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by appointment
Mon-Fri: 9am-11am
12pm-2pm
4pm-7pm

Sat: 11am-1pm
3pm-5pm

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2008

WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE OF OUR NEWSLETTER

In this issue:-

- STAFF NEWS:-** a new face on the Veterinary team
WHAT'S NEW?:- help us raise money for charity by being a part of our 2009 calendar!
MEDICAL FOCUS:- heart disease does your pet have a healthy heart?
KIDS CORNER:- Clarice Anne Hatwell is this issue's winner for her coloured in picture
STAR PET:- Meet Keisha the Siberian Husky
THE PRE-OP ROOM:- What happens here?
EXOTIC SPOT:- The Guppy by Jamie Biggs

STAFF NEWS

Congratulations are due to Miss Jo Sheen who passed her Certificate of Zoological medicine. Miss Sheen has moved on from Lawton and Stoakes to further her career in exotic animals.



Miss Andrea Shiele has joined us in the post of assistant Veterinary Surgeon. Miss Schiele (pronounced Sheeler) qualified from Leipsig in Germany in 2001. She has a PhD in Cardiovascular research and her main interest is in surgical cases. Andrea is also interested in gaining experience in

exotic species.

Kelly our 1st year trainee nurse hopes to be able to start the second year of her course in Veterinary Nursing in January 2009. She takes her 1st year exam in November 2008 so we wish her the best of luck. Jamie has started his course in Veterinary Nursing at Writtle College and will be away from the practice on Wednesdays learning the theory to back up his practical work at the surgery.

WHAT'S NEW?

LAWTON AND STOAKES CALENDAR 2009



New for 2009 Lawton and Stoakes are preparing a calendar featuring photos of **YOUR PETS**. This will be on sale from end of November priced **£4.99** of which **£1.00** will be **donated to the Zebra Foundation**.

This registered charity was set up by the British Veterinary Zoological Society (BVZS) of which Mr Lawton and Miss Stoakes are both members. The aim of the Foundation is to promote education for Veterinary students and Veterinary surgeons in Zoological species.

If you would like for your pet to be included please bring or send your photos in to the surgery (if you would like them returned don't forget to write your name and address on the back). Alternatively e-mail pictures to **Secretary@exoticvets.net**. We want to include as many as possible so get snapping and help us to support this worthwhile charity! Closing Date for entries November 10th.

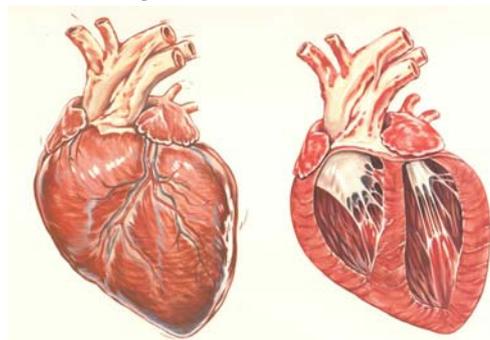
HEART DISEASE

Heart disease affects cats and dogs in the same way as it does people although there are some differences in the causes of the disease.

Congenital heart disease.

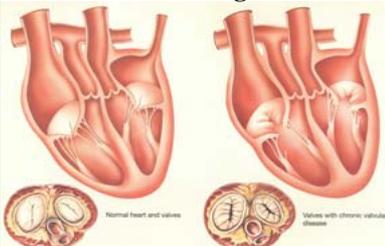
This is a defect of the heart that the cat or dog is born with. It may or may not be hereditary. There are many different types of defect that can occur but typically they fall into one of two groups either **muscular defects** such as a hole between the left and right heart chambers or **valvular defects**. These defects, if severe, will lead to stunted growth and early death unless the defect can be surgically corrected. If the defect is minor the animal may live with it without showing any signs although a heart murmur is usually picked up by the Veterinary Surgeon on examination of the chest with a stethoscope.

Normal Dog heart



Acquired heart disease develops later in life. There are two types of condition that can occur.

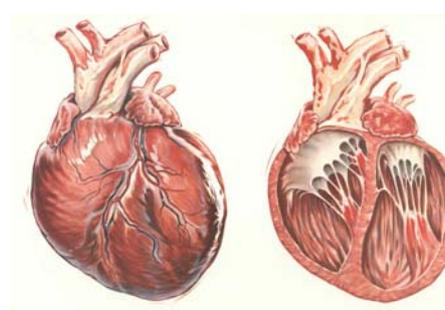
Endocardiosis in dog heart



Endocardiosis is a degeneration of the heart valves. The valve leaflets become “knobby” and as a result they leak resulting in a murmur.

Cardiomyopathy is a disease affecting the heart muscle affecting the ability of the heart to pump.

Dilated Cardiomyopathy in the dog



Heart disease often (but not always) leads to **heart failure**. The body has defence mechanisms to deal with this failure all of which aim to increase the blood pressure. Eventually these mechanisms are overwhelmed and signs of **congestive heart failure** occur. These typically include:-

Lethargy (often mistaken as sign of ageing), **increased thirst**, **breathlessness or coughing** and **weight loss**.

Hypertension (raised blood pressure) is seen in cats more than dogs. This is not usually due to lifestyle choices as seen in the disease in people! Cats can get secondary hypertension due to **kidney failure** or **hyperthyroidism** and treatment of the underlying condition often helps the heart disease.

