

Practice News

Welcome to the first issue of our quarterly newsletter. We hope you enjoy this new way to keep you informed of our services.

Unfortunately, we said **goodbye** to **Dr. Alex Geddes** this year, who left to follow a career as a specialist veterinary dentist. Additionally, we wish **Dr. Franco Cortesini** all the best for his future as he departs to spend more time back in his homeland of Italy. We would love to take this opportunity to introduce you to our new veterinary surgeons: **Dr. Lucia Parena, Dr. Alicja Kordowska** and **Dr. Tsai Payn**.



Lucia

Lucia is pursuing certification as an Advanced Veterinary Surgeon in Small Animal Surgery and complements our soft tissue surgery service. **Alicja** had been locuming across the UK for several years before settling here at Anderson Veterinary Group to follow her interests in orthopaedic surgery. **Tsai** initially joined the Anderson Veterinary Group at the Bromley North branch back in 2013. After a career break, we welcome her back to the Orpington branch to support our dental and neutering clinics. They look forward to meeting you and your pets.



Alicja



Tsai

...introducing The Pet Health Club

We have just introduced our new health care plan – The Pet Health Club. The Pet Health Club is designed to provide you with all your regular essentials such as vaccinations, worming and flea treatment by a monthly direct debit to equally spread the costs of pet care throughout the year. Members benefit from a 20% saving on their annual veterinary care compared to pay-as-you-go prices, and also receive discounted prices on a range of other products:

- 10% off consultations
- 10% off neutering
- 10% off in-house laboratory work
- 10% tick collars
- Free microchip
- Free nail clips
- 10% off dental procedures
- 10% Adaptil & Feliway products

Start saving today from as little as £10.99 per month for cats and dogs, and £5.99 per month for rabbits. Please see leaflet for further details.

We at Anderson Veterinary Group aim to be at the forefront of veterinary medicine and surgery. So we are proud to announce that we are now offering laparoscopic surgical procedures (also known as “key hole surgery”) utilising leading-edge specialized equipment. The advantages to our patients of these “key hole surgeries” are significant, and include faster recovery times and reduced post-operative pain since surgery is performed through small holes (usually only 5mm) instead of full abdominal incisions. Please let a member of our team know if you are interested in laparoscopic bitch spays or other endoscopic diagnostics. More will follow in our next newsletter.

Please let us know if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter. If we have your email, our e-newsletter also contains additional promotions and discounts.



Don't get hacked off with Kennel Cough!



Did you know that Kennel Cough is a highly contagious cough that doesn't just develop from being in kennels? It can in fact be caught anywhere dogs meet – out on walks, at the beach, training classes, dog shows and of course boarding kennels! It can be transmitted through the air, on objects that have been in contact with an affected animal, and also by direct nose-to-nose transmission.

The condition can involve several infectious agents including viruses and a bacteria – *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. Younger animals are particularly vulnerable, and any pet that is going

into kennels or dog training classes may be at greater risk. The symptoms commonly involve a harsh “honking” cough with white phlegm that is often coughed up, a high temperature and a sore throat. It can progress to nasal discharge, breathlessness, a loss of appetite and lethargy. Affected pets may cough for weeks and some will require anti-inflammatories to reduce the cough or even antibiotics if a bacterial infection develops.

To make sure your pet is protected, an intranasal kennel cough vaccine is available to reduce the risk of developing the disease and reduce clinical signs. This is given as an addition to your pet's standard vaccines. Please call us at the surgery for further information!

Gorgeous guinea pigs!



Guinea pigs make excellent pets since they are easy to handle, are very inquisitive, rarely bite and can be very 'chatty', communicating with a range of sounds. There are different

breeds of guinea pigs with many varieties of coat types, length and colour.

Guinea pigs are sociable animals and should be kept in groups or pairs; males reach sexual maturity at 9-10 weeks, females even earlier at 4-6 weeks so it is essential that the male, at least, is neutered to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Housing guinea pigs with rabbits is not recommended due to different nutritional requirements between the species, the risk of disease transmission and the risk of rabbits bullying guinea pigs.

Housing should be away from draughts, kept out of direct sunlight and guinea pigs housed outside must have access to shade. Housing should be as large as possible, with the enclosure being 1.2 x 0.6m, or larger (for each pair of guinea pigs), with permanent access to a 2 x 1.5m run.



