



The Lawn Veterinary Centre
Wise Vets for Special Pets

FREE
E-BOOK

Caring for your CAT



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Contents

Welcome	3
Lifetime Plan for your Cat	4
Vaccination.....	5
Microchipping	8
Fleas	10
Worms.....	12
Toxoplasmosis.....	14
Nutrition.....	15
Neutering.....	16
Dental Care.....	17
Behaviour & Training.....	19
The Wise Pet Care Plan	20
Pet Insurance.....	21

Welcome

Here at the Lawn Veterinary Centre, we understand that a strong bond of affection soon grows between you and your cat and that in order to enjoy this bond for as long as possible, you must play an active role in maintaining your pet's health.



Left to right: The Lawn Veterinary Team – Anne, Evelyne, Paul, Michelle, Sam, Kirstie and Aida.

This free e-book will help you to keep track of all the most important healthcare measures, including those administered by your vet and those you need to perform yourself.

Please note that although this publication provides some key points to help you maintain your pet's health, it is not intended to replace professional advice from a Veterinary Surgeon or Veterinary Nurse. If you have any queries, particularly if you notice any changes in your cat's behaviour or health, please call us on 01793 644422.

“ We wish you and your pet a long and happy life together! ”

Lifetime Plan for your Cat

- 6-9 WEEKS OF AGE:** Meet your Veterinary Nurse
Free preliminary examination with nurse
Discussion of preventative health care and behaviour/training
- 9 WEEKS:** Full health examination by a Veterinary Surgeon
Start primary vaccination programme
Discuss Pet Healthcare Plan and insurance
Discuss neutering and microchipping
Discuss worm and flea control programme
- 12 WEEKS:** Complete primary vaccination programme
Free development check with your Veterinary Nurse
Discuss Pet Healthcare Plan and insurance
Discuss neutering and microchipping
Continue worm and flea control programme
- 6 MONTHS:** Free adolescent development check with your Veterinary Nurse
Check preventative healthcare programme
Neutering of both sexes
Behaviour/training advice
- 9 MONTHS:** Young adult development check with your Veterinary Nurse
- ONE YEAR OLD AND EVERY YEAR THEREAFTER** Full health examination by a Veterinary Surgeon
Annual booster vaccination
Check Pet Healthcare Plan and insurance
Continue worm and flea control programme
Check weight and nutrition
- 6 MONTHLY INTERIM HEALTH EXAMINATION:** Health examination with your Veterinary Nurse
Check Pet Healthcare Plan
Check weight and nutrition
Behaviour advice

Vaccination

KEY POINTS

- All kittens should be vaccinated.
- All cats need yearly boosters.
- Elderly cats still need their vaccinations.
- These diseases are still around, and they can kill.
- A full health assessment is included in the price of a vaccination appointment.
- Rabies vaccinations are available for pets destined to travel abroad.
- You should take the vaccination certificate to the cattery as proof of vaccination.

Treatment of sick and injured animals is obviously a very important part of our work, but we are great believers in preventative medicine. Vaccination of adults and kittens plays a major role in maintaining your pet's health and we consider vaccination to be safe and necessary. Having said that, we are also keen to vaccinate only as often as we believe to be necessary for effective disease prevention.

Currently, cats can be vaccinated against seven different diseases:

1. **Feline panleucopaenia – feline infectious enteritis, feline parvovirus**
2. **Feline herpes virus type 1 (FHV-1) – feline rhinotracheitis**
3. **Feline calicivirus (FCV)**
4. **Feline leukaemia virus (FeLV)**
5. **Feline chlamydophilia infection**
6. **Bordatella bronchiseptica**
7. **Rabies**

We recommend routine vaccination protection against feline enteritis, the Cat flu viruses and feline leukaemia virus. We still see these life-threatening diseases in unvaccinated cats, and the heart-breaking fact is that they can be so easily prevented.

FELINE ENTERITIS AND CAT FLU

Feline enteritis and cat flu are contagious viruses which can be contracted from the environment or from unprotected cats.



FELINE LEUKAEMIA

Feline leukaemia is transmitted in the blood or saliva when cats fight each other, during grooming and during mating. It can take several months/years for clinical signs to develop after infection, but then the virus begins to suppress the cat's immune system, causing secondary infections, tumours and ultimately death. Feline leukaemia may not make your cat ill for several years after infection and the only way you can rest assured that your cat is safe and protected is by annual re-vaccination. It can be transmitted by blood infection (through bites) and also from saliva, so feeding bowls and mutual grooming can be a source of infection.

