



Complete health care  
for your pets

# THE VETERINARY CENTRE

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# NEWS

SPRING 2010



## Good news!



We are pleased to reassure all our clients that the Veterinary Centre remains OUTSIDE the extended London Congestion Charge Zone.

Free parking is provided for our clients at St. John's Vicarage on Kilburn Lane. You may park there while you visit the Veterinary Centre but you must display a parking permit available from our reception desk.

For appointments, please telephone 020 8969 5283

Visit our website –  
[www.veterinarycentre.com](http://www.veterinarycentre.com)



## Consulting Times

Monday -Friday:  
9 - 10.30 am  
1 - 2 pm, 5 - 7 pm  
Saturdays: 9 - 1 pm

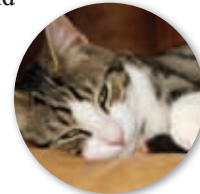
For all inquiries,  
advice and emergencies,  
PHONE 020 8969 5283

## Meal deal – choosing the ideal diet!



CHOOSING a diet for your pet can sometimes seem a daunting task with such a huge range to select from! To make matters more complicated – and just as with ourselves – our pet's dietary requirements *alter* as they grow from tiny kittens and puppies, into adulthood and eventually old age. However, the good news is that with *life-stage diets*, we are able to feed our pets a correctly balanced diet for every stage of their lives.

**Puppies and kittens**, because of their rapid rate of growth, need *higher* levels of energy, protein, fatty acids and other nutrients. Specifically formulated junior/growth diets ensure controlled growth (avoiding obesity) and healthy joint development. Puppies of large and giant breeds also have different dietary requirements and require their own specially formulated diets.



**Adult pets**, with their major growth phase now complete, require a balanced diet to keep them fit and healthy, but with *lower* levels of many of the nutrients mentioned above. To achieve this, adult pets require carefully balanced adult/maintenance diets.

**Older pets** also benefit from specifically formulated geriatric/senior diets. These have a reduced calorie content to help prevent weight gain in older age, higher fibre content to reduce constipation and changes in protein and mineral levels to reduce the workload of internal organs such as the kidney, liver and heart.

Whether healthy or poorly, your pet will benefit most from a high quality diet that suits their needs. If you have any queries on the most suitable diet for your pet – we would be delighted to help you.

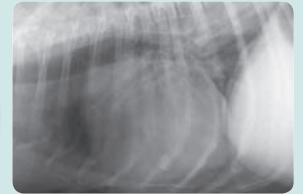


Photo: Jane Burton

## Prescription Diets

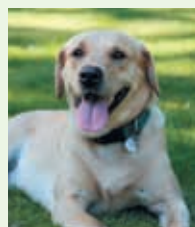
Pets with particular disease problems may also benefit from specific "*prescription diets*". These are specifically formulated diets that can help greatly in the treatment of a variety of conditions including diseases of the kidneys, heart, joints, skin and teeth.

### The heart of the matter!



Chest x-ray of a dog with an enlarged heart and heart failure. Specifically formulated cardiac diets are a key part of treatment.

## Make sure your pet stays worm free!



NO MATTER how careful you are, unless you worm your pet regularly it is often difficult to avoid them playing host to worms. There are two major types of worms affecting our pets:

**Tapeworms** live in the small intestines and shed segments containing eggs, which pass out in the faeces. The eggs may then be eaten by an *intermediate* host, including *small rodents* and *fleas*. Cats catch and eat small rodents and both cats and dogs swallow fleas as they groom, reinfesting themselves with tapeworms.

**Roundworms** are spaghetti like in appearance and also live in the small intestines. They shed thousands of tiny eggs, which pass out in the faeces and pollute the environment. Dogs and cats are re-infected by unwittingly eating eggs in the environment. These eggs also pose some risk to humans if inadvertently swallowed.

To help keep your pet and the environment worm free, just follow these three simple steps: **worm your pet regularly**, use **regular flea control** and **clear up faeces**. Please let us advise you on the most suitable worming and flea control regime for your pet.

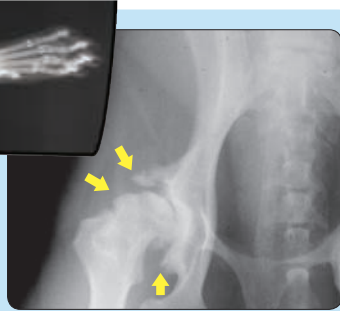


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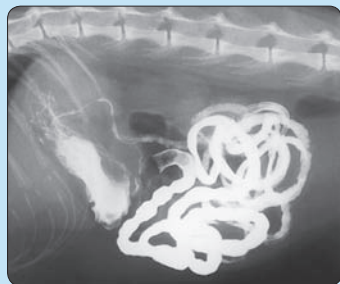
## X-rays: looking inside your pet



WHEN pets get poorly, there is a lot we can tell about them by examining them, however we often need more information than we can glean during a physical examination. Depending on the symptoms there are a number of techniques that can be used for further investigation, but radiography remains one of the most widely utilized mechanisms for 'looking inside' a pet. Although X-rays show up bones best of all, and are particularly useful for diagnosing broken limbs, arthritic changes, and other sorts of bone disorders, they are also used for looking at the size, shape, and consistency of a number of organs.



Arthritic hip joint (in a dog with hip dysplasia). Note the fluffy new bone (arrowed) around the joint.



Abdominal radiograph of a cat. Barium has been used to outline the stomach and intestines.



Abdominal radiograph of a dog with bladder stones – and (inset) the stones following surgery.

They can be used in the diagnosis of heart and lung diseases, liver, kidney and bowel disorders, and a range of bladder conditions. With X-rays we can identify organs that have changed shape or size (e.g. the diseased heart, liver or kidneys) or that have abnormalities within them such as fluid in the lungs, stones in the kidneys or bladder, and some types of tumours. X-rays can also allow identification of foreign bodies within the body ranging from bones and toys to fragments of metal. Alone, or in combination with other forms of further investigation, X-rays are one of our most useful facilities. So, if your pet shows any signs of illness, please get in touch. We have a number of facilities at our disposal to allow us to diagnose the cause of disease, bringing us a step closer to successful treatment of poorly pets.

## Kidney disease Is my pet affected?



THANKFULLY most of our pets lead healthy active lives. However for some, kidney disease can be a problem and it is particularly prevalent in older pets (especially cats). Dogs and cats have two kidneys and each kidney has several hundred thousand tiny filters called **nephrons**. These filter the blood, removing toxic waste products, salts and water which are then concentrated to form urine.

Over time a proportion of the nephrons will disappear with age and not be replaced. Other factors such as toxins, infections or cancer may also destroy nephrons.

However, the kidneys have *excess* filtering capacity with the result that *visible* symptoms of kidney disease are not usually seen until roughly two thirds of the nephrons have been lost. If this stage is reached the filtering capacity falls and toxic wastes begin to accumulate in the blood. Common symptoms include **increased drinking and increased urination, weight loss, muscle wastage, lack of appetite and lethargy**.

With regular veterinary check-ups the symptoms of kidney disease can often be detected at a very much earlier stage – *before* they become outwardly noticeable. So don't delay – if your pet is showing *any* symptoms of kidney problems, please see us for a check-up. Whilst kidney disease cannot be cured, a combination of specially formulated diets that reduce the workload of the kidneys, together with novel forms of medication, can often significantly improve the quality of life for affected pets.

## Parasites: Spring into action!

THE warmer months are peak season for pesky parasites and two of the most annoying are fleas and ticks!

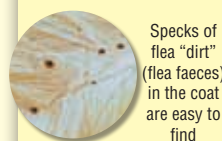
**Fleas** need little introduction to most pet owners! Adult fleas are 2-3mm in length and can be seen without magnification. These tiny

wingless insects survive by feeding on your pet's blood, causing very intense irritation and sometimes allergic skin disease. Fleas also play a major role in transmitting tapeworms in dogs and cats.

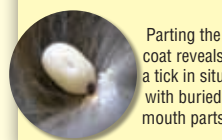
**Ticks** tend to be a problem in the warmer months and commonly live in areas of heathland, moorland and woodland, waiting to attach themselves to passing animals. Ticks feed on your pet's blood and can cause problems in two ways – firstly they can cause a tissue reaction at their site of attachment and secondly they can transmit serious diseases such as Lyme disease and Babesiosis.

Don't let fleas and ticks make your life a misery – Please let us advise you on the best form of flea and tick control for *your* pet!

### What to look for when you groom your pet's coat



Specks of flea "dirt" (flea faeces) in the coat are easy to find



Parting the coat reveals a tick in situ with buried mouth parts

