



# Cat's Whiskers

## Veterinary Clinic NEWS

### Welcome....

Welcome to the second edition of our Newsletter. Since our last newsletter we have welcomed 2 new team members:

Rosemary, our Cat Care Assistant joined us in August, and Laura, our Veterinary Nurse joined us in December. Thank You to all our clients for all the support in 2010. Wishing you a happy and healthy 2011.

*Amanda Kelly*  
*Laura Rosemary*



### Pet Health Plans...

**PAY MONTHLY AND SAVE MONEY ON ROUTINE PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE**

Ask us about joining our **Pet Health Plan VIP Club** which is tailored to your cat's age and lifestyle. You can spread the cost over the year and benefit from exclusive discounts.

Check out our Cat Care videos on our website!



[www.cwvet.co.uk/care\\_wellbeing.htm](http://www.cwvet.co.uk/care_wellbeing.htm)

### Caring for your new pet!



**TAKING** on a new pet is always fun! However, there are lots of things to consider.

All pets need a warm place to sleep, some space of their own, as well as plenty of attention. It is important to explain to children

that pets need to be left alone some of the time, and also to make sure that time is available for supervised play.

**Diets:** Good health also depends on feeding the right amount of an appropriate diet; we stock a range of specially formulated *life-stage* diets, perfectly balanced for pets of all ages.

**Vaccinations:** Kittens are usually protected in the first few weeks of life by antibodies from their mothers milk. However this immunity falls with time, leaving them susceptible to infectious disease. Vaccinations (to stimulate this immunity), will help to protect kittens and cats from a number of very serious infectious diseases. Two or more vaccinations are normally given as an initial course – giving your pet immunity for the first year of life. However the immunity provided by this initial course is not indefinite and will gradually fall and regular boosters will be required throughout your pet's life to maintain this immunity.

**Microchipping** (see back page) and **pet insurance** are also highly recommended! It's a fact that in an average year, 1 in 3 pets suffer illness or injury, so unexpected veterinary bills can occur at any time. So, for *peace of mind* – get your pet insured!

If you would like any further information on any of the topics covered in the article, please ask a member of the practice team!

**Health checks** are required regularly; every 3 months for growing kittens and every 6 months for adult cats.

### Vaccination against infectious diseases

We recommend you regularly vaccinate your cats against the following, potentially fatal, infectious diseases:

- Cat flu virus
- Feline panleucopenia virus
- Feline leukaemia virus



### Pesky parasites!

It is very important to treat kittens for **roundworms** since they can acquire these from their mothers early in life. Following this, since our pets are readily infested with **fleas, ticks and worms**, treatment really needs to be life long! Please let us advise you on the most effective and convenient form of treatment for your cats.



Kitten photos: Jane Burton

### Household hazards

**DID YOU** know that many everyday items around the house can be lethal to our cats? Here we look at a few of the more common ones.



Most varieties of **lily** pose a significant risk, although it is only recently that awareness of this has been raised. All parts of the plant including the flowers and the pollen are poisonous. Symptoms of poisoning from these plants include protracted vomiting, anorexia and depression and ingestion can cause severe, possibly fatal, kidney damage.

Other substances within the home which are potentially poisonous to cats include **cleaning and hygiene products** such as bleach, cleaning fluids and creams, deodorants, deodorisers, disinfectants (particularly phenolic compounds like 'Dettol' which turn milky in water), furniture and metal polishes. **Beauty products** such as hair dyes, nail polish and remover and suntan lotion. **Decorating materials** such as paint, paint remover, white spirit and wood preservatives.

**Motoring products** such as antifreeze, brake fluid, petrol and windscreen washer fluid can have fatal consequences for outdoor cats, even if ingested in small quantities.

And finally – in terms of feeding, the best bet is always to feed diets and treats *specifically formulated for cats*.

## Getting to the root of the problem!



YOU TAKE care of your own teeth, but what about your cat's? Without regular dental care, cats (like us) will develop gum disease, leading to **mouth pain** and ultimately **tooth loss**.

