



Infectious disease outbreak:



Meet Tarn, a lovely collie cross that we treated a few months ago. Tarn came in to see Michael Molloy at Wadhurst, having suddenly become lethargic and gone off his food. Michael found that he was jaundiced, and blood tests showed liver and kidney problems.

Tarn is an active dog, spending lots of time outdoors, and regularly drinking from puddles. As he was not vaccinated Michael was worried about Leptospirosis. Tarn was immediately hospitalised in our isolation unit in Tunbridge Wells, where our amazing nurses and their colleagues in the emergency service cared for him around the clock, with intravenous antibiotics and fluids, syringe feeding and plenty of TLC. Lab tests on his blood and urine confirmed the disease. It took a while, but Tarn responded to our treatment and eight days later was able to go home.

So what is Leptospirosis?

Leptospire are bacteria shaped like a cork-screw. There are over 20 different species and in recent years we have seen new species in our area. Dogs usually pick up the infection from water in which rats, mice and other wild animals have urinated, and the disease can take up to three weeks to develop.

It's an easy infection to miss, but we have seen two serious cases of Leptospirosis in the last two years. Tarn was a lucky boy and recovered fully, however his case does illustrate the importance of vaccination. Three years ago we updated our vaccine to ensure we were covering our animals against new European species of the organism (which Tarn was affected by). We know that the Leptospirosis vaccine only lasts on average a year, so annual vaccination is important!

If you're not sure whether your dog is protected give us a call. We include leptospirosis in the annual vaccine we recommend for most dogs (you'll see L4 on the vaccine sticker in your dog's record book). For Culverden Health Plan members the cost of the vaccine is included!

Dog photo: iStockPhoto

Three New Health Plans

More choice, better protection

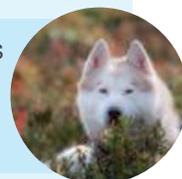
It's nearly four years since we set up our health plan to help make it easier for you to give your animal the best care. Since then we've seen more ticks, and more concern about tick-transmitted disease. We've also noticed that some pets hate spot on treatments!

With this in mind we've designed three plans:



PARK AND GARDEN offers all your regular preventative flea and worm treatments, including cover for Lungworm. This is the same as the existing plan.

FOREST AND FIELD is especially for those adventurers among you who like to off road with your pets, and offers all the standard preventative treatments, but with added Tick prevention.



SPOT FREE is aimed at those who prefer alternatives to 'spot on' treatments for parasite prevention, so we really do offer something for every pet!

Our Health Plans make essential routine treatments more affordable

You'll save money on annual vaccinations, flea and worm treatments and routine health check-ups., and spread the cost over the year. To help you, we'll send you handy reminders by email or text. They really are the easy way to protect your pet. For more information check out culverden.co.uk, give us a call, or pop in. To join the plan call **01892 520296**.

Be Lungworm Aware!

Dogs love to explore, poke their noses into and eat a whole variety of things that they find when out and about. Whilst this doesn't normally cause any serious issues, it can be dangerous if they ingest slugs and snails carrying lungworm – and the High Weald is one of the most common areas for the disease.



What is lungworm?

Lungworm is a parasite that lives in the blood vessels of the chest. Dogs catch it by eating snails and slugs (adults, immature, eggs or slime!).

The signs of infection vary, but can include coughing and breathlessness, spontaneous

bleeding and fitting. We've seen all of these in the practice in recent years, but most commonly see bleeding.

What can I do to prevent it?

Simple measures to avoid contact with slugs, snails and their slime such bringing dog toys and water bowls indoors at night and not letting your dog play with sticks can help.

For most dogs, especially those that scavenge, it's impossible to avoid contact with snails and slugs, and so we advise monthly prevention. If you'd like to discuss this further give us a call or pop in!

New faces



Claire Williams
RVN Veterinary Nurse

Claire qualified as a VN in 1996 and enjoys all aspects of being a Veterinary Nurse as every day is different. She joined Culverden Crowborough branch in April 2018, coming from a mixed practice in Hailsham. In her spare time she enjoys running, walking her terrier and riding her horse Melody.



Emma Fox
Receptionist

Emma joined the practice in Crowborough recently as an evening receptionist. Emma loves working with animals and would like to go on to train as a veterinary nurse.

