



# Cedar Snippets

THE NEWSLETTER OF CEDAR VETERINARY GROUP

SUMMER ISSUE 2008

## SURGERY OPENING TIMES

All surgeries run by  
appointment only

### RINGWOOD

01425 473683

Mon-Fri 8am to 9pm  
Sat 8am to 5pm

### VERWOOD

01202 825217

Mon-Thurs 8.30 to 6pm  
Fri 8.30 to 6.30pm  
Sat 8.30 to 12.30

### FERNDOWN

01202 861622

Mon-Fri 8.30 to 6pm  
(closed 1 to 2pm)  
Sat 8.30 to 10.30am

### NEW FOREST BEHAVIOUR PRACTICE

01425 480721

Tues-Fri 9am to 4pm  
Sat 9am to 1pm  
Mon & Sun Closed

### EMERGENCIES OUT OF HOURS

01425 473683

Out of hours emergencies will usually  
be seen at our Ringwood Hospital.  
Please phone first.

It's summer-time  
again in the New  
Forest, and the  
warmer weather  
brings the usual mix  
of seasonal hazards.

Hopefully you will  
find plenty of useful  
tips in this issue of  
our newsletter, as well  
as all the usual news  
updates from in and  
around the practice.

## Summer Snakebites!

From spring onwards it is not uncommon to see snakes in the New Forest. The adder is Britain's only venomous snake, and can deliver a nasty bite to inquisitive dogs who get too close for comfort!



These timid creatures emerge from hibernation at this time of year, and early spring bites are known to be the most venomous. If your pet is bitten, symptoms will start to develop within minutes, with pain and significant swelling at the site of the bite, often (but not always) accompanied by two puncture wounds. The swelling advances very quickly so can be very dangerous in bites to the face or neck. Other effects of the venom include an irregular heart beat, vomiting and collapse.

If you suspect your dog has been bitten you must come to the vets immediately, this is a genuine emergency. It is a commonly held belief that giving a Piriton anti-Histamine tablet following snake bite can prevent the signs from developing. However, this is simply not true; aggressive treatment is always needed.

At Cedar Veterinary Group we are well equipped to deal with snake bites and hold the anti-venom which is given intravenously in many cases, along with anti-inflammatories and antibiotics. Affected animals are hospitalised so we can put them on a drip and monitor them closely. Snake bites are rarely fatal if treated appropriately, and most cases recover within a few days.



## Ferndown welcomes Babs

With the sad departure of Liz for her new life in Dubai, we are pleased to welcome the newest member of our Ferndown team.

Barbara (or Babs to you and I) is used to being around all sorts of pets. She used to show various breeds of ponies, but has since moved towards four-footed friends of the canine variety. She achieved the level II and III NVQ in dog grooming at Kingston Maurward College, and has found a niche grooming working Springer Spaniels. Babs busies herself walking several dogs for families and friends around Wimborne, where she lives with her two daughters.



## Hooray for Happy Handling!



*Tigger enjoying a fuss from Suzy after his vaccination*

Since we started nurse clinics at all of our branches, we have encouraged regular visits for those pets who may not be so keen to visit. These “happy handling” consultations are designed to help nervous dogs to relax and get used to coming in to the vets.

Tigger is a two year-old Golden Retriever dog who had become very nervous about going to see his previous vet. Of course this was not anybody’s fault, but Tigger was just afraid that he may get hurt, since the previous visits had been for painful conditions. Tigger’s owner Mrs Richardson was very concerned about Tigger’s increasing fear of visiting the vets, and when the family moved house earlier this year she popped in without Tigger for some advice.

Our consulting nurse Justine suggested that Tigger should attend some happy handling sessions to help him realise that coming to the vet is not all bad! Initially Justine met Tigger in the waiting room area, at a quiet time of day, and encouraged him to relax, with some tasty treats as a reward for good behaviour. Tigger returned every fortnight, and gradually relaxed and allowed Justine to examine him. After six visits, he was totally calm in the surgery, and by the time he saw Suzy for his annual booster he showed no fear at all. One week later he popped back in for some fuss and reward to end on a positive experience.

There are several key points to Tigger’s success, which are critical in helping your pet not to be afraid:

- DO NOT reward any nervous behaviour from your dog - this means no eye contact or physical contact if they appear nervous or stressed.
- Reassuring your pet when they are nervous is rewarding their behaviour and will make them worse next time round! Difficult though it may be, you need to ignore them until they begin to relax.
- As soon as your pet starts to explore the room and stops hiding behind you shivering, then DO reward him with lots of fuss. STOP IMMEDIATELY if the nervous behaviour returns.
- Remember you are leading by example and if you are stressed then your pet will be too. Relax and enjoy your visit!

## Tick Troubles...

The New Forest provides a diverse habitat for many animals, and ticks certainly use that to their advantage! Not only do ticks cause a reaction where they have attached, but they can also spread some nasty infectious diseases. Many people have heard of Lyme’s Disease, a dangerous condition affecting the joints which leads to serious illness in people. This condition is transmitted by Ticks and can also be passed on to our pets. Numbers of confirmed cases are low, but there is a suspicion that many affected pets go undiagnosed, since treatment involves standard penicillin-type antibiotics.



Ticks are not only a problem in the UK, if you are thinking of travelling to Europe then the news is even worse. Without effective tick control your pet could be at risk of contracting other tick-borne diseases such as Babesiosis and Leishmaniasis. These diseases cause a range of symptoms and can be very difficult to cure completely.

The best advice is to use an effective anti-tick product on your pet. There are several on the market, and our vets and consulting nurses can provide you with advice on request. Prac-tic is a new spot-on product which is extremely effective at killing both ticks and fleas for at least a month after application. Unfortunately this is only available for dogs at present, so for cats we would still recommend using Frontline or Frontline Combo.