Our pets usually start life with shiny white teeth, and healthy shrimp pink (or pigmented) gums. However, over time, accumulation of plaque bacteria on the surface of the teeth leads to *inflammation* of the gums, a condition called **gingivitis** (otherwise called gum disease). This is frequently accompanied by the accumulation of calculus (tartar) on the surface of the teeth, and also very bad breath!

If the infection continues unchecked, bacteria start to penetrate *below* the gum line, destroying the tooth supporting structures – a painful condition called **periodontitis**. If left untreated, this leads to tooth loosening and eventually tooth loss as the disease progresses.

Cats may also suffer from one or more **tooth resorptive lesions** usually found at or below gum level. These are *unique to cats* and still not fully understood. Here the tooth is progressively destroyed, (see photo right) leading to exposure of the nerve running down the centre of the tooth. These are generally extremely painful lesions, although cats will frequently show no obvious outward signs of tooth ache.

Recent surveys have shown that 70% of cats over three years of age have some form of dental disease. Prompt recognition of any problems in the mouth gives the best chance of successful treatment. Please contact us if you would like a check-up for your pet, or would like to learn more about routine dental care in pets.



Gum disease with reddened gum margins. If left untreated, this frequently results in tooth loss.

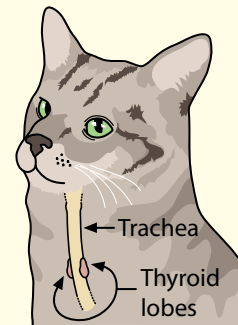


Tooth resorptive lesion (arrowed). Despite being painful, many cats show no obvious outward signs.

## Burn out: Does your cat have thyroid disease?

DID you know that thyroid gland disease is a surprisingly common problem in older cats?

The thyroid gland consists of two tiny lobes, one located either side of the trachea (wind pipe).



The gland produces thyroid hormone which regulates your cat's metabolism. Too much thyroid hormone speeds up the metabolism, whilst too little slows it down.

*Over* production of thyroid hormone is called hyperthyroidism and is a relatively common condition in cats over 8 years of age. In the majority of cases, this is caused by a benign (non-cancerous) enlargement of one or both thyroid lobes.

Hyperthyroid cats typically have an increased appetite, but *despite* this commonly show signs of weight loss, and often become quite unkempt in appearance. In addition, excess thyroid hormone usually increases the heart rate, potentially leading to abnormal thickening of the heart muscle and increased blood pressure. As well as the above, a variety of other signs may be seen including increased activity, more miaowing and, often, a greater need for affection. Vomiting and diarrhoea may also be seen.

However the good news is that, in the majority of cases, hyperthyroidism can be successfully treated. If you are concerned that your cat is showing any of the signs described above, please come and see us for an appointment!

## When the chips are down...



Microchip implant x1

IT IS sadly all too easy for cats to go missing and if this happens it could mean days or weeks of worry for all involved. However the good news is that microchip implants now offer a far more reliable method of identifying your pet than the traditional collar and tag.

The procedure involves implanting a tiny microchip (smaller than a grain of rice) under the skin, permanently identifying your pet. Each microchip carries a unique code which, together with information about your cat and your contact details, are held on a central computer database. Should your cat go missing, when found, the chip can be read using special hand held scanners. Veterinary practices and animal welfare organisations routinely scan all strays, hopefully ensuring that if the unthinkable happens,

you can be speedily reunited. **The good news is that thousands of cats come home every year because their owners had them microchipped!**

And don't forget – having microchipped your cat, it is also *essential* to update your details if you move home. This can be done online, or you can ask at reception for more details. And if you haven't chipped your cats yet, ask about prices now – you'll find microchipping is surprisingly economical, especially when you consider all the benefits!

A special scanner is used to "read" the unique I.D code. This code speedily identifies your pet.

