

## Autumn - season of mists, mellow fruitfulness, Halloween and fireworks!

Welcome to the Clockhouse Vets autumn newsletter, with some timely advice about Halloween and the firework season for those with nervous pets.

## In this issue:

- Prepare phobic pets NOW for fireworks
- Long live cats!
- FREE checks for geriatric cats
- Passive Smoking in Pets
- Special offer on dental treatment

## Meet Our New Vet

If you haven't already, meet our new Head Surgeon, Aussie vet, Kris Barnett, the latest addition to the team at Clockhouse Vets. Kris has worked around animals since he was 14 years old, as a vet receptionist and then a nurse. A Veterinary Surgeon for 14 years, he's performed over 3000 operations. He moved to the UK for his gap year - a decade ago!

He has always kept animals, from Kangaroos to an Echidna and fully appreciates how much a part of the family animals become: "We once had a cat brought in with horrific injuries. It had been shot in the face. We operated and reconstructed its face,

removing the bullet and realigning its jaw, keeping a feeding tube in for a couple of days. Its owner, an elderly lady, was really upset - she couldn't understand why someone would do that to her cat. It's cruel to the cat but equally cruel

to the owner, but got that cat better, which was really satisfying. That's my favourite - fixing the animal makes you feel great, but you're also helping the person and that's kinda nice too.



## Clockhouse Proudly Sponsors Stroud Dog Bins

Clockhouse Vets have joined forces with Stroud District Council, sponsoring dog waste bins all over Stroud. Dog faeces are not just smelly and unpleasant, but toxic.

Josie from SDC explains: "Cattle droppings are all organic but because dogs eat meat, their waste is far more dangerous. Laws came in in 1996 to force owners to pick up after their dogs and it's certainly improved since then but dog waste is still the single largest complaint we get each year. It's horrible to step in and it's horrible for people with pushchairs, mobility scooters or wheelchairs."

"Dog waste can transfer some very serious diseases,



particularly to young children who might put things in their mouth while playing outside and are not so good at washing their hands" explains Pablo, one of the surgeons at Clockhouse Vets, "There are zoonotic diseases that can spread from dogs to humans. Salmonella and Campylobacter can be really nasty and Toxocariasis, or roundworm, can cause blindness. It's part of being a responsible dog owner to pick up after your pet and regularly get them dewormed to help reduce the dangers present in their faeces."

There can also be a danger to livestock. Neosporosis and Sarcocystosis can both be found in dog faeces and can cause abortions in cattle, and neurological disease and death in sheep. There can also be an environmental effect if faecal matter gets into water supplies as dog waste can contain E. coli and any number of other harmful bacteria.

Clockhouse's sponsorship will assist the council in maintaining and updating the bins.

# IT'S NEVER TOO SOON TO GET HELP FOR YOUR PET'S FEARS AND PHOBIAS!

**IF POSSIBLE, BOOK AN APPOINTMENT 3 WEEKS BEFORE AN UPCOMING EVENT**

We often describe dogs as having 'phobias' towards certain loud, unexpected noises (ie. a fear that doesn't improve when exposed repeatedly to the cause) –fireworks, gunshots and cars backfiring, for instance. Many pets react with fear to these loud noises, but there are steps that can be taken to avoid phobias and to lessen fears.

Some of the signs of a fearful reaction in dogs are:

- shaking and trembling;
- salivation, panting;
- avoidance/hiding;
- pacing;
- dilated pupils; and
- reduced or no appetite.

## Prevention is better than cure

Puppies born in autumn/winter tend to be less fearful of fireworks than spring/summer-born puppies, supporting the view that noise phobias can be prevented by exposure to noise from a very young age, in a safe and controlled environment.

Tools such as sound therapy CDs, which play a range of different noises a puppy may not regularly hear, should help it to become desensitised. Socialisation of a young puppy will help it develop into a well-balanced dog that is confident in dealing with loud noise. Socialisation with a confident adult dog can also be reassuring for a puppy.

If it's too late to address these issues from puppyhood, there are still a selection of long-term (in this instance long term describes any treatment that requires more than a couple of days to be effective) and short-term treatments.



## Long-term treatments

Long-term treatment can involve behavioural management, desensitisation and counter-conditioning. As the term suggests, these require some planning ahead, but there are several incredibly effective long-term treatments for noise phobias.

