



# CASTLE VETS PETS

Newsletter – April 2023

Tel: 01566 772211 | [www.castleveterinarygroup.co.uk](http://www.castleveterinarygroup.co.uk)



## Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is an infection caused by a bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi*. It is transmitted by ticks who are infected by the bacteria (between 2½ and 5% of ticks in England and Wales) and affects both humans and domestic animals, including dogs and cats

Ticks are small spider-like parasites that feed by sucking blood from larger animals. They are most active during the warmer months but can be found all year round, particularly in grassy, heathland or wooded areas. They are unable to jump or fly, so they wait in dense vegetation for a host to brush past them and “catch a lift”. They then move around the host’s skin (sometimes for a couple of hours) until they find a suitable spot to feed from

If the tick is infected and it is left to feed for several hours, the bacteria that causes Lyme disease can pass from the tick and then spread throughout the body



Symptoms of Lyme disease can vary (including no signs at all) but typically includes the following:

- Fever
- Reduced appetite
- Swollen joints and intermittent lameness
- Lethargy
- Swollen lymph nodes (glands)

If your pet is showing any of these symptoms, book an appointment with your vet as soon as possible. Your vet will then review their symptoms, along with their history of tick-exposure and arrange a suitable treatment plan

Lyme disease is typically treated with antibiotics and if diagnosed early, most pets make a good recovery. However, if it is left untreated, or symptoms are already severe, it can affect the kidneys, nervous system and heart - causing serious illness which could be fatal

The good news is that you can protect your pet from Lyme disease by following a few simple guidelines:

- Use regular parasite control that protects your pet against ticks by killing them in the early stage of feeding before the disease is transmitted
- Use a tick repellent collar if you live in (or visit) a high-risk area
- Avoid long grass in the warmer months
- Avoid places known for ticks (find out if ticks are common in the area that you live or are likely to be visiting with your dog)
- Regularly check your pet for ticks after walks and remove any you find as quickly as possible using an appropriate tool

Brushing pets regularly will help you locate and remove any wandering ticks. Just make sure you dispose of them before they escape and attach onto someone else in the household!

## Top Tips

Some ticks are a similar colour to your pet's skin and, when engorged after feeding, they can look a bit like a nipple. It is worth double-checking to make sure that you really have found a tick before you try and remove one of your pet's nipples (Don't forget, male cats and dogs have nipples too!)

The easiest way to remove a tick is with a tick hook, using a slow rotating action in either direction. Tick hooks normally come in a pack of two different-sized hooks to ensure you have the right size

If you do not have a tick hook, a pair of pointed tweezers can be used (not blunt eyebrow tweezers)

The tick will need to be grabbed as close to the skin as possible and pulled straight upwards, taking care not to squeeze its body, as trying to rotate a tick with tweezers runs more of a risk of it becoming detached from its head

If a small piece of the tick does get left in the skin, call your vet for advice

**DO NOT** try to burn the tick off, apply Vaseline, nail polish or any other chemical

All of these methods cause discomfort and shock the tick, resulting in extra saliva release and increased risk of transmission of disease

Parasite control and tick hooks are available to purchase from the practice



If you need some help removing a tick, our nursing team offer complimentary appointments to remove them for you

## Senior Cat Clinics

Thanks to advancements in nutrition and veterinary medicine, our cats are living longer lives. Cats aged between 9 and 15 years are known as 'senior', while cats aged 15 years and over are termed 'super senior'. It is wonderful if your cat lives to enjoy old age; however, unfortunately these life stages are associated with health issues. Common health problems include high blood pressure (hypertension), kidney dysfunction, diabetes, hyperthyroidism, arthritis and dementia.

Sadly, it is common to see a decline in cognitive abilities in older animals (e.g., learning, memory, attention, spatial abilities) as a result of ageing changes in the brain. This is sometimes referred to as dementia but is more correctly termed cognitive dysfunction syndrome (CDS). CDS is characterised by behavioural changes. However, the behavioural changes associated with CDS can also result from other diseases, such as hyperthyroidism, chronic renal disease, diabetes and more. CDS can only be diagnosed once all other illnesses have been ruled out.



The kidneys are primarily responsible for regulating and maintaining the volume and composition of the body's internal fluids. Chronic kidney disease is a common finding in older cats. The first outward suggestion of chronic kidney disease is production of a larger volume of urine and increased water intake. These changes occur because, as kidney disease progresses and function is lost, the remaining functioning kidney must handle a greater load of water and substances being filtered from the blood, leading to an increased volume of dilute urine being produced. The animal drinks more to compensate for the loss of an excessive amount of water in the urine. Unfortunately, by the time that these signs appear more than 65% of the kidney tissue has lost its function. In an ideal world we would pick up chronic kidney disease at an earlier stage so that treatment and husbandry changes can be started sooner. Early changes can be seen by running in-house laboratory tests on blood and urine.

Diabetes is caused by either an absolute or relative lack of the hormone insulin. If insulin is deficient, blood glucose levels will rise, and the body will not be able to use glucose efficiently as a source of energy, depending instead on other sources such as breakdown of fats. Diabetes is most commonly found in middle to older age cats. Diabetes is treatable but usually requires lifelong treatment and monitoring.



Hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid glands) is a very common disorder of older cats. It is caused by an increase in production of thyroid hormones from the thyroid glands, which are situated in the neck. Thyroid hormones are responsible for regulating many body processes and when too much hormone is produced the clinical signs can be quite dramatic, and cats can become seriously ill. Thyroid hormones also help control the body's metabolic rate and cats with

hyperthyroidism typically suffer weight loss despite having an increased appetite and increased food intake. The vast majority of cats that develop hyperthyroidism can be treated very successfully with medication to control their thyroid level.

Feline Hypertension (high blood pressure) is often diagnosed with other diseases such as chronic kidney disease and hyperthyroidism. It is estimated Feline Hypertension affects 1 in 5 cats over 9. Often known as the "silent killer", feline hypertension has no early warning signs.

Long term consequences can be severe, damaging organs such as eyes, the heart, brain, and kidneys. However early diagnosis reduces the likelihood of these problems occurring. With treatment, hypertension is easily managed, reducing the risk of organ damage and other health problems occurring.

Here at Castle Vets we are offering senior cat clinics to our clients. One of our nurses will check your cats heart rate, pulse quality and blood pressure as this will check for Feline Hypertension, and common problems seen in older cats.

These Senior Cat Nurse Clinics include a **Urine and Blood Pressure Test** for cats over the age of 9 and are available for only £15 until the **end of APRIL**. Call us on 01566 772211 to book.

## National Pet ID Week



National pet ID week is observed annually for 7 days starting on April 17<sup>th</sup>. This is a great opportunity for pet owners to make sure they have taken all the necessary measures to ensure their pet has the best chance of being recovered if they go missing. Even the most well-behaved cats and dogs can get lost, run off unexpectedly or get separated from their owners. Microchipping your pet will

enable them to be identified should they get lost or stolen and will give them the best chance of being returned to you. Collars and tags are a legal requirement for dogs and they still need one even if they are microchipped, but they can get caught or removed. Microchipping offers a more reliable and permanent solution.

The government have announced that it will become the law to have all owned cats microchipped from June 2024. This is great news and will make the process of tracing strays back to their owners much easier when they are brought into the practice.

The procedure for having a microchip fitted is quick and works by simply inserting the tiny microchip under your pet's skin. Your pet will then be given a code which is unique to them. The chip can then be scanned and matched to the owner's contact details, which are kept on a national database.

It is important that you keep your details up to date. You must inform the data base that you are registered with if your address or telephone number changes.

## Government Alert

On **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2023**, there will be a national test of the UK Emergency Alerts service.

Emergency Alerts is a UK government service that will warn you if there's a danger to life nearby for example severe flooding, fires or extreme weather.

During this test your mobile phone or tablet may:

- make a loud siren-like sound, even if it's set on silent
- vibrate
- read out the alert

The sound and vibration will last for about 10 seconds.

Although the sound may only last 10 seconds, we wanted to make our clients aware as this is long enough to scare any noise sensitive pets. For more information please follow this link: <https://www.gov.uk/alerts>

## Easter Opening Hours 2023

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April (Good Friday) – **Closed**

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April – **Open as usual 8:30am – 3:00pm**

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April (Easter Sunday) – **Closed**

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> April (Easter Monday) – **Closed**

Please do not worry if your pet should need a vet over the Easter period, or indeed any time outside of our normal opening hours, just call us on the usual number 01566 772211. We always have vets on duty 24/7 (Please note, extra charges do apply).

We hope all of our Castle Veterinary Group clients have an egg-cellent Easter!

