patients it will provide good control of the allergy, in another third it will significantly reduce the amount of other treatments needed but unfortunately there are around a third of patients for whom it is not effective.

Allergies are a lifelong battle for many pets but there are more treatment options available than in the past so do come in for an appointment and a discussion of the options if you think your pet may be affected.



## Fireworks Season

It may be a little late in the year to start a desensitising program if your dog is scared of fireworks, but there are a few things you can do to reduce their stress around bonfire night:

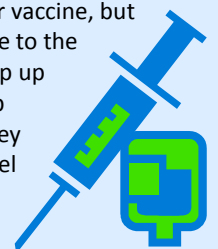
- Walk them early in the evening before dusk and then have all cats and dogs inside from early evening with the curtains drawn.
- Having the TV or radio on will help mask some of the noise.
- Provide your pet with somewhere quiet to retreat to.
- Otherwise continue your routine as normal and do not make a fuss of your pet. Dogs especially look to us when they are worried and if our behaviour changes they see this as a sign that there is something to be afraid of. The best way to reassure them is not with a cuddle but to be carrying on as normal and ignoring the bangs, if you don't seem to be bothered by the noise then your dog is less likely to be either.
- Come and see Jen, one of our qualified nurses, for a free consultation worth £16.95. She can advise on which of the many products available will be most suitable to help calm your pet.



## Upgraded Leptospirosis Vaccine

Leptospirosis is one of the core diseases we vaccinate your dog against each year. It is shed in urine and is largely spread in the urine of infected rats. It usually causes a fever, vomiting and diarrhoea and will often progress to kidney or liver damage which can be fatal. Infected dogs need intensive treatment and strict isolation as they are not only infective to other dogs but can transmit the infection to people as well.

There are different strains of the bacteria and previously we have vaccinated against the most common two found in the UK. Over the last few years other strains are becoming more common so this year our vaccine supplier has brought out a new version which protects against four of the most common strains. Your dog can have this as normal with their annual booster vaccine, but in order for them to produce a good response to the two extra strains included they will need a top up four weeks later. As long as you then keep up with their yearly boosters, this first year is they only time they will need two doses. Please feel free to ask the vet any questions you may have about this at your next appointment.



## Staff News and Changes to Opening Hours

Many of you will already know that Sarah-Jane Eastman has retired from the Endell Veterinary Group partnership. She is going to be missed by staff and clients alike and we wish her all the best in the next stage of her career. We are delighted to be able to officially welcome Cerrie Perrett as a permanent member of the veterinary team. Cerrie knows the practice well after having spent many weeks here as a student and working much of the last twelve months for us.

Following the retirement of longstanding practice manager Barbara Bebbington this spring and Linda Reynolds RVN leaving to spend more time with her family, we are pleased to welcome Helen Vickery to the team. Helen will be working part time in the office to take on some of both Barbara and Linda's roles. In addition you may have already met Emily Weeks on a Saturday morning in reception who is also helping in the office during the week.

Congratulations to Leanne and Jim Willshire on the safe arrival of baby Anabelle Eden this September. Leanne is one of our qualified nurses and has been on maternity leave since July. We have been fortunate to have Suzie covering Leanne's maternity leave over the summer and are very pleased that she has recently agreed to stay until December as she has quickly become a valuable member of the team.

The staff changes have meant that we have had to alter our opening hours slightly. Last appointment times are now 6.15pm on Mondays and Fridays; and 5.45pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. For early birds, appointments from 8am are available Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Saturday morning opening hours remain 8.30am to 12.30pm with routine appointments available from 8.30am to 10.15am followed by spaces for urgent cases. Out of hours care continues to be provided by dedicated emergency specialists Vets Now who provide a Vet and Nurse, both on the premises to see emergency cases and care for inpatients, as well as to take telephone calls for advice.



### New Staff Pets

2013 seems to be the year for new puppies here at Endells. So far the total is running at three but there's time yet! Boxer puppy Puzzle has joined Cerrie and Michelle Dyke RVN has brought home working cocker puppy AJ. Both are doing well and enjoying getting out and about now their vaccinations are all up to date. Most recently student nurse Jo Woolley has collected little Jack Russell pup Nellie. Check out our Facebook page for photos of all three.

## Are You A Member of Our Pet Health Plan (ViP Extra) Club Yet?

The Endell Veterinary Group Pet Health Plan offers an easy, cost effective way to meet your pet's essential healthcare needs. We believe that preventative health care is an important part of pet ownership; things like vaccines and parasite control are important factors in helping your pet have a long and healthy life. As well as vaccines, wormers and flea control, the plan provides a six-monthly check up to catch any problems early, something that becomes increasingly important as your pet ages. This is not the same as pet insurance but allows you to save money and spread the cost of preventative health care for your pet and works well in conjunction with a good insurance policy.

### What's included?

For a regular monthly fee your pet receives:

- Twice yearly health assessments
- Full routine annual vaccination
- Full worming program for cats and dogs for effective year round protection against round and tape worm (includes lungworm)
- All year round flea control for cats and dogs
- Parasite program for rabbits for *E cuniculi*
- Annual health screen blood test
- Insurance claim forms completed free of charge

In addition, you get discounts on the following:

- Routine consultations
- Neutering
- Microchips
- Dental treatments
- Additional vaccinations
- Royal Canin and Hill's food



### ViP Club - if you don't want all the "extras":

We also have another Pet Health Club Plan (ViP) that offers full routine annual vaccination, worming and flea control.

## Ordering Food and Medications

We have changed the way we order your pets' medications and food. We have found that holding a lot of stock means that many products go out of date on the shelf. To try and combat this we are ordering most medicines and foods from our wholesaler only as required. In order to save yourself a wasted journey in to the practice, we ask that you please telephone us in advance to give us 48 hours' notice to order your food or medication.



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