



# Ark Vet Centre

SMALL ANIMAL NEWSLETTER SPRING 2024



In September 2023, new guidance on prescribing prescription-only medications (POM-V) came in to force in the UK. This guidance was set out by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), who are the regulatory body for the veterinary profession within the UK. This guidance affects the prescribing of antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals and parasiticides.

## So what does it mean for you?

### Flea/tick and worm treatment

As some of you may already be aware, a physical examination must be carried out before we can prescribe any flea/tick or worming treatment.



We can then prescribe this same treatment for a full 12 months from the date of examination.

However if you decide to change from one product to another, or we recommend a change, a new physical examination would be required.

### Antibiotics, antiviral and antifungals

A physical examination will be required prior to prescription of any antibiotics, antifungal or antiviral medications.



This includes treatment for ear infections, eye infections, skin infections, urinary tract infections or gastrointestinal infections, even if your pet has had one of these issues before. It covers oral (by mouth) and topical medications, such as eye drops and ear drops, within these categories.

### Other medications

As has always been the case, patients on other long-term medication need to be seen by the practice every 3-6 months depending on the condition.

As detailed above, these changes are out with our control so please be patient with us while we navigate them. Equally a repeat examination of your pet enables us to address any new conditions or concerns, monitor the progression of existing ones and ensure that any current medication is appropriate.

## STAFFING UPDATES



**Lorraine Smith** – Lorraine joined Ark in November 2023 having moved over to us from Castle Douglas area. She splits her time between Dumfries and Lockerbie at the moment. She has a particular interest in small animal surgery.

## FELINE ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is a painful condition that affects a surprising number of our feline friends. Studies have shown that around 60% of cats over 6 years old have arthritic changes on x-rays and around 90% of cats are affected by age 12. Cats are very good at hiding signs of pain as historically in the wild showing weakness would attract predators. This means that it may not always be obvious that your pet is in pain.

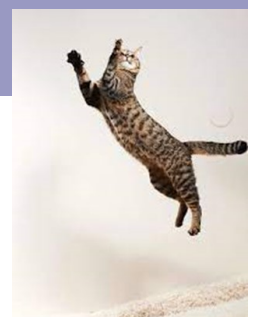


Signs to look out for

are: difficulty jumping

up onto objects or surfaces, reluctance to jump down from a height, struggling with stairs or generally doing less. Some cats will become less friendly as stroking them can be uncomfortable or it becomes difficult to jump on to your knee. A scruffy or matted coat can also be a sign that your cat is in pain as they can struggle to reach parts of their body to groom properly.

Luckily our pets don't need to suffer in silence as there are a range of options to help them. In early cases a joint supplement may be sufficient to keep them moving smoothly but as arthritis progresses some form of pain relief is usually needed. There are various treatments available from monthly injections to daily medications given at home in the food. We can also offer acupuncture to help with arthritic pain. If you think your cat may be starting to become uncomfortable please speak to one of our vets as there are options to suit every pet and managing arthritis well can make a huge difference to their quality of life.





**Peter Little** – Peter joined Ark in September 2023 having qualified from Cambridge University although originally from Castle Douglas. Peter is working in all departments, but has a particular interest in farm work. Not long after joining us he got his lovely black Labrador Kiwi who he spends lots of time training and will be hoping to use in his passion of outdoor pursuits.

**Claire Porteous** – Claire joined us back in June 2023 and now heads up our insurance claims in Lockerbie. This is of huge value to the team and someone to speak to if you should have any insurance queries.



## EASTER TOXINS

With Easter approaching our homes are filled with lots of seasonal treats, some of which may prove toxic for our four legged friends.

### Chocolate

Most will be aware that chocolate is a poison for our pets, but why is it exactly, that chocolate eggs should not be on the menu for our pets this Easter?



Chocolate contains a chemical called theobromine, which, when ingested may be fatal to dogs and cats. Theobromine is present in chocolate at varying degrees, with its highest content being in dark chocolate and cooking chocolate, however if your pet manages to get their paws on any chocolate at all, you should contact us immediately.

Chocolate poisoning may present with symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhoea, irregular heart rhythm, seizures, and in very severe cases coma. These symptoms can appear from a few hours after ingestion up to 24 hours later.

Ideally, your pet should be made to vomit by the vet within just a few hours of ingesting any chocolate to maximise the chance of a successful treatment.

As always, prevention is better than cure, this Easter ensure your chocolate is kept out of sight and reach of your pets.

### Raisins

Raisins and grapes are another poisonous culprit which may pose a threat to your pets at this time of year.

Even just a few raisins may have detrimental effects on your pet's health with its severe toxic effect on the kidneys.

You should contact us immediately if you are suspicious you pet has indulged on any treats containing raisins or grapes, as successful treatment depends upon inducing vomiting within hours of ingestion and providing support to the kidneys with fluid therapy.

### Lilies



This popular seasonal decoration may cause harm to any curious cats who may choose to take a few bites from this plant.

Ingestion of any part of the plant, leaves, petals, pollen or even water from the vase, can lead to the onset of kidney failure within 3 days.

Signs that may indicate poisoning with lilies include, vomiting, excessive drooling, increased urination and dehydration. Poisoning can be fatal, however early recognition of

symptoms and prompt medical intervention can significantly improve your cat's prognosis.



## FLYSTRIKE IN RABBITS

It is getting closer to the time of year when the dreaded flies start to come back. It is important to ensure we keep our rabbits clean throughout the warmer months to prevent flystrike infections.

### What is flystrike?

Flystrike occurs when flies lay their eggs in damp/wet/warm environments, often the genital region if soiled or unclean. The eggs then hatch and the larvae will eat the skin around the area, burrowing into the skin. This encourages more flies to lay more eggs. These maggots can burrow into the skin within 24 hours - causing death if left untreated.

### Prevention is better than treatment!

Flystrike can be prevented by a number of methods:

**Check your rabbit's bottom for faeces or urine daily** - clean and dry area if needed.

**Replace soiled/damp bedding daily** to avoid encouraging flies to the area.

**Overweight and obese rabbits should be encouraged to lose weight** by lowering the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables whilst encouraging an increase in exercise. A rabbit's diet should be made up of 85% hay, 10% fruit & vegetables and 5% good quality nuggets. Weekly weights help to track progress made and correcting the diet should improve faecal quality too.

**Painful rabbits or those with urinary issues should seek veterinary advice** to help relieve pain/treat infections.

**Keep wounds clean and dry** - seek veterinary care when required.

### **Products, such as Rearguard,**

**help to repel flies** during summer months. This is available from ourselves and online. It does not kill maggots but will stop flies from laying eggs on your rabbit. We advise applying when flies appear (around May) and it lasts 8-10 weeks before re-application is necessary (around August).

