

Summertime - and long may it last!

Welcome to the Clockhouse Vets summer newsletter. We hope you find it informative. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask a member of our team.

In this issue:

- Bunny care advice
- Pets in cars in warm weather
- Tips to help pets keep their cool
- What to look for in pet insurance
- Special offer for older cats!

Everybody Needs Some Bunny to Love!

It is estimated that there are between 1.6 and 2 million pet rabbits in the UK, and plenty of choice with 67 breeds and 531 varieties of rabbit, from the smallest, the Netherland Dwarf, to the largest, the Flemish Giant, weighing up to 6kg.

Rabbits are very easy to look after, but it's not just a case of popping them in a hutch in the garden and cleaning and feeding them when needed. Rabbits usually live to about seven or eight years old, but many live for over 10 years. They are incredibly social animals and if left without appropriate company and things to do for a long time they can suffer. They are happiest when kept with another friendly rabbit, so rabbits should ideally live in friendly pairs or groups.

A good combination is a neutered male and a neutered female. Speak to your vet for advice about neutering.

Rabbits have a wonderful ability to interact with humans but need time and regular, gentle handling from an early age to become comfortable around humans. They are, first and foremost, prey animals and their natural response to a perceived threat is to often run and hide. Lots of

bolt holes/hiding places within their home and areas they have access to are essential. Open spaces with no protection will cause your rabbits to feel under threat. A good idea is to place their carrier inside the homing area to increase familiarity and reduce stress during vet visits. In the wild, rabbits have plenty to keep them occupied, from foraging to reproduction and territorial defence. Pet rabbits, on the other hand, often lack stimulation, which can lead to behavioural

problems and poor health. Much like humans, they need to be kept physically and mentally

active. You can replicate a rabbit's natural environment by providing tunnels, tree stumps (from trees that are safe for rabbits to chew, e.g. apple, that have not been sprayed with chemicals), safe, unsprayed twigs (hung up, so that they can pull them), suitable toys, a digging box (i.e. a planter filled with earth for digging), platforms - it's a good idea to rotate items regularly to keep them interested.

Rabbits are known as 'fibrevores' because fibre is absolutely essential for their dental, digestive and emotional health. Good quality hay and/or grass should make up the majority of a rabbit's diet and should be available at all times. Without adequate portions of the right kind of fibre, they rapidly succumb to illness. Rabbits fed on muesli-style foods will often selectively feed, picking out the starchy elements and leaving the rest, leading to an unbalanced diet. If you are currently feeding a muesli style food to your rabbits, gradually transferring them onto a hay and nugget based feeding plan over a period of 14 to 28 days will help balance their diet.

75% of rabbits seen by vets are diagnosed with dental problems - their teeth grow continuously, about 2-3mm a week. In the wild they wear them down by gnawing on rough vegetation, but many domestic rabbits don't get to do this and their teeth often need to be filed down by a vet.

If a rabbit doesn't get enough exercise, their nails may also need to be clipped. Lack of exercise can also lead to osteoporosis in rabbits, a condition which can also be caused by a diet low in calcium. At least 80% of rabbits in the UK are not being fed correctly and 30% of rabbits in the UK are obese, possibly due to their sedentary life as domestic pets. If you'd like more information on how to keep your rabbit(s) happy and healthy, please ask us.



How Long Can You Leave a Dog Unattended in a Car on a Sunny Day?



There is a really simple answer to this question, and that is “you can’t!” It is not safe to leave your dog unattended in a car for even a couple of minutes while you pop to a shop or run an errand. For one thing, your errand may take longer than expected. What if you were unable to return promptly, or if something happened to you and no one was aware that your dog was locked in the car alone?

The temperature within a car, even if parked in the shade, will climb rapidly and heatstroke can occur within just a few minutes in this environment.

When it’s 22°C/72°F outside, the temperature inside a car can reach 47°C/117°F within 60 minutes.

Jude Clay from the RSPCA says: “All too often owners make the mistake of thinking that it is sufficient to leave a bowl of water or a window open for their pet, but this is not enough to protect your pet from heatstroke, which can have fatal consequences. The RSPCA’s message is: ‘Dogs die in hot cars. Don’t leave your dog alone in a car.’ ”

Animals can sustain brain damage or even die from heatstroke in just 15 minutes. Beating the heat is extra tough for dogs because they can only cool themselves by panting and by sweating through their paw pads.

If you see a dog unattended in a car on a warm day, call the Police on 999. If the police are unable to attend, please call the RSPCA 24-hour cruelty line 0300 1234 999.