If your Vet suspects that your pet has a heart condition he/she may request the following tests:- **Radiography** (Xrays) of the chest, **ECG** (electrocardiogram) to monitor the rhythm of the heart, **Echocardiography** (to assess heart structures such as valves and muscle) and **blood pressure monitoring** is also possible in some patients. It is often not possible to cure heart disease but there are many modern medicines available which can go a long way to improving the quality of life for these patients.

If you suspect your pet may have a heart condition telephone our receptionists who will be happy to book and appointment with one of our Veterinary Surgeons to examine them.

KIDS CORNER



This Issue we are featuring a picture that Clarice Anne Hatwell coloured in while waiting with her grandmother in the surgery waiting room. We love the colours Clarice Anne has used! A £10 WHS voucher is on its way to Clarice Anne.

If any other children would like to use the colouring books in the waiting room we love to see your drawings. Just remember to put your name on the top and hand it to the receptionist as you leave. Or else why not send in a drawing or poem about your favourite animal. Remember we send a prize for any we publish.

IT'S TIME TO HIBERNATE YOUR MEDITERRANEAN TORTOISES!

Once tortoises have stopped eating for about 1 month it is safe to put them into their hibernation box (hibernaculum). This box should be just big enough for the tortoise to turn around in and should be filled with insulation material such as chopped hay or shredded paper. This box should then be placed inside a larger box and the space between them also filled with insulating material (polystyrene chips are ideal). This should be kept in a frost free place such as a garage or shed. A maximum/minimum thermometer placed inside the box will help you check that the temperature remains between 5-10°C. Alternatively many people are now choosing to use a wine-chiller to hibernate their tortoises which helps to eliminate fluctuations in temperature caused by the climate changes. After the cold, wet summer it is wise to get your tortoise checked prior to hibernation to ensure it is fit to withstand hibernation. See you for your post hibernation check in the spring!



FIREWORKS!

Keep your pets safe! Noise phobia is a common problem in our pets. There are many remedies to help them get through this period. If your pet is affected by fireworks the RSPCA gives the following advice:-

1. Keep pets indoors after dark
2. Stay in with your pet
3. Turn the telly or radio up to disguise the external noises
4. Try plug in pheromone diffusers. These are species specific calming aromas.

If your pet is affected by the fireworks ask our receptionists for advice.



STAR PET

Meet Keisha the Siberian Husky. She is 4 years old and although she looks angelic in this photo (she loves to pose) her owner describes her as a “devil dog”. She loves people and especially men who she flirts with but watch out if you are a squirrel because she loves to chase small grey furry things! Her owner admits spoiling her and with a liking for Asparagus, minted peas and runner beans we’d have to agree! Keisha appears in our 2009 Calendar so we should call her Miss January but then she may get ideas above her station!



THE PRE-OP ROOM



This room leads into the operating theatre (see next issue Jan 09) through swing doors. This is where our patients are anaesthetised and prepared for surgery. For most anaesthetics an injection is first given intravenously and then the animal has a tube placed into the windpipe through which gaseous anaesthetic with oxygen is administered. The animal is monitored by staff with the help of heart rate and respiratory monitors. Fur may need to be

clipped around the surgical site prior to being aseptically prepared with a surgical scrub. A hand held vacuum is then used to remove traces of hair from the site. The patient can then be moved into the operating room on a wheeled trolley.

This room contains the scrub sink where the veterinary surgeons scrub up for surgery. The water is automatically dispensed by sensors when the hands are placed beneath the tap.

In this room some minor procedures are performed such as wart removal, ear cleaning, or rabbit dentals.

EXOTIC SPOT

The Guppy (*Poecilia reticulata*) by Jamie Biggs

The Guppy is a tropical freshwater fish that originates from Central and South America, and lives in estuaries and swamp areas. They are very popular amongst fish keepers, due to them being relatively low maintenance. The 2 sexes can be distinguished quite easily. Male Guppies are very colourful and grow to 2-4cm in length, whereas females are larger at up to 8cm long, but are much less colourful. Both sexes can live for 1-2 years.



Guppies need a reasonably large, well planted aquarium, as they live in shoals in the wild. A 35 litre tank is ideal for keeping up to 30 fish. The water quality is very important if these fish are to be kept for as long as possible, therefore a filter must be used, and 10% of the water should be changed every week. The filter must not be too powerful so as to disturb the Guppy's swimming, and should ideally filter around 1.5 times the volume of the tank every hour. A heater should also be used to keep the water at between 22 and 28°C, and the water should be regularly tested in order to keep the pH between 6.5 and 8, and the water hardness between 10 and 30dH. Water testing kits can be purchased at most pet shops. A fluorescent lighting tube should also be used to provide 12-13 hours of light per day.

Although these fish are very small, they have a huge appetite, and ideally should be given 5 feeding sessions per day! They should be fed a variety of mosquito larvae, bloodworms, brine shrimp and daphnia (which can be live or frozen), as well as vegetable fish flakes.

They are very easy to breed. When breeding Guppies, it is advisable to put at least 3 females to 1 male. Unlike most fish, female Guppies do not lay eggs, but give birth to live young which are fully independent from the moment they are born. A single female can give birth to between 10 and 50 young depending on her size, and the babies can eat brine shrimp larvae and micro-worms as soon as they are born! If breeding is not preferable, it is advisable not to mix males and females!