



## Does my pet have worms?



DOGS and cats commonly play host to two major types of worms – roundworms and tapeworms.

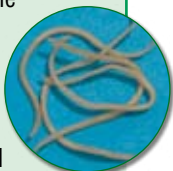
**Roundworms** are spaghetti like in

appearance and live in the small intestines. They shed thousands of tiny eggs which pass out in the faeces and infect the environment. As well as reinfecting our pets, the eggs – if swallowed – can also pose a serious risk to children.

**Tapeworms** are long and flat and have a segmented body. Segments (containing eggs) are shed in the faeces and break down releasing the eggs into the environment. The eggs are then ingested by an *intermediate* host – these include fleas and mice. Both cats and dogs swallow fleas when grooming, and in doing so, reinfect themselves with the tapeworms.

To keep your pet worm free – **worm your pet regularly, use regular flea control and clear up faeces.**

Please let us advise you on the best worm and flea control for your pet!



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Cartoon: Jenny Hole

## ASTONLEE OPEN DAY 19 August 2006



On Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup> 2006, Astonlee held an Open Day to celebrate 20 years of being in Newport Pagnell, and a thank you to our clients.

The day started fairly bright weather wise. We had face painting, 'behind the scenes' Practice Tours, *kids talk*, and a Raffle with all proceeds going to Margaret for the Local Wildlife Charity. The money raised was just enough for her to buy a boat for rescuing birds/wildlife from the numerous lakes in the area. We also held a Tombola for Ian, who runs the Local Animal Ambulance.

Pauline, our Practice Administrator, ran a stall in aid of Boxer Rescue, which was very well supported and again, a good sum of money was raised for that Charity.

### PDSA Pet Aid Scheme

Another reason to celebrate was that on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2006, Astonlee Veterinary Surgery became a PDSA Petaid Practice.

This means that anyone living in the Postcode areas of MK1 – MK16 who is in receipt of either Housing Benefit

or Council Tax Benefit can register one of their pets in order to receive PDSA funded treatment.

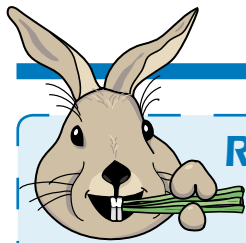
Eligible pet owners must register their pets with us in advance to guarantee for PDSA funded treatment. Please call in to the Surgery to pick up an Application Form.

For more information please call PDSA on **0800 731 2502** or visit [www.pdsa.org.uk/er4pets](http://www.pdsa.org.uk/er4pets).

### More good news

We had our air cooling system up and running in July... a great relief! Our night nursing rota has started with improvements on our previous system. We are aiming to have a nurse on the premises most or all of the time, and some of the new system is now in place. This means a greater level of care for patients when they stay overnight with us.





## Rabbit teeth – time for a check-up?

YOU MAY be surprised to learn that the most common health problem in rabbits is dental disease. Rabbits have *continuously growing* teeth, with both the cheek teeth and the incisor (front) teeth growing by as much as 1-2 mm per week!

The **incisor teeth** should meet, thereby ensuring that as your rabbit chews, they will wear down. If they become misaligned they will continue to grow, and will overgrow past each other. This invariably leads to eating problems.

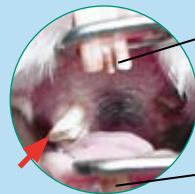
Turning to the **cheek teeth**, these are grinding teeth. However if they become overgrown, they frequently develop sharp spikes (see photo – lower right) which can lacerate the tongue and cheeks, making eating very painful. Signs commonly include “slobbers” with saliva wetting around the mouth, a decreased appetite and often marked weight loss.

If you are worried about your rabbit's teeth, we would be pleased to check them for you and also advise you on diet regimes aimed at promoting optimum dental health.



Lower incisors

Misaligned and overgrown lower incisor teeth.



Upper incisors

Lower incisors

Overgrown cheek teeth (arrowed) are sharp and lacerate the gums.

## Winter worries!



WITH THE cold weather upon us, now is a time when we all start to feel our aches and pains, and dogs and cats are no exception! Look out for limps, and difficulty rising after a rest – these are signs that your pet has a bit of joint stiffness and pain which can be exacerbated by cold or damp wintry weather.

With all the seasonal cheer, it's all too easy for pets (and sadly their owners as well) to start expanding the waistline! Don't hesitate to get in touch if your pet is gaining a few extra pounds and we can give you some nutritional advice; carrying too much weight has a multitude of adverse effects on the body.

Inside the home, remember that items such as ribbons and tinsel are very attractive to kittens and may be swallowed, leading to an intestinal blockage.



Don't forget to keep pets away from anti-freeze, a very palatable poison, and to prevent access to fallen fruits, conkers, acorns, chocolates off the Christmas tree, and leftover Christmas dinners – all of which can cause illness!



Finally, don't forget about fleas – even in winter they can breed in your home, so it is advisable to keep anti-flea treatments up to date, even at this time of year!



## Ticker trouble – is your pet affected?



THE MOST vital muscle in the body, the heart is the muscular pump responsible for supplying the tissues of your pet's body with oxygen and nutrients, allowing him to lead a normal active life.

The heart receives de-oxygenated blood from the tissues of the body and pumps it to the lungs where it is re-oxygenated. The oxygen rich blood then returns to the heart where it is then pumped back to the tissues of the body.

As the heart muscle squeezes and pumps, valves within the heart prevent back flow of blood. Heart problems can occur due to weakening of the **heart muscle**,

or – more commonly, to disease of the **heart valves** that prevents them from working properly.

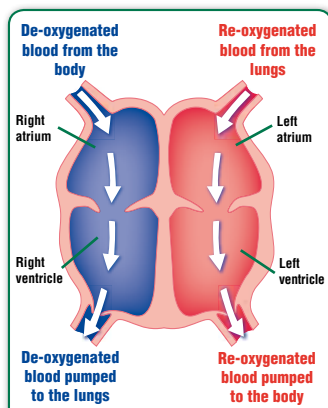
Any kind of heart problem can prevent the blood from being pumped effectively around the body. This causes poor circulation and

abdomen (tummy).

Heart disease is generally more common in older dogs, however in certain breeds it is more prevalent at an early age. In cats, heart disease is quite commonly associated with thyroid gland disease.

If you are concerned that your pet is showing any of the previously described signs, please come and see us for a check-up.

The good news is that these days we have a range of medicines that can help pets with heart disease. So, if you suspect that your pet may have heart disease, give us a call and we can arrange to see him – treatment gives the best results if it is started promptly.



**Schematic diagram of the heart**  
De-oxygenated blood is pumped to the lungs where it is re-oxygenated. Re-oxygenated blood is then pumped to the tissues of the body.

reduced oxygen flow to the tissues, leading to **weakness** and **tiredness**. Fluid can also build up in the lungs and other organs causing **coughing**, **breathlessness**, and sometimes a **swollen**