Regular opportunities to graze and exercise are essential. Also, the run should be secure and prevent predators (dogs, cats, birds of prey) from entering the enclosure. Shelters

should be provided to allow areas to hide, provide enrichment and help them feel secure (boxes or pipes). Owners should also provide branches from untreated apple trees, willow or poplar to gnaw on. Please note that branches from cherry, plum, cedar, walnut and oleander are poisonous.



Guinea pigs require a high fibre diet, and grass hay must be available at all times. Guinea pigs also need approximately one quarter of a cup per adult guinea pig of a commercial pelleted diet, plus leafy green foods to provide vitamin C and other nutrients.

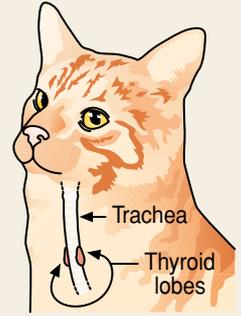
Guinea pigs instinctively hide any signs of pain and illness, therefore it is important to check them at least once a day. If appetite decreases and/or droppings become smaller and less frequent, or are not produced, then this is deemed as an emergency. Guinea pigs can get dental disease (overgrowth of incisors and cheek teeth) and gastrointestinal stasis as a result of an inappropriate diet or as a sequel to pain or an underlying illness. Nail overgrowth is also common in guinea pigs, especially in animals housed indoors. Guinea pigs are also prone to mites which can cause intense itching, crusting and scaling of the skin and hair loss.

We are here to help, so if you have any questions regarding your guinea pigs, give us a call today.

Thyroid problems – is your pet affected?

Most of us have heard of the thyroid gland, but did you know that thyroid problems are surprisingly common in pets? The thyroid glands consist of two lobes, located on either side of the trachea (windpipe) in your pet's neck (see diagram). Usually they are not noticeable and can't be easily felt through the skin.

The thyroid gland produces thyroid hormone which regulates your pet's metabolic rate. Too much thyroid hormone (hyperthyroidism) speeds up the body's metabolism, whilst too little (hypothyroidism) slows it down.



Hyperthyroidism is a common condition in older cats. Most frequently they develop a benign growth (or goitre), which produces excess thyroid hormone. The symptoms of this include rapid weight loss despite a ravenous appetite, hyperactivity, drinking excessively and gastrointestinal signs such as sickness and diarrhoea. When the thyroid level is too high, it also puts pressure on the other body organs with associated high blood pressure, heart disease and kidney damage.

Diagnosis is usually based on clinical signs and a blood test. Once thyroid disease is diagnosed, medication can be started to allow your pet to put on weight and reduce the adverse clinical signs. Other treatment options include special diets, surgery to remove the affected glands and radioactive iodine at a specialist centre.

Hypothyroidism: Dogs can sometimes develop an under-active thyroid and some breeds may be more prone to hypothyroidism. Lowered production of thyroid hormone leads to a decrease in the metabolic rate, usually leading to weight gain (with no increased appetite) and generalised lethargy. Other signs often include coat problems, and recurrent skin and ear infections.

Diagnosis of hypothyroidism can be more tricky, but in confirmed cases, daily treatment with oral thyroid supplements can be very successful in treating this condition.

Once on treatment your pet may require monitoring blood tests and weight checks to make sure they are doing well. If you notice any of the symptoms in your pet, or if you are concerned your pet may be suffering from thyroid disease, please call us to make an appointment to examine your pet.



Don't ignore lumps and bumps!

Lumps and bumps can come in a variety of shapes and sizes. If you notice a lump (also called a mass or growth) on your pet, it is important to make an appointment so we can check it.

If your pet does develop a lump, there are several underlying causes including: allergic reactions (such as an insect bite), abscesses (very common in cats), hernias (often seen in younger pets) and tumours.

Tumours are understandably the most worrying and are either *benign* – which tend to be slow growing and remain in one place, or *malignant* – which can be fast growing, invade the surrounding tissue and have the potential to spread to other parts of the body.

If you do find a lump on your pet, it is very important that we examine it as soon as possible. Speed is of the essence and a delay in appropriate treatment can be the difference between a small mass that is easily treatable and one that is far more difficult to treat.



Skin lump on a dog Skin lump on a cat

Lumps may vary considerably in appearance. Some are fairly obvious (such as the photos above), whilst others are much harder to detect.

Routinely grooming your pet is a great way to keep an eye out for lumps, bumps, ticks and any other problems. Just give us a call if you find anything unusual.