



CASTLE VETERINARY GROUP LTD

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Monday – Friday 8.30am – 6.30pm; Saturday 8.30am – 12.30pm; Sunday closed.

CANINE BABESIOSIS—NEW TICK-BORNE DISEASE IN DOGS FOUND IN UK

What is Canine Babesiosis?



You may have heard in the media recently, that a number of dogs have become ill with the tick borne disease "Babesiosis". This is the first time that this disease has been seen in the UK in dogs that haven't travelled abroad.

The disease is transmitted by ticks and it causes destruction of red blood cells. It is potentially fatal. The symptoms can range from mild to severe and include lethargy, lack of appetite, fever, pale gums, an enlarged abdomen and jaundice (yellowing of the skin).

Please don't panic about this as so far there have been only five cases in this country and they have all been in Essex. However, the infected ticks are expected to spread across the United Kingdom.

Protecting Your Dog

There are ways that you can protect your dog from Babesiosis and other tick-transmitted diseases, such as Lyme's disease. The best way is to use a product which contains a tick repellent that prevents ticks from attaching to your dog or medication that kills ticks within twelve hours of attaching, before the tick can transmit disease. Be warned, that manually removing ticks yourself may not be adequate, as the ticks may not be visible to you until they have been attached and growing for a day or two. It is particularly difficult to spot ticks early in longer coated dogs.



Detecting ticks: Run your hands over your dog, feeling for any lumps on the skin surface. Start at the head first – around the mouth, ears and neck, then working your way down the forelegs and rest of their body. If you find a lump, look at it closely. The skin where a tick is attached may be painful, swollen and red. If you look closely, the tick's legs can be seen at the level of the skin.

To remove a tick: Use a specially designed tick hook which will remove the tick with all parts intact. Do not attempt to pull it off as this may leave the head part in your dog. If you are worried about removing the tick yourself, or you are not sure if it is one, then our nurses will remove it for you free of charge. (Tick hooks are available at the surgery in a pack of two, one large and one small, for £3.59).

Please speak to us at the surgery for further information and advice on the options available to protect your dog.

SPECIAL OFFER ON TICK PREVENTION FOR DOGS—APRIL & MAY 2016

We have an offer on the flea and tick treatment available as a palatable tablet for dogs. One tablet provides 12 weeks flea and tick prevention, so with our buy 3 tablets and get the 4th one free offer, you will be able to get 12 months cover for the price of just 9 months, giving you an excellent opportunity to provide your dog with year-round cover. You can choose to purchase them quarterly or all in one go.

NB: Offer applies to specified treatment for dogs only.

MICROCHIPPING FOR DOGS LAW - EFFECTIVE FROM 6th APRIL 2016

A final reminder that the new law comes into effect on 6th April. All dogs over 8 weeks of age must be microchipped and registered on the national database before this date. If your dog is not yet registered please contact us as soon as possible so we can arrange this for you. The cost of inserting the microchip and registering your pet on the national database is just £16.50 . A small price to pay to help ensure your lost pet can be safely returned to you.

PET INSURANCE GUIDE

If you have a pet, the likelihood is that you consider them part of the family and you would be devastated if anything happened to them. However, just like us, animals of all types can suffer from an array of illnesses and accidents, but they can't turn to the NHS for free treatment. Investing in pet insurance can give you peace of mind that they'll be covered should they need treatment following an accident, injury or illness.

Like any other form of insurance, pet insurance policies vary, so do make sure you read the fine print. However, there are some standard features across these policies. For example, they will usually include cover for vet's fees up to a certain annual sum, alongside advertising and recovery costs if you lose your pet. Also, if your dog causes a traffic accident, for example, any costs incurred as a result will be covered under the liability section of your policy. Routine treatments such as neutering and vaccinations are not generally covered by insurance, so you won't be able to claim for these.

Rather than simply opting for the cheapest cover, you need to make sure you find the right policy for your particular pet. You don't want to find out you're not covered at a time when you need it most.

There are two main types of pet insurance, and which you choose depends on your budget and your pet. For example, lifetime cover is the most comprehensive, and provided you renew the policy every 12 months you'll know your pet will be covered for life. This is useful if your pet has a long-term illness. It is also worth checking if there is a maximum amount of cover, you should be looking at least £4,000 for a condition rather than £1,000 or £2,000 that some policies offer. **Be aware that to receive ongoing cover for lifetime policies, you must stay with the same insurer and make sure that the policy is always in place by paying your premium every year.**

The other form of cover is annual, which means it lasts for 12 months, after which it will expire. This could be cost-effective if your pet suffers a one-off accident or illness and you want cover for treatment following this only, as it's cheaper than lifetime cover. However, remember that your pet won't be insured when the policy ends and you'll have to get new cover if needed, for and any pre-existing conditions won't be covered.

To see the different types of pet insurance available, it can be useful to use a comparison website. We are not able to recommend insurance here at the vets, but we do have a selection of leaflets for companies which offer lifetime cover, which we would recommend if you can afford it. A pet which turns out to suffer from an ongoing condition such as diabetes or a skin allergy can incur thousands of pounds worth of treatment over the course of a lifetime.

Remember that there are some general exclusions from many providers, such as cats or dogs not being insured under an annual policy when they are older. Some pets are more expensive to insure than others, if for example, you have a crossbreed rather than a pedigree dog you'll find they'll be cheaper to insure as they tend to suffer fewer health complaints.

FUN CORNER

This month I thought we'd think about the beautiful flowering bulbs we have been enjoying over Spring. Here are eight anagrams for you to work out: **theyfoallively, fiddloaf, soccur, thingraypeach, ponsword, pitul, lebulebel, sillymara.** Answers will be in next months newsletter.