



### Oswald's Health Plan

Our own practice Membership Health Plan is designed to help pet owners spread the cost of routine treatment and also provides the support to help you keep your pet fit and healthy.

The membership plan means that the cost of maintaining good general health of your dog, cat or rabbit is distributed throughout the year by making monthly Direct Debit payments; its simple, affordable and gives you peace of mind.

#### FOR DOGS AND CATS THE PLAN INCLUDES:

- Annual booster vaccination
- Worm control (sufficient for 12 months supply)
- Flea control (sufficient for 12 months supply)

#### FOR RABBITS THE PLAN INCLUDES:

- Annual booster vaccination for RHD1-Myxo & RHD2
- Two seasonal applications of Fly Strike preventative treatment.
- Three monthly nail clippings.

#### THE PLAN ALSO INCLUDES FOR DOGS, CATS & RABBITS:

- Two annual veterinary examinations
- 20% OFF normal costs of other services
- 10% OFF pet food
- 10% OFF neutering
- 10% OFF dental procedures
- 10% OFF sundries like leads, collars and toys

There is NO UPPER AGE LIMIT or QUANTITY of pets you can sign up!

Please see our leaflets at reception or call for further information:  
**01902 731127**



Photos: iStockPhoto

## We are excited to announce we are now stocking Royal Canin Diets

We are eagerly working with Royal Canin to provide your pets with food that has been carefully and scientifically developed to provide your pet with their exact nutritional needs and bring you amazing promotional offers.

We will be running a **SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER of 33% OFF** the entire feline and canine prescription and life-stage range for a limited period only, so grab yours quick whilst stocks last!

We will also be running a collect and save scheme, whereby once you have purchased your eighth bag of food, you will receive your ninth bag completely FREE!

Our Oswald Health Plan joiners can also benefit from an additional 10% discount off the entire range also.

If you feel you would like to speak with one of our Veterinary Nurses regarding your pet's nutrition please book a FREE of charge nurse consultation and we will be happy to help.



## Q: Where do fleas go in the winter? A: Your home!



Did you know that the worst time for flea infestations is actually the Autumn and Winter months? Fleas thrive in warm conditions and thanks to central heating, they don't need to hop south for the winter, they just need to move into your living room.

Fleas can make their way into our homes in all sorts of ways; on our pets, on us, or just hopping in by themselves. Did you know that fleas can jump 20cm into the air – so your front step is no barrier to them! They lay their eggs in protected places like under furniture or in the cracks of laminate floors and those eggs can survive for months, waiting to be activated by warm conditions (remember that central heating?!) and the presence of pets spending more time inside. This is why flea infestations can appear to come out of nowhere!

**So, it is vital to protect against fleas all year round!** Come and have a chat to us about the best ways to do this and you can stop your home from being a flea's winter paradise!

## New Rabbit Starter Packs



Our new rabbit starter packs include everything you will require for your new bunny in the first few months of their arrival, all for just £65.00!

(Saving you approximately £30.00)

The pack includes the RHD1-Myxo vaccine and the RHD2 vaccine, a full veterinary examination, microchipping, initial flea and worm treatment, nail clipping and an information pack.



The package is available for all rabbits under 12 months of age and is a perfect forerunner for our Oswald's Health Plan (see left for all of the great benefits.)

**Opening Times** Monday - Friday **8.30am - 6.30pm** • Saturday **9.00am - 2.00pm** • Sunday **Closed** • **24 hour emergency cover**

## Update on lungworm in dogs



Lungworm or *Angiostrongylus Vasorum*, is a parasite that can affect dogs and also local foxes. It can cause significant disease and in some cases, be fatal. Unfortunately, cases are becoming more common throughout the UK and Ireland and it is therefore very important to be aware of lungworm and how you can help protect your pet from this parasite.

Dogs can be infected with lungworm larvae carried by **slugs and snails** (which act as intermediate hosts). Slugs and snails can be inadvertently eaten in grass, soil or whilst playing with toys in the garden. Lungworm larvae can even be found in the trail that snails leave behind in your garden. The disease is commonest in young dogs that eat or play with slugs and snails, and in dogs that eat or drink outside and may have had slugs or snails in their bowls.



