



Ark Vet Centre

SMALL ANIMAL NEWSLETTER SPRING 2024

VACCINE UPDATE

Leptospirosis:

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease affecting animals and humans. It is one of the diseases which your dogs will be vaccinated against at their regular annual boosters.

This bacterial disease is often picked up from urine of infected animals, stagnant and slow moving water and contact with wildlife such as rodents. For these reasons hunting and working dogs may be at higher risk of becoming unwell.

The disease is zoonotic, meaning animals which are infected pose the risk of spreading disease to people through contact with urine.

Vaccinating your pet is the best way of preventing illness. Previously leptospirosis vaccines have protected against two forms of the bacteria, and as a result less and less animals are becoming unwell from them. However more recently, there is two additional forms of leptospirosis that are more commonly being seen in animals which become unwell from the bacteria. For this reason vaccine companies have improved their vaccines to offer protection against all four types of leptospirosis.

With this in mind, we are in the process of transitioning our yearly vaccinations to include Lepto 4, ensuring the best protection for your pet. This means that at your next vaccination appointment your dog may require re-vaccination to gain this additional protection, this will include an injection on the day of their booster as well as an additional second injection 4 weeks later.



STAFFING UPDATES

CIARA MELLOR—Ciara graduated from Edinburgh Vet School in May 2024 and starting working at Ark in August as a mixed animal vet. Outside of work she spends a lot of time fell running with her Border Collie in the lake district, rock climbing or bagging munros!

TONOPEN

We have recently had an exciting new addition to our small animal equipment within the practice. A device known as a 'Tono-pen'



or handheld veterinary tonometer allows us to accurately measure the intraocular pressure (IOP) within an eye. Fluid is produced at the front of the eye which normally leaves the eye at the same rate as it is produced. However if the rate of fluid production is faster than the rate at which the fluid is leaving the eye then this increases the pressure within the eye. A tonopen allows us to measure this pressure.

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness in small animals affecting 1-2% of our canine patients and is defined as an 'elevation in intraocular pressure (IOP) that is incompatible with healthy ocular tissue'. Signs of glaucoma can include painful eyes, bulging eyes, redness around the edge of the eyes, dilated pupils and a decrease or loss of vision. The addition of a tonopen allows us to accurately measure the intraocular pressure within an eye, diagnosing glaucoma or monitoring the condition when it presents.

Intraocular pressure can also decrease with conditions such as uveitis. Uveitis is inflammation of the uvea which is the middle part of the eye. When this area is inflamed or swollen it produces less fluid at the front of the eye. The signs of this can include painful eyes, sensitivity to light and squinting.

If you have any concerns about your pet's eyes please don't hesitate to contact us.

JULIE KEITH— Julie graduated from Nottingham Vet School in December and began her veterinary career with us in January. Outside of work she enjoys playing and watching football, as well as training for running events. Julie also loves spending time with her animals, including four cows, two cats and one dog.



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.

HYPERTENSION IN CATS

Hypertension in cats, otherwise known as High Blood Pressure, is a relatively common occurrence especially in older cats. It can affect as many as 1 in 5 cats over the age of 9 years old, and can be difficult for owners to detect.

Normal Blood Pressure of a cat is between 80-160mmHG and if consistently higher than this can lead to secondary problems, especially in the Eyes,

Kidneys, Heart and Brain.

Causing varied



signs such as blindness, increased drinking, disorientation and weight loss to name a few. Measuring of Blood Pressure can in most cases be easily performed within the surgery. It is a non-invasive procedure, similar to that used in humans with an inflatable cuff although somewhat smaller! It is really important that our cats stay as calm as possible during the procedure so that we don't get inaccurate readings,



which in general means lots of cuddles and treats for your cat.

Many older cats will have concurrent issues alongside the high blood pressure such as Kidney Disease or Hyperthyroidism, which medication can help with. High blood pressure can also be controlled with daily medication. When identified and treated early damage to the organs can be reduced or prevented.

All of these factors highlight the importance of getting our older cats checked over on a regular basis to look for underlying disease. If this is something you feel your cat would benefit from please contact the practice for more information.