Pet Insurance – a really good idea!

THINKING about insuring your pet? We’d like to encourage you to do so! Pets give us so much enjoyment and are one of the family – you look after them and ensure they have regular health checks, vaccinations, appropriate diets, worming and flea control. But what about pet insurance?

Each year, on average 1 in 3 pets suffer illness or injury, so unexpected veterinary bills can, unfortunately, occur at any time.

We often think of insurance covering emergency treatment of broken bones or wounds following road traffic accidents, but don’t forget animals can also develop many medical conditions such as skin disease, ear problems, heart disease and arthritis – to name just a few!

Veterinary medicine does not stand still and our dedicated team of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses frequently attend courses to update their knowledge – with the aim of giving you and your pet the very best in veterinary care. As a result, our ability to treat life-threatening conditions such as heart disease (see article back page) has improved greatly. However the drugs used to treat such conditions can be costly and we frequently see the agonising choices our clients have to make regarding the treatment of their pets. With appropriate pet insurance, we can hopefully ensure that your pets get the best of care without heart wrenching financial decisions becoming a limiting factor.

Case Study – Poppy the Chocolate Lab

When you see Poppy leaping across the fields (see photo left), you wouldn’t think that at just eight months of age she developed a serious elbow lameness requiring specialist key hole joint surgery. Her owners are delighted with the care they received and Poppy is now fully recovered. They would have been even happier had they had the foresight to get her insured though!

Third Party Cover – what is it?

An additional benefit of pet insurance is third party cover. It’s a worrying fact that as a dog owner you can be held legally liable for the actions of your dog. Should your dog stray and cause a road traffic accident, you could be held liable for the actions of your pet.

Winter Fleas: Don’t get caught on the hop!

THESE days the advent of winter no longer stops fleas in their tracks! Fleas love central heating and will breed in the carpets and bedding, as well as in the cracks of hard flooring. In addition flea development can continue on the coat of most animals. Worse still, adult female fleas can lay in excess of 50 eggs per day – thus a brief infestation can result in thousands of flea eggs being produced!

Common symptoms of bites include itchiness, red rashes, hair loss and severe irritation, which is particularly marked in pets with an allergy to flea saliva. Some affected pets develop secondary skin infections and may require antibiotics and treatment to relieve their itching.

Thus, for optimum flea control – and peace of mind – treatment should ideally be all year round! Spot-ons and sprays can be used to kill fleas on the pets, whilst larvicidal house sprays can be used to prevent fleas developing in the home. We are happy to advise you on the most suitable form of flea control for your pet and your home (don’t forget you need to treat both)!!

Congratulations!

A big congratulations to Coco Clinton who has reached her target weight. Coco has been on a strict diet of R/D for 6 months and had weigh-ins with our nurses every 2 weeks. Her owner was very diligent with her diet and we are thrilled to be able to congratulate her on this fantastic achievement. Well done Coco from all the team at Westgate.

Also in this issue:

• The big chill – a seasonal survival guide!
• Keeping your Guinea Pig fit and well!
• Ticker trouble! Is my pet affected?

For further information on any of the topics covered in this newsletter, please contact your local surgery
Winter is also a difficult time for all animals that live outside, especially pet rabbits and guinea pigs. It is important to ensure that their hutches are warm and dry, and in a sheltered position. Give them fresh food and water every day and check the water bottle regularly to ensure that it has not become frozen. Finally, if you would like further information on any of these topics – please just give us a call!

Keeping your Guinea Pig fit and well!

GUINEA PIGS (or Cavies) come originally from South America and are sociable animals that make great family pets. They thrive on a mixture of hay, fresh greenstuff, fruit and vegetables and can be given small amounts of commercial concentrate. Relatively trouble free, they require no vaccinations but we do recommend regular health checks so their teeth and nails can be monitored. Problems to look out for include chest infections (that can follow bad weather or stress), diarrhoea (which can relate to infections or a diet change), skin disease and dental problems (usually associated with overgrown teeth).

We are here to help! If you would like any further information on any aspect of guinea pig care, or if you would like a check-up for your pet, please contact us!

Skin problems
Skin problems may occasionally occur and the most common of these is an infestation with a burrowing mange mite – *Trichacarus caviae*. Affected guinea pigs are itchy and develop scaly skin, which is often most obvious on the ear tips initially. If untreated, areas of hair loss, self inflicted wounds and skin infection can develop.