FELINE CHLAMYDOPHILA

Feline chlamydia infection is a particular problem in colony cats and chlamydia is a bacterial infection causing painful inflammation and swelling of the conjunctiva. We do not at present routinely advise vaccinating against feline chlamydia, but we do consider individual circumstances when recommending a vaccination protocol.

BORDETELLA BRONCHISEPTICA

Bordetella bronchiseptica is a bacteria that can cause disease of the respiratory tract in cats. Cats with bordetellosis may cough, have a runny nose or runny eyes, sneeze, and occasionally have a fever. The signs of disease are very similar to those caused by feline herpesvirus and feline calicivirus. Cats are believed to become infected by breathing the bacteria into their noses. Cats residing in or entering rescue shelters and multiple-cat households have the highest risk of exposure, especially if respiratory tract disease has occurred in the environment.

A vaccine to prevent disease caused by *Bordetella bronchiseptica* is available, though at present we are not making it part of our core vaccination protocol.

RABIES

Rabies vaccination is only required for cats who are travelling abroad or have entered the UK from abroad.



At the Lawn Veterinary Centre, a full health assessment is included in the price of every vaccination appointment. This is always a good opportunity for us to examine your pet for any problems that you may or may not have been aware of. Regular examinations mean early diagnosis of conditions and gives your pet a better chance of a successful outcome.

In summary, vaccination is a safe, reliable and cost-effective way of giving your cat the best chance of living a long and healthy life.

Once kittens have had their initial vaccination courses at 9 and 12 weeks, it is important for them to have an annual booster vaccination. It is vital to maintain their immunity, since older cats can still succumb to these killer diseases. There is no evidence to suggest that immunity lasts longer in older cats. In fact, elderly cats – like elderly people – are more likely to have a poor immune system and so you may need to restart the vaccination course if the booster is allowed to lapse.

Microchipping

KEY POINTS

- Microchips are the best method of permanently identifying your cat.
- They are safe, practical and effective.
- There is one database for all microchips.
- Microchips can be implanted at any age.
- Implantation takes a few minutes and does not require sedation or anaesthesia.
- Microchips are required as part of the Pet Travel Scheme.

MICROCHIPPING

Microchipping is a quick, easy and painless one-off injection that places a tiny microchip under the skin of the scruff of the neck. There is no need for sedation or anaesthesia, although many people have their pets microchipped when they are anaesthetised for neutering. Each microchip carries a unique number that can be read by a portable scanner and will allow the authorities to contact you should your cat get lost.

HOW CAN I BE TRACED IF MY CAT IS FOUND?

Your information is kept for life on our practice computer system and a national database and the fee for this is included in the cost of the implantation. If your cat is found and its chip number identified, it is a relatively easy matter to reunite you with your pet. The chips comply with the International Standard (ISO) and so can be recognised by scanners abroad.

WHAT IF MY PERSONAL DETAILS CHANGE?

Whilst the microchip with its unique number will remain with your cat for life, it is possible to update your personal details on the National Database as and when required.

CAN MICROCHIPS HAVE SIDE EFFECTS?

A European reporting system which monitors reactions to microchip implantation has failed to identify any significant problems in the last 6 years.



Why should I have my pet microchipped?

- The microchip is a permanent means of identifying your cat. Collars and tags, however useful, can easily be lost.
- Should your cat become lost, the microchip system will help to return him/her to you with the minimum of delay before being re-homed or even euthanased. This is particularly important if your cat is seriously injured.
- Cats travelling abroad are required to be microchipped as part of the Pet Travel Scheme.



Fleas

KEY POINTS

- Almost all cats pick up fleas.
- Fleas are present all year round.
- Your house may provide a supply of developing fleas to attack your pet.
- Fleas are a health hazard to you and your pets.
- Effective control involves treatment with the correct products throughout the year.



WHERE DOES MY CAT GET FLEAS FROM?

