

Vets Viewpoint - Allergy

Thankfully it seems like the weather is on the up. The nights are starting to draw out and the temperature will soon be on the rise..... hopefully! It is at this time of year that we start to see pets at the surgery with symptoms of allergy. The two main reasons for the increase at this time of year are allergy to seasonal pollens or fleas.

As spring kicks in, plants start to sprout and bud, and pollens start to be released. These pollens can have an effect on the eyes or nose of your pets, primarily dogs, but, more often, they cause generalised skin irritation.

Fleas are a year round problem. However, as the weather warms up, animal movement and flea survival increase. This leads to an increase in the chance of infestation. Some animals are over sensitive to the saliva in flea bites and this can cause some of the symptoms listed below. Symptoms of allergy include:

- Generalised scratching, especially, but not restricted to, the armpits or groin.
- Watery green/yellow discharge from the corner of the eyes (dogs mainly).
- Redness to the membranes in the eye (conjunctivitis) again, mainly in dogs.
- Pinkness of the skin.
- Licking of the paws over and above normal grooming.
- Over grooming in general, particularly in cats, on the belly.
- Scabs/crusts/lesions on the skin – lesions tend to be around the head in cats for general allergy, or along the back and around the tail base in flea allergy. Lesions in dogs are more generalised, but tend to be on the abdomen.

Treatments include dealing with the underlying cause (in the case of fleas), antihistamines, steroids, antibiotics (in case of infection), creams and washes/shampoos. Animals may need prolonged courses or intermittent therapy to keep them irritation free. Further investigative techniques include skin sampling, such as swabs, plucks, scrapes, but also biopsy and allergy screening.

Allergy – continued:

As a final note, unfortunately the world is full of millions of different allergens, the things that cause allergies. This article has only scratched (sorry for the pun) the surface, however, hopefully it may explain why your pet may seem more itchy at this time of year.

Nurses News - Ferrets

Ferrets have been used for hunting and pest control since ancient times and are still kept for this purpose today though are becoming increasingly popular as pets.

Did you know?

- Female ferrets continue in heat unless they are mated or their heat is suppressed. This can be fatal due to blood loss.
- Ferrets have a gestation period of about 42 days.
- If a male ferret is kept with a female, the male can be vasectomised. He can then still mate the female to suppress her heat without unwanted kits.
- Ferrets have musk glands, this is why they have a distinctive smell.
- Ferrets come under the pet passport scheme.



Microchipping for Dogs

Just a brief reminder that we are holding free microchip clinics, on Wednesday afternoons, 3pm-4pm, throughout March. These are drop-in clinics so no appointment is needed, just turn up. This offer finishes 25th March. Nurses are happy to microchip by appointment outside of these times at a cost of £16.50. Don't forget all dogs must be microchipped by law from April 2016.

Healthy Pet Club

About the club:

We have designed our Healthy Pet Club so that you, as a pet owner, can ensure your pets receive the very best quality preventative treatments, through a simple monthly direct debit. The concept of spreading the annual cost of household bills is a regular and well recognised feature of our daily lives.

Extra benefits of the plan include discounts on many other products and services at the practice, in addition to the average annual saving of around 10%. Talk to one of our team for more information, or you can quickly and easily sign up by phoning 08453 714495 and be registered immediately.

Benefits:

Our Healthy Pet Plan provides your pet with:

- *Annual health check and vaccinations – providing protection against diseases such as Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvovirus and Kennel Cough for dogs and Flu, Enteritis and Leukaemia for cats

- *Six month health check with a vet nurse, including nail clipping, dental check, etc

- *Flea and worm treatments, sufficient for 12 months

- *Personalised, printed treatment planner for your pet

- *15% discount on microchipping

- *10% discount on neutering, diets and waiting room sales items, dental work and additional vaccinations (ie Rabies)

Monthly payments:

Cat - £11.50

Small Dog (under 10kg) - £13.00

Medium Dog (10-20kg) - £14.50

Large Dog (20-40kg) - £17.80

Giant Dog (40-60kg) - £23.50

Please note, if you are registering a puppy, the weight will be based on the expected weight at maturity.

There is a £1 discount per month for each additional pet registered.

You can opt to pay for the supplemented plan, at an additional £3 per month per pet.

This includes for dogs – annual urine test and annual blood review test. For cats – annual urine test, annual blood review test and annual blood pressure measurement.

Prices correct as of 1st March 2015.

PDSA Big Pet Survey

Pet obesity levels are continuing to rise. 80% of veterinary professionals have reported an increase in pet obesity in the last 2 years, with current expectations that in 5 years time, there will be more overweight than healthy pets. PDSA are running their PDSA Animal Wellbeing survey again this year. The 2014 report focuses on 4 key issues, pet obesity, problem behaviours, preventative care and pet ownership.

The report continues to provide a unique and comprehensive insight into animal wellbeing in the UK and with your help, the PDSA hope to make the 2015 report the biggest ever. You can complete the survey on their website at:

www.pdsa.org.uk/bigpetsurvey

There are prizes to be won for taking part.

You can also read about the state of the UK's Pet Nation in their PAW Report 2014, packed full of interesting facts and figures about the health and wellbeing of UK pets, as well as lots of tips on providing them with the right kind of care.

Fun Corner - Mad March Hares!

This little saying got me thinking about the book Alice in Wonderland. Below are anagrams of characters from the book, see if you can work out who they are! Answers next month....

TOM TRUCKLE

SOUR DOME

THE RICE CASH

PARCEL TRAIL

WET BATH BIRI

GNORPHY

MAT HATRED

CELIA

DOOD

TWEE MUDDLE

DELETE WEED

TORQUE SAFE HEN

FEAR SHAVE KNOT

The quote from our February Valentines wordsearch: From the film Notting Hill, Julia Roberts says to Hugh Grant: "I am just a girl standing in front of a boy asking him to love her"