

Lawton and Stoakes

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STAFF NEWS

Laura is embarking on a 2 year Veterinary Nursing Course at City and Islington College this September. We will be supporting her theory study with practical skills learned in the practice and we wish her all the best.



Rachael who is currently on maternity leave visited us with her new baby Mason. It was good to catch up with her and we look forward to her return to work.

Lynne and Martin are away at the Exotics Conference again in August/September. This year it is being held in Portland Oregon. It was so useful last year to meet up with our American counterparts all of whom have a special interest in our more unusual pet species and learn about how other Veterinarians deal with similar cases to those we see in the UK. Noemie and Moira will be covering in our absence and will continue to see exotics as well as the cats and dogs.

Moira is getting Married in September and will be taking 2 weeks for honeymoon so we wish them the best of luck. Noemie will be covering for Moira while she is away.

What's New?

For our smaller exotic patients accurate weights are essential to monitor health. We have invested in 3 new digital scales, which can weigh animals from as little as 1g to 6kg in 1g increments. These scales have a removable top and cover for ease of cleaning between patients.

Any exotic inpatients are weighed on a daily basis and this forms an important part of our clinical examination helping us to determine their fluid intake and food and water requirements. We recommend that owners of reptiles keep a record of their pet's weights as this can give an early warning of disease before other clinical signs develop.



STAFF

VETERINARY SURGEONS

DR MARTIN LAWTON B.Vet.Med;
Cert.V.Ophthal; Cert.L.A.S; C.Biol; M.S.B;
D.Zoo.Med; FRCVS

DR LYNNE STOAKES B.Vet.Med. MRCVS

DR NOEMIE MCDERMOTT B.Vet.Med.
MRCVS

Dr MOIRA KELLY MA VetMB MRCVS

RECEPTIONISTS

JULIE AUSTIN (Administrator)
CORAL WILKINSON

NURSING STAFF

JAMIE BIGGS RVN Head Nurse
RACHAEL BROWN 1st Yr Trainee
LAURA BOUCHIER 1st Yr Trainee
LILY KNELL Nursing Assistant
MORGAN COOPER Nursing Assistant

Kennel Cough

This summer we have seen a number of cases of this irritating condition. This may be partly due to the warm and wet weather we have experienced. The name of the condition stems from the increased incidence seen in kennelled dogs but it is by no means only seen in such circumstances and many of the cases we saw this year were from dogs that had been walked in the local parks. Angel and Buffy were both affected although Angel had the worst signs which lasted for just over one week.



The cough is caused by numerous viruses such as Parainfluenza virus, adenovirus, corona virus or Distemper virus or bacteria such as Bordatella.

What can you do to prevent infection? Injectable vaccines are available for some of the viruses and an intranasal vaccine is available which covers Bordatella so keeping up with your recommended annual vaccination program helps.

How is kennel cough treated? Just as with the common cold in people kennel cough will often resolve of its own accord. Antibiotics are not always the answer. You should rest your dog and not take it out on its usual walks as it is likely to be infectious to others. Soothing drinks such as honey in warm water sometimes helps to ease the cough.

When should I contact my vet? If your dog has a sudden onset cough and is unwell or if the cough is accompanied by other signs, such as sneezing or nasal discharge, or if the cough is troubling your dog (or you) then an appointment with one of our Vets would be advised. Also if your dog is elderly or has a poor immune system or other chronic illness it would be a good idea to arrange to see one of the Vets.

What will the Vet do? There are many other causes of coughing in dogs and it is important to rule these out. The Vet will examine your dog to check for signs of other, more serious conditions such as lungworm or pneumonia. Sometimes further investigation may be necessary such as radiographs or bronchoscopy.

One enterprising client has made a “bra” for her chicken. The hen is 7 years old and the muscles of its crop have become weak so it has difficulty emptying. The device made from an old sock is designed to support the crop and assist its emptying. This is a temporary measure until a properly designed sling arrives from the USA. This is one adored chicken and is well deserving of all the attention....I hope she appreciates it!



Risks of Feeding Raw Meat Diets to cats and dogs

Food, diets and nutrition are popular TV and newspaper subjects and our pets' diet are also coming under scrutiny. Many people are suspicious of the contents of commercially prepared pet foods and preferring instead to use a raw Meat Based Diet (RMBD). However, there is little scientific evidence to show that these raw diets are, in fact, better for our dogs and cats and increasingly the risks of feeding these diets are being highlighted.

Home made raw meat diets run the risk of being unbalanced and we have come across people feeding raw meat but no bone which when fed over a long period would result in Calcium Deficiency and can lead to brittle bones.

One of the greatest risks is that of infectious disease. Many harmful bacteria can be found in supermarket meat sold for human consumption, which are inactivated by cooking. However *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *E. coli* are capable of causing diarrhoea in humans, dogs and cats and at Lawton and Stoakes we have come across cases of *Campylobacter* in puppies fed a raw meat diet. Often these can have long lasting effects on the animal.

Bones are a common cause of foreign body obstruction especially of the oesophagus and it has been shown that this is just as likely with raw as with cooked bones.