## Justine joins the referral team



Some of our more regular clients may already be aware that Justine will sadly be leaving our first opinion practice in Ringwood, where she has been invaluable in setting up our consulting nurse clinics. However, we will be continuing clinics at all our branches, and these will be taken over by Lucy, one of our experienced veterinary nurses who is already involved with running clinics at Verwood and Ferndown. Lucy will be available for all the usual nail clips, microchips and weight clinics, as well as performing many pre- and post-operative check-ups. Of course she will also be available for general healthcare advice, and is especially keen to encourage puppies and kittens into our Youth Club to help you get them off to the right start!

We would like to thank Justine for all her hard work, and although we are sorry to lose her from the Ringwood practice, we look forward to welcoming her as the newest member of our referral team, where she will be working alongside our existing orthopaedic and cardiology vets and nurses.

### July is Microchip Month

Microchipping provides a safe and easy way of identifying your pet. You may remember the story of the lost West Highland White Terrier (Cedar Snippets Spring edition 2008) who was reunited with his owner within half an hour at our Ferndown surgery one Saturday morning in the early spring. Fortunately he was microchipped which made it easy for us to identify him and contact his owner through the national database of microchipped pets.

It is a simple procedure which can be done any time, either with Lucy our consulting nurse or during any veterinary consultations. The microchip about the size of a large grain of rice, and is implanted under the skin between the shoulder blades. Problems with microchips are extremely rare; occasionally they can move around under the skin but this does not affect your pet or the ability of the chip to be read.

For the month of July we are offering microchips at the discounted price of £15-00 per pet at any of our surgeries.

### ...Prac-tic is the new solution!

FINDING FREEDOM  
FROM  
FLEAS AND TICKS

With summer finally looming it is the time of year to look out for visitors on your pet. Warm weather brings out the fleas, and with their incredible ability to reproduce quickly, it is important to use an effective flea treatment. For some time now we have all relied upon Frontline, which is still effective for fleas. However, there is now a newer product available for dogs called Prac-tic which is just as effective if not more so, with a few added bonuses.

Prac-tic kills all fleas on your dog within 24 hours, before they have had the chance to lay any eggs. By eliminating egg production, Prac-tic stops the flea's life cycle in its tracks, effectively protecting both your pet and your home from infestation. It also kills ticks within 48 hours, minimising the time when they may be able to pass on infectious diseases. Although Prac-tic is deadly to fleas and ticks, it is extremely safe for you pet and remains on the surface of the skin for a full month after application. The good news is that is it not affected by bathing and swimming in the way that some other spot-ons are, so you don't need to worry if your dog enjoys a summer splash.



Prac-tic is currently on an introductory offer of two packs for the price of one (3-packs only), so you can give it a whirl for less!

## An itch to scratch...

There are a variety of reasons that our pets can get itchy, but many of them are worse at this time of year.

Some skin problems can be caused by parasites, with fleas being by far the most common. Not only do fleas cause itching directly, but pets can also be allergic to flea bites, and in this case it only takes one or two bites to cause an allergic rash. This is known as flea allergic dermatitis and is especially common in cats. Lots of small crusty spots appear all over the back and tailbase, and the cat will start grooming excessively, often pulling out large quantities of hair. Cats are fastidious groomers so you will often not find any fleas on them but this does not mean they haven't been there (and have probably already laid hundreds of eggs in your carpet!).

Sarcoptic mange or "fox mange" is also very common in this area, and as the name suggest this can be caught from foxes. It is a very itchy condition caused by lots of tiny mites which burrow under the skin. There is normally a rash which starts around the dog's belly and under their front

legs, and can often cause very itchy ears as well. Sometimes we need to take scrapings from the skin to diagnose this condition, but often we will use a spot-on treatment just in case. Fox mange can be transmitted to people so be sure to seek veterinary advice if you think your pet may be affected.

Although these infectious causes are easy to treat, many skin conditions are a little more complicated. Skin allergies are commonly caused by things which surround us and our pets, such as pollens, grasses, house dust mites, smoke, and some allergies can even be caused by your pet's food. As the skin becomes inflamed, bacteria and yeasts which already live there tend to grow out of control and cause infections, which is what causes the itching. Ears and feet are very commonly affected since there are pockets where bacteria can hide and less air gets to them so they can become moist.

Allergies can be tested for, either by using blood tests, or testing the skin directly, which requires referral to a



Once we know what your pet is allergic to, we can often improve matters by using desensitisation therapy, where small quantities of the offending item are given by injection to "get the immune system used to it". Additional therapy is sometimes also required, and often these conditions are frustrating, recurring time and again, and needing repeated treatments to control them.

It is important to use a reliable flea treatment, at the recommended dosing interval. If your pet is still itchy then it is advisable to bring them in to see one of our vets as it will probably not just go away!



## Open All Hours!

Remember that we are now open at Ringwood until 9pm for routine appointments during the week. We hope that this provides a flexible service to suit those of you who spend much of your day working or commuting. So far the late evenings have proved extremely popular, so it is wise to book early if you wish to attend at these times. Of course we do try to keep some slots for evening emergencies, which means that we should be able to see your pet at short notice without requiring an emergency call-out fee.



After 9pm appointments are on an emergency basis and unfortunately there is an increased fee for these visits. However, at least you can rest assured that it will be one of our own vets you see during nights and weekends, as we do not subscribe to an external on-call service.

If you usually use Verwood or Ferndown then you are also welcome to use the later evening appointments at Ringwood if it is more convenient; appointments can be arranged through any of our surgeries.