Heatstroke - early warning signs

Heatstroke can be fatal. Some dogs are more prone than others:

- dogs with short snouts
- fatter/muscular dogs
- long-haired breeds
- old/young dogs
- dogs with certain diseases/on certain medication

Heatstroke develops when dogs can’t reduce their body temperature. Symptoms include:

- heavy panting
- profuse salivation
- rapid pulse
- very red gums/tongue
- lethargy
- lack of coordination
- reluctance/inability to rise after collapsing
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- loss of consciousness.

Heatstroke - first aid

Act quickly - heatstroke can be fatal!

If pets show any signs of heatstroke, move them to a shaded, cool area. Ring your vet immediately.

- **Urgently, gradually lower their body temperature:**
- **Immediately douse them with cool (not cold) water, to avoid shock – you could use a shower, or spray and place them in the breeze of a fan.**
- **Let them drink small amounts of cool water.**
- **Continue dousing until their breathing settles – never cool pets so much that they begin shivering.**

Once your pet is cool, immediately go to the vet.

Warm Weather Tips for Happy, Healthy Pets

Extra care should be taken to protect all pets in hot weather and as it gets hotter this summer, all pet owners need to think about how they can take simple steps to ensure their pets are happy and healthy during the warm weather. Simple steps to take are:

- ☀ Don't leave pets in vehicles, glass conservatories or caravans in the heat, even if it's cloudy.
- ☀ Make sure pets have adequate water to drink
- ☀ Provide adequate room to move into a cooler, ventilated environment.
- ☀ Avoid exercising pets in the heat of the day
- ☀ Provide necessary protection from the sun in the hottest part of the day. If your pets are kept outside outside, ensure they have access to a cool shady spot where they can escape from the sun.



A plentiful supply of drinking water is essential



Lots of dogs love to cool down in a paddling pool

- ☀ Groom dogs and cats regularly to get rid of excess hair. Give long-coated dogs a haircut at the start of summer.
- ☀ Dogs and cats, particularly those with light-coloured noses/fur on their ears, can get sunburned. White cats and dogs should be kept out of direct sun as much as possible, and if they must be in the sun, you can help them prevent sunburn by using a sunscreen on their ears and noses.

Over a period of time, repeated exposure to the sun can cause squamous cell carcinoma, a cancer found most often on the tips of the ears and nose. Early signs are a sore that does not heal, or that bleeds.

Ask us for advice on pet-safe sunscreens and how to use them.

All Pet Insurance is NOT the Same!

According to the Association of British Insurers, the average pet insurance claim last year was over £600. For those whose pets are not insured, that's a lot to find at the drop of a hat, so it's well worth insuring your pet, but what type of cover should you go for?

Broadly speaking, there are three types of insurance cover.

- **Lifetime cover:**

The most expensive option, but offering the best benefits, covering your pet for its entire lifetime for any illness or injury, up to a maximum amount each year. The insurance company will continue to pay out year after year on long-term treatments without affecting your annual premium, which generally stays the same.

- **Maximum benefit policies:**

Also allow you to claim year after year, but to a pre-set limit of cover for each condition, e.g. if your pet develops diabetes, you can claim back vet fees until that limit has been reached. If your pet then develops another problem you will be covered again until the limit is reached for this new illness, so you have good cover for sequential illnesses, but limited cover for long-care requirements.

- **Twelve-month policies:**

These limit the amount of time you have to claim for any one condition to the twelve month period following initial diagnosis. These policies are the cheapest, but their cover is not helpful if your pet develops an expensive long-standing problem that will incur costs for many years, e.g. arthritis, diabetes, etc.

Pet insurance allows you to budget for vet fees and make the best decisions about your pet's care without money worries, but they're not all the same, so choose carefully and wisely.

**Summer
Special Offer**
FREE HEALTH CHECK
FOR CATS OVER 12 YEARS OF AGE,
THROUGHOUT AUGUST.
QUOTE 'SUMMER OFFER' WHEN
BOOKING AN APPOINTMENT
(MONDAY TO FRIDAY ONLY) AND
BRING THIS VOUCHER.



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.

- Routine vaccinations and health check
- Twice yearly health assessment
- 12 months of flea and worm control
- Free microchipping and nail clipping
- Free nurse appointments

Plus you will also receive these additional member benefits:

- 20% off t/d dental diets and any non-prescription food
- 15% off veterinary consultation fees, counter sales and other preventative healthcare services including routine neutering
- 10% off prescription diets

PAWS&CLAWS

MONTHLY PET HEALTH PLAN

CAT	DOG
£12 per month	from £10* per month

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