Fleas are a potentially year-round problem. Typically, cats pick up adult fleas when outside in the garden during spring, summer and autumn. Fleas may be identified either by seeing adults moving around on your pet or by the presence of flea faeces, also known as flea dirt. Check for little black specks of flea dirt in the coat. If you are not sure if what you find is flea dirt, then place the sample on a white piece of paper and add a drop of water. If you see the sample dissolving or red coming from the edges, then this is positive for flea dirt. The fleas lay eggs, which drop off as your cat walks around your house, seeding your home. Warm, humid conditions favour the development of the eggs into larvae and then into pupae. The pupal phase is the stage when the developing flea is wrapped up in a protective cocoon and this is an important stage when it comes to treating flea infestations. The bad news if you see fleas on your cat is that this represents only 10% of the problem; the remaining 90% (eggs, larvae and pupae) are in your house (carpets, furniture, your cat's bed and even your bed if your cat is allowed on it). Interestingly, we see a lot of fleas on cats during November and December. This often comes as quite a surprise to owners, but can usually be traced back to a failure to control fleas earlier in the year which allowed the owner's home to become contaminated. When the outside temperature starts to drop, owners turn on the central heating and this favours the rapid development of the fleas' life cycle – the pupae hatch out and the adult fleas jump onto your cat.

WHAT CAN FLEAS DO TO MY PET?

Adult fleas live on your pet and feed on their blood. Heavy infestations in young kittens and debilitated animals may cause them to become anaemic and potentially very unwell. Some cats can live with fleas showing minimal or no signs, whilst others may develop an allergic reaction to being bitten by them. Cats that are unfortunate enough to react to the flea's saliva develop skin irritation which can be extremely unpleasant for them. Owners may also suffer from allergic reactions to flea bites, developing raised, inflamed, itchy lesions on their lower legs. Cats may also develop a tapeworm infestation by ingesting fleas whilst grooming.

FLEA CONTROL

Fleas breed throughout the year in centrally heated homes, so it is important to maintain a flea control programme throughout the year, killing adult fleas and preventing a build-up in the environment.

Environmental Treatments

Regular hoovering and washing your pet's bedding is very helpful. This needs to be combined with environmental insecticidal and insect growth-regulating sprays. These will kill the eggs and larvae but often have limited or no effect on the fleas that have already reached the pupal phase. These pupal fleas can only be killed using a pet treatment (see below) once they've hatched into adult fleas and jumped onto your cat.

Pet Treatments

Prescription spot-on applications are applied on to the skin in the neck region and quickly kill adult fleas. If applied regularly every month, they can give excellent long-term control of fleas, even in cats that are allergic to them. Some flea treatments can also kill and prevent infestation with ear mites (otodectes). This is a very common parasite, particularly in kittens and young cats.

TICKS

Some spot-on treatments can also kill and prevent diseases caused by ticks. This is a very common parasite in some parts of the UK and, if untreated, can lead to diseases such as Lyme disease, though this is rare in cats.

Ticks are oval-shaped insects which attach to your pet's skin in order to feed. They can resemble a wart-like lump, so if you are unsure, always ask a qualified member of our staff to take a look. Never pull a tick off – you may leave the mouth parts of the tick under the skin, causing infection. It is therefore important to kill it first and use an appropriate device and technique to remove it. To kill a tick, use a suitable veterinary product dabbed directly onto it. The tick will wither and drop off in a few days. Vaseline applied over the whole tick can stop it breathing and it will be forced to remove itself from your cat.

Please ask your vet or Veterinary Nurse for more details – they will be happy to advise on products which do not contain organophosphates and are extremely safe (much more so than most of the other products available, particularly the non-prescription pet shop treatments).

How can I control the flea problems?

- Please discuss this with your vet or Veterinary Nurse - in our experience, non-prescription preparations simply do not work well enough to achieve effective flea control.
- It is practically impossible to prevent your pet coming into contact with fleas, so regular treatments are necessary to control the problem and prevent a build-up within the home.

Worms

KEY POINTS

- Worms are a threat to the health of your family and your cat.
- Regular worming is necessary to control infestations.

WHAT ARE WORMS?

Adult worms are parasites generally found within the intestines of your cat, although certain species can be found in other locations. Roundworms look like pieces of string. Tapeworms are long and flat with segments which look like grains of rice and can be mobile. They can occasionally be seen on the hair around the anus. Worm eggs remain infective in the environment for years.

WHAT CAN WORMS DO TO MY CAT?

Heavy infestations can result in vomiting and severe diarrhoea and cause a loss of blood, weight and condition. Worms weaken the immune system, and by migration through major organs can cause illness, e.g. pneumonia. Whilst pets with lighter infestations may show no external signs, they are still a possible source of infection to others, including humans.