Appointment Times

Tunbridge Wells: 01892 520296

Monday to Friday:

9–11am, 2.30–4.30pm, 5–6.30pm

Saturday: 8.30–11.30am

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Crowborough: 01892 661650

Monday to Friday:

9–11am, 2.30–4pm, 5–6.30pm

Saturday: 8.30–11.00am

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Wadhurst: 01892 782382

Monday to Friday: 9–11am, 2.30–4pm

Monday and Thursday: 5–6.30pm

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Troublesome ticks and tick-borne diseases



Ticks love the autumn weather! However, unlike fleas – which largely cause skin irritations in both pets and their owners,

ticks can also carry a range of serious infectious diseases.

Ticks can be found in long grasses and wooded areas, especially where there is wildlife such as deer and hedgehogs. Here they wait for an animal or human to brush past them so that they can jump on and feed. They attach using their mouthparts and will feed on blood from their host for several days before dropping off. Ticks can cause problems in two ways:

- **Local tissue reactions:** Firstly, they can sometimes cause redness and swelling at the attachment site.
- **Disease transmission:** ticks can spread diseases which pose serious health risks to both pets and humans. The major ones are: **Lyme disease**, also called borreliosis, is spread by ticks; affected pets (and also

humans) can develop swollen joints and stiffness. They can also develop a fever, anorexia and lethargy. In some cases the disease causes life-threatening kidney disease.

Babesiosis (caused by *Babesia canis*) is an emerging tick-borne disease, destroying red blood cells and causing acute signs of anaemia in affected dogs.

Ehrlichiosis also attacks red blood cells and can be fatal. Both Babesiosis and Ehrlichiosis are particularly prevalent abroad, so if you take your dog abroad on holiday, it is essential to protect them against ticks.

Current evidence suggests that tick-borne diseases take many hours after tick attachment to be transmitted. Using a product that rapidly kills or repels ticks will help to reduce the risk of these diseases. No tick product is 100% effective however, so dogs should also be checked for ticks every 12-24 hours and, any found, removed with a special tick remover. So please let us advise you on keeping your pets safe from tick-borne diseases.

Rabbits – what's up doc?



Rabbits are becoming increasingly popular due to their cute and loveable nature.

They do, however, need a lot of care and commitment. They are best kept in neutered pairs to provide companionship, enrichment and grooming. They should have a run where they can stand up fully and run at least five large hops or more. Some rabbits may become sexually active as early as a few months of age, so please speak to us at the surgery to discuss neutering.

Feeding: Rabbits have evolved to eat large amounts of fibre; this provides mental stimulation, keeps their large stomach system working consistently and makes sure their teeth grind down properly. Rabbits have constantly growing teeth, so diets heavy in pellets (and low in fibre) can cause teeth to misalign and your rabbit to require dental surgery. Feeding your rabbit a balanced diet is one of the best ways to keep them healthy. They should have large amounts of hay plus you can also provide a small daily portion (tablespoon sized) of pellets and a handful of fresh veg but make sure once these are finished, they are not replenished until the next day.

Intestinal problems: Stress, pain and disease may cause your rabbit's intestines to slow down suddenly, making them very unwell. It is very important that you monitor how much faeces your rabbit is producing and what it is eating daily. Diarrhoea can cause a dirty bottom, encouraging flies to lay their eggs and can lead to a serious condition, known as flystrike.

Flystrike is a particular problem whenever the weather is warm and flies are around, typically in the spring, summer and autumn. Flies are very attracted to rabbits if they have soiled bottoms – here they lay their eggs which rapidly hatch out into flesh eating maggots. It is important to check bunnies' bottoms on a daily basis and call us at once if you are worried.

Infectious diseases: We can vaccinate against two deadly diseases: myxomatosis and rabbit viral haemorrhagic disease. **Myxomatosis** is spread by flies and fleas. It causes progressive swellings, leading to blindness and often is not successfully treated. **Rabbit viral haemorrhagic disease (RVHD)** is often a silent killer, producing few clinical signs except for sudden death. There are two strains of RVHD, known as RVHD1 and RVHD2; both strains are lethal. Happily, annual vaccination provides bunnies with protection against these deadly diseases.

If you would like any further information on caring for your rabbit or you are concerned about their general health – please contact us today!

Rabbits have constantly growing teeth and dental problems are not uncommon



Misaligned and overgrown incisor (front) teeth