For mild phobias, desensitising CDs can work well for adult dogs if used correctly. Drugs and nutrition can also play an important role in calming an anxious pet. A variety of products are available to promote a calming influence on pets, some of which can also be used reasonably effectively as a short-term treatment.

Clockhouse stock Kalm Aid capsules, which, for dogs can be opened and mixed with food or given whole. For cats it is presented as a liquid, which can also be given directly or added to food. The active ingredients include calming amino acid L-tryptophan, that helps to support a relaxed mood and affects the production of serotonin, and Thiamine (vitamin B1, deficiency of which is associated with nervous disorders) which also have a calming effect once ingested.

Zylkène's active ingredient is derived from a milk protein and has a similar calming effect to that you see in a puppy after it has received a milk feed from its mother.

Royal Canin's Calm diet is a food designed to help alleviate stress, with added prebiotics to help encourage friendly bacteria in the gut to reduce stress diarrhoea. The food should be used from 10 days before the expected stressful situation and, the company claims, works for two to three months after being consumed.

Adaptil is a pheromone treatment we recommend for dogs, to help to calm and comfort them in times of stress. It is available in collars, sprays and plug-in diffusers to release the odourless pheromone around the house. It is advised to start this process around two weeks before any expected noise event.

## Short-term treatments

Firework Night and New Year's Eve come around quickly and it's easy to forget how badly your pets can be affected until these events are close. There are, however, still a number of short-term measures you can take to help them through this stressful time.

- Walking them before the event (before dark for fireworks) will help limit exposure to the noise,
- Providing pets with a safe den (for example, under the kitchen table, beside your feet or under the stair cupboard) can help to alleviate stress.
- Closing the curtains and putting on the TV or playing some music can provide a welcome distraction.
- Keeping things as normal as possible will help to reduce anxiety - over-fussing can make pets more anxious. Having said that, to some pets, some form of comfort can be very helpful and, if they seek it from you, do not deny them.

- Keeping pets distracted by playing with a favourite toy and games may help some dogs with a mild phobia.
- The anxiety-reducing products mentioned earlier can be used to some effect on a short-term basis – for example, the day before the event.
- Products such as ThunderShirts and ThunderCaps (available from good pet shops) work for some pets, by applying gentle pressure to make the pet feel safe and secure, calming them and reducing anxiety.

These ideas work well for mild phobias, but a pet suffering from moderate to severe phobias may require a consultation with a veterinary surgeon, to assess the best form of treatment.

Noise fear and phobia can be traumatic for both pet and owner and it is worth noting that New Year's Eve and the weeks either side of Firework Night aren't the only occasions where loud, unusual noises can occur - thunderclaps or a car backfiring can be just as scary.

**If your pet suffers from any kind of phobia, please make an appointment with one of our practice nurses to discuss what can be done to help them. The further ahead you can plan this, the better, but we recommend at least 3 weeks ahead of a known, phobia-inducing event. For severely phobic dogs, we can give safe, effective medication consistently for up to 3 weeks.**

## Here's to a long and happy life for our cats!

Meet Graham, a 30 year old cat (that's about 136 in human years!) who is in the running for World's Oldest Living Cat. While the oldest cat of all time lived until she was 38, the cat currently considered the oldest alive is only 24 giving Graham a 6 year lead on her.



If it's possible to prove Graham's age then she (yes, she - long story) could be a new Guinness World Record Holder. Graham's owner recently gave Clockhouse a framed picture of Graham, bearing the caption "Well looked after by Clockhouse Veterinary Practice".

Cat's are considered 'senior' when they reach 10 years of age and 'geriatric' over the age of 15 years. Keeping an older cat healthy and happy requires more care than with a younger cat, as they can suffer from a variety of common diseases including:

- Heart disease
- Over-active thyroid glands
- Dental problems
- Chronic kidney disease
- Lymphoma
- Diabetes

If you notice reduced activity levels, a change in appetite, impaired vision, weight loss, altered sleep patterns, poor coat conditions, increased thirst, bad breath or soiling inappropriately in the house, it's probably worth arranging a geriatric feline health check.

Regular health checks are increasingly important as your cat gets older to ensure they remain healthy - Graham is proof that, with the right care (okay, and the right genes), cats can stay active and happy for a LONG time!

**Until the end of November, Clockhouse are offering FREE urine checks for geriatric cats, to check for the first signs of kidney disease, so that we can take steps to slow it's progression. Call 01453 752555 for more information or to book an appointment.**



## Passive Smoking can Harm Pets Too!

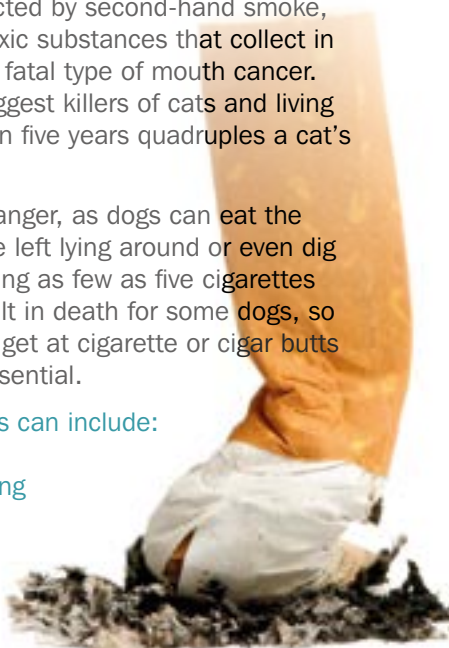
Most smokers are aware of the risks that smoking poses to fellow humans. However, many do not consider the impact of second-hand smoke on their pets. Tobacco smoke can cause allergic reactions, inflammation and even pulmonary cancers in pets.

Cats, in particular, are affected by second-hand smoke, because they lick up the toxic substances that collect in their fur and can develop a fatal type of mouth cancer. Lymphoma is one of the biggest killers of cats and living with a smoker for more than five years quadruples a cat's risk of cancer.

Even e-cigarettes pose a danger, as dogs can eat the nicotine cartridges if they're left lying around or even dig them out of the bin. Ingesting as few as five cigarettes or a third of a cigar can result in death for some dogs, so making sure your pet can't get at cigarette or cigar butts or used pipe tobacco, is essential.

Symptoms of cancer in pets can include:

- Coughing
- Trouble eating or breathing
- Weight loss
- Vomiting
- Excessive drooling
- Nasal discharge



Smoking even affects birds, causing eye and skin diseases as well as respiratory problems. Pets often spend more time in the homes of smokers than the smokers themselves, so are exposed to the carcinogens produced by smoking for even longer than their owners. They have smaller lungs than humans, so are more susceptible to the dangers of smoking. Even if your pet isn't experiencing any of the above symptoms, tobacco smoke still greatly increases their risk of many types of cancer and other diseases. A smoke-free home is always better for animals.

Clockhouse Vets use state-of-the-art equipment to check your pet is healthy and, if they do have cancer or any other disease caused by passive smoking, can care for and treat them.



### Special Autumn Dental Offer

**20% OFF DENTAL TREATMENT FOR CATS & DOGS THROUGHOUT OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER**

**QUOTE 'AUTUMN OFFER' WHEN BOOKING AN APPOINTMENT (MONDAY TO FRIDAY ONLY) AND BRING THIS VOUCHER.**

**Dental problems in animals are not just a cosmetic or social problem - they can and do affect your pet's quality of life!**

Dental disease is painful and can lead to a number of serious, life-threatening illnesses, including kidney and heart problems.

If, when you look at your dog's or cat's teeth, you can see a brown/yellow coating (tartar), *it's time to book a check-up*. A red line along the gums is an indication of gingivitis (gum disease), angry red gums are a sign of severe gingivitis/lesions and tartar going up and over the gums indicate dental disease/lesion - all of which mean *your pet needs dental help fast!*

If your cat has a poor/tufted coat, is not grooming as much and has bad breath, it's worth getting their teeth checked. In dogs, bad breath can be a sign of dental problems and, if the problems are severe, they may have a poor appetite.

## PUTTING YOU AND YOUR BEST FRIEND FIRST

Spread the cost of your pet care with easy monthly payments and enjoy a **15% inflation-proof discount** over the year for complete peace of mind.

CAT	DOG
<b>£12</b> per month	<b>£10*</b> per month

\*depending on size and weight, contact us for a more detailed price



## PAWS & CLAWS

### MONTHLY PET HEALTH PLAN

See our website or ask us for details of the many member benefits!