WHAT CAN WORMS DO TO MY FAMILY?

The greatest threat to human health is the larvae from the roundworm *Toxocara*. *Toxocara* worms can produce infectious eggs, which cats can pass in their faeces. These eggs can remain in garden soil, public parks or in sandpits for up to two years and still be infectious to people as well as pets if the eggs are transferred to the mouth and swallowed. They may be picked up from the environment by children putting their hands in their mouths. Although serious consequences are quite rare, these worms can cause blindness, heart problems and epilepsy in children.

HOW WOULD MY PET GET WORMS?

Kittens may pick them up through their mother's milk. Worm eggs are left behind on the ground when infected animals pass faeces, then picked up on the fur of the muzzle and paws. These eggs may then be swallowed while grooming. Pets that hunt can pick up worms by eating rats and mice. Some worms can get into the body through the skin. Tapeworms can be picked up when pets groom and swallow fleas that are infected with tapeworm eggs.

HOW CAN I CONTROL THE PROBLEM?

Your vet or Veterinary Nurse will be able to recommend a suitable treatment regime to keep your cat free from roundworms and tapeworms. Worming treatments can also be used to prevent heart and lungworm infestations. If your cat is being wormed regularly, there is no chance of them putting your family at risk by passing worm eggs in their faeces.

There are different ways to treat your pet for parasites such as tablets, oral liquids/pastes and – easiest of all – spot-on treatments that you just squeeze onto your cat's neck. The most important thing is planning. We have parasite protection plans that enable you to protect your cat, your home and your children.

Please feel free to discuss any aspects of parasite control with a vet or one of the healthcare nursing team.



Toxoplasmosis

WHAT IS TOXOPLASMOSIS?

Toxoplasmosis is a disease caused by a microscopic parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii* (T gondii). Cats can become infected after eating meat that contains T gondii cysts and raw or undercooked meat and although the cat's immune system usually responds to the infection within a couple of weeks, particles called "oocysts" are shed in its faeces which then become infectious to other animals, including humans.

IS IT DANGEROUS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN?

Because the disease can affect unborn babies, pregnant women are often understandably concerned about the risks involved of owning a cat. However, recent research has shown that although cats do play a part of the parasite's life cycle, human contact with cats does not increase the risk of infection.

WE RECOMMEND:

At Lawn Vets, we recommend that you follow sensible hygiene rules to avoid the risk of toxoplasmosis.

- ◆ Ideally get someone else to change your cat's litter tray. Alternatively, wear gloves and wash your hands carefully afterwards.
- ◆ Change your cat's litter daily as T. gondii is infectious between one and five days after the cat defecates.
- ◆ Do not feed your cat raw meat.
- ◆ Always wash your hands after contact with stray cats and kittens.
- ◆ Keep outdoor children's sandpits covered.
- ◆ Wear gloves when gardening in case a cat has toileted there.
- ◆ Wash all vegetables and fruit thoroughly before consuming.
- ◆ Cook all meat thoroughly and avoid cured meats and unpasteurised dairy products.
- ◆ Wash all utensils well after cutting raw meat, fruit and vegetables.

Nutrition

The right diet is absolutely vital to keeping your cat fit and healthy. Poor nutrition accounts for a remarkably high percentage of the health problems we see, from vomiting, diarrhoea, flatulence and obesity to dental problems, growth deformities, heart, kidney and skin problems.

WHAT TYPE OF DIET IS BEST?

- ◆ Although **homemade diets** might sound ideal, they are in reality rarely nutritionally balanced or complete. In addition, they can be expensive and difficult to prepare.
- ◆ **Commercial diets**, on the other hand, are convenient, relatively inexpensive and provide your cat with the nutritional balance they need.

IS TINNED OR DRY FOOD BETTER?

Tinned food has a higher water content than dried food, which means that more is required to satisfy your pet's appetite. But some pets find tinned food more palatable and easier to digest.

Dry food is more cost-effective and some dry foods can assist in dental health, although it has been found that cats do not take in adequate water to completely replace that missing in the dry food. As a result, some cats seem more prone to bladder problems such as cystitis or even blocked bladders if fed dry foods alone. Also, the high calorific content of dry food can lead to obesity and diabetes if quantity is not monitored.

At Lawn Vets, we believe that it is a good idea to feed some wet food if possible.

WHICH BRAND SHOULD I CHOOSE?

Premium cat foods offer a high quality range of diets tailored to meet a cat's nutritional needs at their given stage of life.

Growth stage is a diet for kittens, designed to provide the extra nutrients needed by growing kittens yet avoiding the excesses that often lead to obesity.

Adult stage diets provide all the nutritional requirements of an adult cat while reducing the risk of obesity, dental and kidney disease. They also come in an '**Adult light**' formulation for obesity-prone individuals. Variations are also available for pets with sensitive skin or stomachs and for those prone to hairballs. For pets prone to dental problems there is a prescription diet which uses unique fibre technology to clean the teeth while eating, equivalent to weekly brushing.

Senior stage diets are designed for pets over 8 years old and cater for the more relaxed lifestyle of the older pet, helping them to remain in good shape while keeping the skin, coat and internal organs in good health.

Neutering

WE RECOMMEND:

That all pet cats are neutered, unless intended for breeding.

WHAT IS NEUTERING?

Neutering is the surgical removal of the sex organs. In the male this is called castration, and simply involves removing both testicles. In the female, the operation is commonly called spaying, and both ovaries and the womb are removed.

WHY IS IT GOOD TO NEUTER YOUR MALE CAT?

Some problematic behavioural traits may, in part, be linked to male hormones. These include aggressive, hypersexual and territorial behaviour, including spraying – all of which may be unacceptable in a home environment. Castration of cats has been shown to reduce the tendency of them to exhibit such traits.

Uncastrated male cats tend to spray urine indoors and are also more likely to fight with other cats. Serious wounds may be inflicted, or life-threatening diseases (e.g. feline leukaemia or FIV) transmitted. Castration may also reduce wandering and therefore reduce the risk of road traffic accidents.

WHY IS IT GOOD TO NEUTER YOUR FEMALE CAT?

Apart from the obvious advantage of preventing unwanted litters, a female cat will stay in season for most of the year, starting with her showing a behaviour known as “calling” (which lasts for 3-10 days and occurs every 3-4 weeks). This can be distressing to owners as it sounds as though she is in pain. She will become desperate to get out of the house to find a mate, increasing the risk of road traffic accidents and unwanted pregnancies. Unneutered cats carry a high risk of developing malignant mammary tumours.

WHEN SHOULD THE OPERATION BE PERFORMED?

Neutering cats of both sexes is usually performed from 5.5 months of age.

ARE THERE ANY DISADVANTAGES OF NEUTERING?

Neutering is a surgical procedure and involves an anaesthetic. In a young, healthy animal, the risk associated with this anaesthetic is minimal. Neutered animals have a reduced metabolic rate, and so there may be a tendency to put on weight if the same quantity of food is given. However, a reduction of food intake, or a light diet, will easily control this. One of our healthcare nursing team would be happy to discuss any queries with you.

Dental Care

KEY POINTS

- Monitor young pets for abnormal tooth development.
- Get your cat used to having its mouth opened and examined on a regular basis.
- Use a prescription diet and/or pet toothpaste regularly.

Dental disease is one of the most frequent problems and can be seen in up to 70% of cats over 3 years old. Frequent problems are due to periodontal disease, gingivitis and neck lesions, and the most common cause of dental disease in cats is due to tartar accumulation. As in humans, cats accumulate bacterial plaque on the tooth's surface which, if not removed, quickly becomes mineralised to form tartar or calculus. The bacterial products and decaying food stuck to the tartar are also a cause of bad breath.

Dental disease is one of the most common problems we see. Much of the dental work we perform is preventable.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?

Your cat may have a lack of interest in food, perhaps tending towards soft foods. They may approach the bowl but seem reluctant to eat. They may chew with caution and discomfort, drop food from the mouth or swallow with difficulty. Dribbling may be seen, possibly with blood, and there may be an unpleasant odour to the breath. In some cases, the cat may paw at their mouth or shake their head. With this reluctance to eat, the cat may lose weight dramatically. However, there are some animals with terrible mouths who show no signs or problems. The Veterinary Surgeon or nurse will check your cat's mouth regularly and advise on any treatment required.

A slight degree of redness just below the edge of the gum may be seen as normal in some kittens and adult cats with no sign of dental disease. If you're unsure, please book an appointment with the dental nurse. Some cats develop severe gingivitis with minimal signs of accompanying dental disease. The affected areas may extend beyond the gums to other areas of the mouth, e.g. the throat and tongue. The cause of this disease isn't yet known but is likely to be multi-factorial and may differ between individual cases. This condition is often very difficult to control and may require repeated or constant treatment. Accurate diagnosis can involve investigative procedures.

