



Oak House Veterinary Centre

# Newsletter

Spring 2025 Edition



## In this edition!

Page 1 - March is pet anxiety awareness month | Page 2 - Could your pet have an allergy?

### Get involved with our weight campaign!

We'll be running the Slim Pals weight campaign from January to March, with the aim of helping pets reach their optimum weight. Every dog and cat is different, but if you're worried that your pet is overweight or underweight, we're here to help!

Our team will be offering weight clinics throughout the season, where we can weigh and measure your pet and put together a suitable diet and exercise plan to meet their individual needs.

Please get in touch to book an appointment or learn more.

### March is Pet Anxiety Awareness Month



Like people, dogs and cats can suffer with anxiety. For instance, your pet may struggle with being at home alone, meeting new people, fireworks or travelling to places in the car.

In dogs, symptoms of anxiety can include barking or whining, scratching, drooling, panting, shaking or going to the toilet in the house. Symptoms in cats can include hiding, scratching, spraying and conflict.

If you think your pet may be struggling with stress and anxiety, please contact the practice. Our team will be happy to offer advice and recommend some suitable treatment options, such as sessions with a qualified pet behaviourist, calming products or medication. We can also chat to you about what you could be doing at home to help your pet manage their anxiety.

### Watch out for these spring hazards



As a new season approaches, we're sharing some tips for keeping pets safe throughout spring.

#### **Keep Easter eggs away from dogs and cats**

Chocolate contains theobromine, which can cause serious harm to dogs and cats. Please get in touch with the practice if you think your pet has eaten chocolate.

#### **Thinking of spring cleaning?**

Keep cleaning products away from pets, as they often contain toxic chemicals. If you think your pet has consumed or licked a cleaning product, please call the practice for advice.

#### **Watch out for grass seeds**

Grass seed injuries happen when foxtail seeds get trapped in fur and pierce the skin. Check your pet's feet and ears regularly, and look for symptoms like shaking their head and ears, licking toes, swollen paws and red lumps. Contact us if you think your pet is affected.

#### **Longer dog's walks?**

As the weather improves, you may mix up your dog's walks and try out new routes. Remember to choose walks that suit their needs, condition and age, building the distances up slowly.

#### **Flystrike in rabbits**

Flystrike is spread by flies laying eggs, and you can prevent your rabbit catching it by keeping their home clean and dry, maintaining good dental health and using preventative products if needed. Contact our team for further advice.

#### **Flowers and bulbs**

Many dogs love to dig up the garden, but some spring flowers and bulbs can be toxic if eaten. Keep them out of reach, and get in touch with us if your dog consumes a flower or bulb.

#### **Wasp and bee stings**

Most stings cause mild pain and irritation, and you can try scraping out the sting (without squeezing it!) with a credit card, washing the area in water and applying ice. Please call the practice if you're worried or see signs suggesting they may be having an allergic reaction.





## It takes two for rabbits

Rabbits are sociable pets who live in groups in the wild, so it's important that they have opportunities to socialise. They shouldn't be kept with other species, as they are prey animals and may feel stressed or threatened around larger pets. They should also be kept away from smaller animals like guinea pigs, as they may bully them or pass on harmful bacteria.

However, it is great to keep more than one rabbit together – the ideal pairing is a spayed female bonded with a neutered male. The process of getting two rabbits to form an attachment is known as bonding, mixing or pairing. If you are introducing rabbits to each other for the first time, you should introduce them slowly and follow the advice of your vet or a rescue centre.

Make sure their accommodation is clean, warm and dry, and if you're moving them to a new environment, move them during the daytime so they can adjust properly. Don't put one rabbit in another's housing area – you can use temporary housing whilst getting one area ready if needed. You can also bring any outdoor rabbits inside if it's very cold.

Ensure your rabbit's space is large enough for them to seek isolation if they want to, and monitor any changes in behaviour or signs of aggression or discomfort. For two standard sized rabbits, the Rabbit Welfare Association and Fund recommend a living area of at least 3m by 2m, by 1m high on a single level, including their sleeping area. The more space the better, though!

For further advice on rabbit care, please reach out to the practice.



## Could your pet have an allergy?



Pets can be allergic to several things, including fleas, foods and environmental factors.

You pet's immune system views these normally harmless substances (known as allergens) as a problem, and so reacts to them.

Symptoms of allergic skin disease in dogs include red skin, scratching, licking and chewing, persistent ear or skin infections, hair loss and runny, red eyes or noses. In cats, symptoms include itchy skin, over-grooming, hair loss and thinning, rashes, recurring ear infections and thickened skin.

Your vet can help diagnose your pet with allergies, and rule out other potential causes like underlying parasites and diseases. Pets with allergic skin disease require unique treatment plans, and it can take time to find the best combination of treatments for your pet.

Treatment options include: dietary changes, environmental changes, topic or skin barrier treatments, oral and injectable medications, and immunotherapy.

Although the condition can't be cured, it can be managed! Continuous, proactive treatment is key, and symptoms may change seasonally, so watch out for allergens like pollen this spring.

For further advice on diagnosing and treating allergic skin conditions, please get in touch.

This newsletter is provided as an education service to our clients. All news and other items in this newsletter are for information only and should not be treated as a substitute for veterinary advice.