Feeding a raw diet has been suggested is better for dental health. However, people who feed commercially prepared raw diets that are minced to their pets lose the benefit of the action of chewing on the bones. Dogs fed a cooked commercial diet can have chews and other means of protecting their teeth from decay.

STAR PET

TJ came to us in May this year with diarrhoea and breathing difficulties; it turned out TJ had been indulging on a poor diet of mainly sunflower seeds which combined with little exercise had left him very overweight and with liver problems. TJ has been doing brilliantly on a new, varied diet; his liver is recovering, he's lost over 30% of his body weight and now exercises and flies every day! WELL DONE TO TJ (and his owners!)



GRASS AWNS

It's that time of year again when we need to be reminded about the dangers of these horrible seeds. So far we have removed grass seeds from 3 patients and Angel had a suspicious lameness with plant material in her paw. Please check over your dogs after a walk and remove any grass awns you see before they have a chance to migrate under the skin. If your dog suddenly starts shaking his head or rubbing his face or is suddenly lame and licking at its paw after a walk please make an appointment with one of our Vets to check them over!



KIDS CORNER

A poem for our slightly older readers this issue one of the Lawton's favourites!

Piddling Pete

A Country dog, once came to town, his Christian name was Pete
His pedigree was ten yards long; his looks were hard to beat
And as he wandered down the road 'twas beautiful to see
his work on every corner and his work on every tree
for he watered every gateway and he never missed a post
coz' piddling was his masterpiece, and piddling was his boast.
The City dogs stood looking on in deep and jealous rage
To see this simple country dog, the 'piddler of the age'
Behind him all the City Dogs, debated what to do?
They'd hold a "Piddling Carnival" and show this stranger through,
They started out, with many winks, to wear this stranger down
And showed him all the piddling posts they knew about the town.
But on and on went Noble Pete, with hind leg kicking high,
While all the City Dogs were lifting legs in bluff or piddling mighty dry.
And on, and on went Noble Pete, he watered every sandhill
'Till the city dogs were piddled to a standstill.
The City Dogs said "So long Pete, your piddling did defeat us"
But no one EVER put them wise,
– that Pete had DIABETES!



TIGER SALAMANDERS



Salamanders are a group of amphibians characterised by a typically lizard-like appearance and ranging in size from 2.7cm (the minute salamander) to 1.8m (the Chinese giant salamander). Salamanders can be found across much of the northern hemisphere. These amphibians have permeable skin and so must live in or near water. Most salamander species lay eggs in water and have aquatic larvae with some species being fully aquatic, some swimming intermittently and others being entirely terrestrial as adults. These creatures also have the incredible ability to regenerate their limbs and some can produce powerful toxins in their skin.

Tiger salamanders include some of the species most commonly kept as pets and at 28cm or larger, tiger salamanders share the record for the largest land-living salamander in the world with the giant salamanders (*Dicamptodon spp.*). Contrary to the popular belief that salamanders are challenging pets, most Tiger salamanders adapt well to captivity and can live for around 10-13 years when well cared for.

There are very different housing requirements for the aquatic larval stage versus the terrestrial adults. Larvae require a fully aquatic set up with clean, still water. Once metamorphosed adult tiger salamanders require a long terrarium with a lid. Tiger salamanders like to burrow and require at least 12cm deep of a good quality top soil as a substrate. It is important to ensure the substrate does not have any fertiliser or artificial ingredients as the salamanders' skin is very permeable. It is also important to make sure there are no large particles in the soil as these amphibians can often ingest substrate matter while lunging at food and this can cause an obstruction. Sphagnum moss can be used to cover the substrate's surface and retain moisture.

Tiger salamanders can live in a range of humidities and temperatures. In general maintaining a gradient of moisture with the substrate being moist but not dripping wet; and a temperature of 50-75F (10-24C) although this can vary between species and should be matched to the climate of their region of origin.. A large water bowl can also be left in the enclosure providing it is easy to get into and out of; all water should be dechlorinated drinking water. Terrarium lighting is not required.

In the wild salamanders would eat mainly beetles, earthworms and crickets so we aim to emulate this in captivity. Crickets and shop-bought insects should be gut-loaded with vegetables to improve their nutrient content. Adults should be fed 2-3 times per week, feeding the quantity they can consume within 15 minutes. Tiger salamanders have an insatiable appetite and often become obese, so it is important to limit foods such as waxworms, meal worms and pinky mice to occasional treats.

HIBERNATION TIME!!!

Reptiles, amphibians and some small wild mammals hibernate during the winter months. You can help them by providing sheltered sites in your garden and not being too fussy about tidying up the flower borders. Check bonfire piles before lighting up for any signs of hedgehogs or other wildlife. Many of these species have been hit hard by recent changes in the climate and are in desperate need of our help. There are many magazines and Internet sites that will give you ideas for ways in which you can help protect these animals for future generations.



ALERT!!

Owners of cats are being asked to be careful to securely cover their waterbutts after a family pet cat was found drowned having fallen in one and not able to get out. This easy measure will also help protect small children.