Neck lesions or FORLS (Feline Odontoclastic Resorptive Lesions) result from a progressive destruction of the tooth substance, effectively resulting in slowly deepening holes in the teeth affected. Once the sensitive parts of the tooth are exposed (you may see a pink hole appear in

the tooth), these lesions are intensely painful and usually the only available treatment is to extract the tooth. The cause of this disease is unknown.



Plaque is made up of bacteria and food debris and builds up on the teeth throughout the day. The cat's mouth is a very unhygienic environment housing millions of bacteria. Many of these bacteria will breed on the surface of the tooth and form an invisible layer called plaque. Some of this is removed by the cat's tongue and chewing habits but if allowed to remain, the plaque will thicken. Plaque then mineralises and is visible as tartar.

Tartar is identified by its light to dark brown colour. It is usually first seen at the gum's edge, particularly on the back teeth, but will cover the whole tooth in time. The accumulation of tartar and bacteria on the tooth's surface will lead to infection and inflammation of the gums (gingivitis). Infection soon follows and due to the gingivitis, the gum soon recedes. Untreated infection spreads into the tooth socket, resulting in the tooth loosening and falling out due to failure of the periodontal ligament that holds the tooth in place. This process often leads to infection of the surrounding gum and bone, causing pain. As the infection in the mouth increases, tonsillitis and pharyngitis can also occur. The bacteria are absorbed into the blood stream and can be a launch pad for infection, which travels via the blood to other parts of the body, including the heart and kidneys.

WE RECOMMEND:

In order to prevent dental disease, the prime aim is to keep the mouth as free from infection as possible by preventing the accumulation of tartar. Feeding a dry diet encourages chewing, which stimulates the production of saliva (which itself contains natural antibacterial substances). The mechanical action of chewing helps to scrape plaque and tartar from the teeth. There are now special oral care diets available that will help too.

Brushing is the most effective way of reducing tartar. A number of toothpastes and brushes are available for animal use. Never use human toothpastes on cats. These are not designed to be regularly swallowed and could cause illness. Whilst cats are in general rather intolerant of brushing, it is possible to clean some cats' teeth. If your cat proves to be unreceptive to brushing, a range of antibacterial mouth washes and gels can be applied to the teeth and mouth to reduce the amount of bacteria present.

Behaviour & Training

HANDLING YOUR KITTEN

It is important to start regular grooming as early as possible, particularly with long-haired cats. If you start handling your kitten now, he or she will regard this as routine, making your life a lot easier and safer!

SOCIALISING YOUR KITTEN

A well-behaved cat is a joy to have around. To ensure good behaviour throughout its life, training should start as early as possible, and your cat should be fully socialised.

In the first fifteen weeks of every cat's life there is a uniquely sensitive period in which they can absorb many new experiences without fear. The more they can be exposed to these experiences at an early age, the less likely they are to become scared and stressed later on in life. It is therefore vital that you allow your young kitten to interact with adults, children, cats and other pets, and that you let them experience a wide range of household noises, appliances, vehicle sounds and so on.

Vaccinating as early as possible will allow socialisation outdoors and in the company of other animals without fear of disease.

LITTER TRAINING

Cats are generally very clean animals and they will usually have already been litter trained. All you will therefore need to do is ensure that the tray is kept clean and is in a quiet area in the house. Cats do not want their toilet to be next to a busy walkway or near their food.

TOYS

Kittens rarely play with the most expensive toys that you buy for them, but are far more likely to find enjoyment out of batting ping-pong balls around the room or hiding in cardboard boxes. Don't be tempted to use your hands or feet for kittens to pounce on, since this can lead to serious behavioural problems later on in their life.



The Wise Pet Care Plan

WHAT IS THE WISE PET CARE PLAN?

Here at the Lawn Veterinary Centre, we believe in preventative care for your pets. So much so, that we have designed the Wise Pet Care Plan to help protect both your pets and your pocket should any illness occur. Used in conjunction with a pet insurance policy (see below), membership of the plan will help you to take an active part in your cat's wellbeing and keep them healthy and happy for as many years as possible.