Electron micrograph of an adult lungworm

Lungworm are swallowed as tiny larvae, which migrate into the circulation of the liver and travel to the right side of the heart. Here they develop into adult worms (see photo left) which can build up in the heart. Here the adults mate and produce eggs. The eggs hatch into larvae and then migrate into the lung tissue. These larvae are coughed up and are passed out into your dog's faeces to re-infect molluscs.

When in the body the larvae cause significant lung tissue damage, often causing a cough, breathing troubles and lethargy. This can result in bronchitis, heart failure and spontaneous bleeding. Affected dogs often become weak and lethargic, go off their food, and may cough, vomit, or pass blood. The disease can be so severe as to be fatal but, if diagnosed early, can be treated successfully. Blood or faecal testing can give rapid diagnostic results.

Lungworm is best prevented by using an appropriate spot-on wormer at monthly intervals. Fortunately it can't be transmitted to humans but it is very important to make sure your pet is adequately protected. Please contact us at the practice if you are concerned your pet is not covered.

Lungworm photo: courtesy Bayer.



## Winter weight worries!

Shorter days, inhospitable weather, and the lure of a cosy sofa all conspire against us and our pets in the winter months, leaving both pets and owners prone to putting on a few unwanted pounds. This is a problem because while it is all too easy to gain weight, it isn't nearly as easy to lose it!

Long term, this can have health risks since carrying excess weight can cause or worsen a range of conditions including skin, heart, respiratory and joint disease. Your pet may also be more prone to develop problems such as raised blood pressure, diabetes and pancreatitis.

So – now is the perfect time to assess your pet's weight! Dogs should have a visible 'waist line', with ribs that can be felt on palpation. By contrast, if you can pinch an inch or more, and if your pet's tummy sags down, then a diet is probably in order. We are here to help and can weigh your pet and can advise you on their ideal weight. Additionally, by visiting the surgery every few months we can use the scales to keep an eye on your pet's weight.

Special diets and feeders, advice on exercise, treats, and calorie management all have their part to play and will give you the best chance to get your pet's weight back under control. The good news is that as your pet loses weight, the benefits of increased healthiness and vitality are usually seen quite quickly. So, if your pet has gained weight, or seems to have slowed down, then why not give our Weight Watchers nurse's Kerry or Laura a call and they will book a FREE of charge weigh consultation for your pet!



## Brrr – it's cold out there!

With the colder weather setting in, it's a good idea to start making plans to avoid some Christmas calamities and keep our pets healthy throughout the festive season.

**Winter walks:** In order to avoid pets expanding their waistline, getting out and about as the weather cools is essential. However make sure that your pets are adequately prepared; when outside they may need to wear waterproof and warm jackets, especially if they are older or have thin coats. Some salt mixtures on paths, and also snow building up between the paws, can cause limping and pain. So, do check your pet's feet regularly and make sure they are washed and clean on return from a walk. Whilst out and about, make sure you play some games to give your pet mental as well as physical exercise.

**Toxic alert:** Anti-freeze poisonings increase at this time of year because we use it more in our cars. Although it is highly toxic, it tastes very sweet and pets, in particular cats, will drink it readily. Make sure your car isn't leaking any fluid and keep cans or bottles of it well out of reach and cleaned on the outside. Even a few licks can be fatal.



**Outdoor pets:** Rabbits and guinea pigs are ideally brought into a heated garage or shed, or moved inside. Make sure they have plenty of bedding and that their water supply is fresh twice daily. Check your small furries at least once a day to make sure they are bright, eating and well. If you have a rabbit or guinea pig who lives alone, now is the ideal time to think about getting a friend of the same species so they have someone to cuddle up with!



**Foliage alert:** Some plants such as ivy, poinsettia, holly berries and mistletoe can also cause stomach upsets. Lily petals and pollen are very toxic to cats. They may brush against the pollen and lick it off their fur, which can cause kidney failure.

**Festive alert:** Pieces of string, tinsel and bones from turkeys should be kept well out of reach to avoid an intestinal blockage and the possible need for life saving surgery. Baubles and lights, if broken and eaten, will cause serious damage to your pet. Similarly we see lots of problems at this time of year from pets eating things like chocolate, christmas cake and mince pies.



So – enjoy the festive season and follow these tips to keep your pets safe and healthy. As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch!