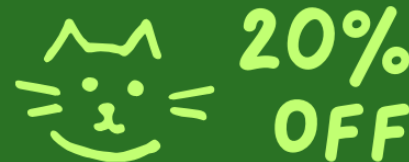




DISCOUNTED MICROCHIP OFFER FOR CATS

As of the 10th June 2024 it will be a legal requirement to have your cat microchipped. In light of this, for two weeks in May we are giving 20% off **ALL** cat microchipping. The discounted price is £17.76 and the offer will run from Monday 13th May – Friday 17th May 2024 & Monday 20th May – Friday 24th May 2024 only (no Saturday appointments). Please call us to book your appointment.



World Rat Day



World rat day is celebrated on the 4th of April and is a day to dispel the bad vibe that rats suffer. Rats are intelligent, highly social and make incredibly rewarding

animals to look after. However, they do have complex needs and are not always easy to look after well. Some of the things that rats need to live out a happy life are:

- Company – rats are social animals and require company of their own kind. Lone rats can even become depressed. In order to avoid unwanted babies, it is usually best to pair or group rats of the same sex. If you do choose to pair or group male and female rats together, make sure the males are neutered to prevent unwanted litters.
- A good sleep – as rats are nocturnal they are most active at night and at dawn or dusk. You may wish to consider the location of their cage for the benefit of your sleep and theirs. Keep their cage away from draughts, direct sunlight, loud noises and vibrations given off by televisions and speakers.
- Dust free bedding – avoid using bedding such as wood shavings or sawdust as this can cause respiratory problems. Dust extracted bedding is best such as paper-based, non-aspen wood chips or cellulose-based chips.
- Shelter – rats need a designated space to enjoy some peace and quiet and to sleep so a nest box is an important addition to their cage.
- Enrichment – A rat's cage should have multiple toys to keep them busy such as tunnels, things to climb and a rat safe exercise wheel. There should be enough room inside the cage to allow normal rat behaviours, such as burrowing, nesting, exploring and exercising. The opportunity to explore outside of their cage is also beneficial but make sure that play conducted outside of the cage is safe and rat-proof. Doors and windows should be closed and block cracks in floorboards, as rats can squeeze through surprisingly small gaps.



source, such as dry dog food. While rats are partial to titbits and household scraps, it is important that they do not overeat and become overweight. The occasional piece of fruit or veg is fine but peanuts and sunflower seeds are high in fat and should only be given as a rare

treat. Fresh, clean water must always be available.

It is also important to be aware of any changes in your rat which might indicate that they are unwell. The signs to look out for are:

- Loss of appetite
- Losing or gaining weight
- Runny nose or eyes
- Red discharge around the nose or eyes
- Sneezing or wheezing
- Lethargy or tiredness

If you have a pet rat/s and you are concerned about their health, please speak with a vet. It is also advisable to bring your rat in once a year for a check-up. Rats are prey animals so are good at hiding signs of ill-health. This is why an annual vet visit is important to avoid any illness.

Did you know?

Male rats are called bucks and females are does. Baby rats are known as kittens.

Rats are altruistic and will help a sick or injured rat that is not known to them as well as members of their own group.

On average, rats live for around two and a half years.

Spring Dangers



After what has felt like a long, wet winter I think we are all glad to see the arrival of Spring. The brighter evenings and warmer weather encourage us to

spend more time outside, but this does mean that your dog may be more likely to come into contact with a number of springtime dangers, such as lungworm, adder bites and ticks. Using regular parasite control against ticks is always recommend as this will protect your pet from Lyme disease by killing the ticks in the early stage of feeding before the disease is transmitted. This kind of preventative care is included in our Castle Care Club, with membership providing year-round protection against things like fleas, worms and ticks. If you would like to become a member, please give us a call.

Many common plants that start to bloom in the springtime are poisonous to dogs. We often keep spring plants inside our homes as well as our gardens and although cases of poisoning are rare it is a good idea to know which ones are poisonous so that they can be kept out of reach. Please visit <https://www.bluecross.org.uk/advice/dog/health-and-injuries/plants-poisonous-to-dogs> for a full list of plants that are toxic to dogs. If you think your dog has been poisoned, or has come into contact with potentially poisonous substances, call us immediately on 01566 772211.

At this time of year, we also see the fields filling up with livestock and their young. Make sure you are cautious when walking near livestock and always



keep your dog on a lead. Animals like sheep and cattle can be very protective of their young, and if your dog is off their lead, they can be at risk of being charged at. Livestock who are chased by dogs can become seriously distressed, even if the dog doesn't catch them or cause any physical harm. The stress of the chase alone can cause sheep to die and pregnant ewes to miscarry their lambs. Please remember, just because you can't see baby animals in a field, it doesn't mean your dog's presence won't be distressing for the animals that are there.

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.

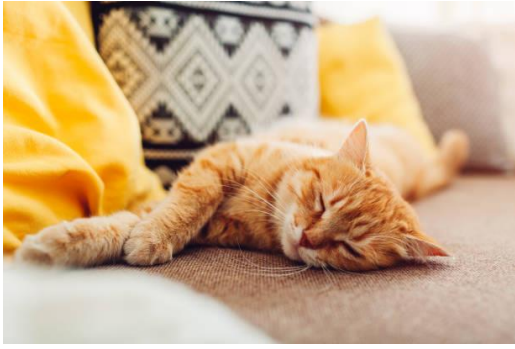
Sadly, it is common to see a decline in cognitive abilities in older animals (e.g., learning, memory, attention, spatial abilities) as a result of ageing changes in the brain. This is sometimes referred to as dementia but is more correctly termed cognitive dysfunction syndrome (CDS). CDS is characterised 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 £17.95. Call us on 01566 772211 to book.