The Wise Pet Care Plan includes:

- **Boosters**
- **Health checks**
- **Flea products**
- **Worm products**

as well as discounts on:

- **Neutering**
- **Microchipping**
- **Dental work**
- **Food**

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Membership of the plan is quick and convenient. By spreading the cost of preventative treatments across the year and paying by monthly Direct Debit, it offers affordability and peace of mind. There is no registration fee and membership can start immediately. To find out more about prices, contact us today.

HOW DO I REGISTER?

To become a member of the Wise Pet Care Plan, just give us a ring on 01793 644422 or pop into the surgery, where our staff can give you more details and answer any questions you may have.

Pet Insurance

KEY POINTS

- Some medical problems can be very expensive to treat.
- The daily cost of insurance is relatively low.
- Tailor your cover to your needs and your means.
- Start your insurance early before your pet develops any problems to avoid any exclusions.
- Never cancel or change your policy without speaking to your vet first.
- Always read the small print of your policy and seek advice. if you are unsure about anything – it may be too late once your pet has an illness or injury.

Here at Lawn Vets, we choose 'cover for life' policies for our pets.

PET INSURANCE

One pet in three will require veterinary treatment this year.

Perhaps this treatment will be a 'one-off' problem like broken bones after a road accident. It may equally be an ongoing problem like diabetes, a skin allergy or arthritis.

Veterinary medicine has become increasingly sophisticated. We are able to diagnose and treat many conditions that a few years ago would have remained undetected, often with fatal consequences.

The advancement of diagnostic testing, medical and surgical treatment, has inevitably led to the cost of first-class veterinary care increasing and in some cases an owner's finance can become a limiting factor.

But it is possible to insure your pet against accident, illness and injury.

Vaccination, elective procedures like neutering, pregnancy, diets, most preventatives (e.g. flea and worming products) and pre-existing conditions are excluded. Some companies offer a pensioner or multi-pet discount. Like your home and car insurance, pet insurance will have an excess whereby you will pay for each condition being treated, and the rest is paid by the insurance. In this way, your pet gets the very best treatment that money can buy. Depending on the policy and the company you choose, it may be possible for us to claim treatment costs directly from the insurance company, but please discuss this first with a member of staff.

Without insurance, owners have to fund the cost of their pet's treatment themselves and if their finances are limited they may have to opt for the second best treatment available for their pet. Pet insurance provides you with peace of mind.

SELECTING A POLICY

It's vital to make sure that you understand the cover you are getting and, even more importantly, what will not be covered.

Three basic types:

- ◆ Time-capped – Where conditions are only covered for 12 months. These policies are often cheaper, but we don't recommend you take them out. This is because after 12 months, the condition will no longer be covered and you will have to fund further treatment. Please note that taking out a new insurance with a different company won't give you more cover, as the new company will exclude the problem as a pre-existing condition.
- ◆ Maximum benefit – Where you have an amount specified in your cover that can be spent treating the condition. There are no time restrictions on these types of policy, but once the total amount available has been paid out, the insurance cover stops and you will have to personally fund any further treatment costs. Once again, please note that taking out a new insurance policy with a different company won't give you more cover, as the new company will exclude the problem as a pre-existing condition.
- ◆ Cover for life – These policies typically provide a specified amount of cover that can be claimed in any year, which is renewed each year along with the policy (remember you will have to pay excess fees each year) and hence your pet is covered for life.

Subject to current legislative restrictions, we can give general advice regarding pet insurance. We would always recommend discussing insurance with us first, since pet insurance companies vary considerably in terms of the ease with which claims are dealt with and we will be well aware of those that are currently good and others who can be more challenging for owners to deal with.

Generally, the best advice is to take out 'cover for life' pet insurance with an appropriate level of cover as soon as you get your kitten. Choose a reputable company and renew each year, keeping the same policy with the same company. If you change your policy in any way (even with the same company) or if you renew with a different company, then you must remember that any previous conditions or related problems (even if you haven't previously made a claim and including conditions that haven't even been treated), will not be covered by the new policy.

Be aware that some policies will only cover an illness for 12 months before cover stops, while others provide life-long cover for ongoing conditions. Chronic conditions can go on for life, not just for 12 months. Make sure the vet fee is renewed every year and not a fixed amount. Check that there is no limit on how long you can claim for each illness. Finally, check that your cat will be covered in later years when they are older.

Leaflets with further information are available in reception.

We recommend combining the Wise Pet Care Plan with an insurance policy to give you absolute peace of mind for all your pet's healthcare needs.



“ Call us on
01793 644422 ”

