



Hamilton Update

Joints (not the sort you smoke!)

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A joint is the mobile junction of two or more bones. Joints are susceptible to developmental, degenerative, infectious and traumatic disease.

A common example of developmental disease is osteochondrosis (OCD) seen in younger animals. It causes significant pain and lameness, usually in the shoulder, elbow or stifle (knee) joints.

Certain pedigree breeds are predisposed including the GSD and Labrador. Controlled diet and restricted exercise can help to limit OCD. Treatment often consists of surgery and supportive measures to treat the subsequent arthritis.

The repair of fractures involving a joint is often more complex than those of the shaft of a bone, since failure to reconstruct the joint



accurately will result in excessive callus formation which will lead to arthritis.

Joint infections can cause both pain in the joints as well as a high temperature. Quick and prolonged treatment is essential to prevent long term damage.

Arthritis can be the end result of any of the above conditions or can be due to wear and tear in the ageing

joint. It is a very common problem in older dogs and a recent study showed that two-thirds of older cats also have arthritis. Arthritis is usually diagnosed by Xray where bony changes within the joint and the surrounding soft tissues may be visualised. Treatment of arthritis has come on in leaps and bounds over the past few years. We use many different anti-inflammatory to suit the

individual pet eg rimadyl, previcox and metacam and medications to improve the cartilage function including cosequin and cartrophen. Acupuncture physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and osteopathy are being increasingly used in the management of arthritis

The arthritic patient should be given frequent short periods of exercise, and maintain a lean bodyweight

A recent study showed that two thirds of older cats suffered from arthritis

Our Brave Pets

Our Brave Pets of the month go to Frasier Wake and Max Dodds who both came to see us one fateful Saturday morning after they were both attacked by the same dog. Frasier was first with two large skin wounds. Luckily the dogs teeth did not penetrate the underlying tissue and the wounds were



sewn together without too much trouble.

Max however, did not get off so

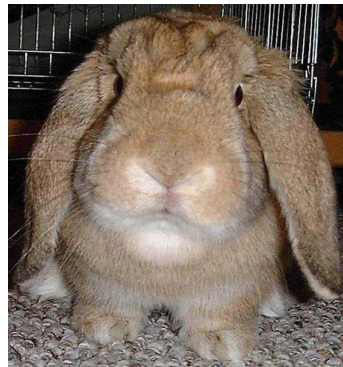
lightly. The dog had managed to tear the skin away from the muscle and had also caused serious damage to the muscles and the body. The first stage was to flush and dose all wounds to prevent infection. Thankfully both dogs have recovered well and truly deserve to be our Brave Pets of the month Well done Max and Frasier!

Wabbits etc

With the summer quickly approaching we all think how the weather is affecting our cats and dogs, but few think about how this time of year affects our other pets, the rabbits, guinea pigs and other small furry companions.

Many of us own a small furry along side our other animals and sometime do not realise that they are just as rewarding and as much as a commitment as a cat or a dog.

For example, rabbits can be very rewarding pets, they are intelligent and as long as they are looked after carefully, can live to 10 years old! That's the same as some breeds of dog. Rabbits can



be litter trained making them ideal to keep in the house if they are the only pet. They do however need to be vaccinated regularly, with Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (VHD) annually and Myxomatosis every 6 months. North London and the surrounding counties are high-risk areas for Myxomatosis and it is important to protect our rabbits from this most often

fatal disease.

Guinea pigs make great pets as they are inexpensive and because they are not native to this country and are not susceptible to diseases like cats dogs and rabbits, but as guinea pigs can live up to 8 years old its best to have them checked out regularly just in case.

Smaller rodents, such as hamsters or rats are incredibly easy to look after and make great starter pets or children's pets.

It is sometimes easy to dismiss these animals as not important, but when you look at the life span they are just as important and deserve the same respect and attention as any cat or dog. We can offer advice on all aspects of looking after your small furry so feel free to bring them in any time.

Staff



Thank you to everybody who sponsored Rachael in the London marathon and helped to raise a fantastic two thousand, eight hundred and fifty pounds for Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. Well done Rachael for completing the race in three hours, fifty four minutes. A great achievement. Roline had to take extended leave at the beginning of May to return to her home in South Africa, but we hope to see her back with us by the end of the

summer. In the meantime Natalie and Stuart will be nursing at Hamilton with the help of Declan, who has found his niche as laboratory technician.

As we expected Tracy has left on maternity leave, but sadly she will not be coming back as she has set up home in Buckinghamshire and is happily awaiting her new arrival. Fiona has taken over as receptionist at Finchley and has settled in extremely well. We are expecting great things!

The advances in medical imaging are continuous requiring frequent updating of expensive equipment providing for ever better visualisation of internal structures.

Xrays

Xrays provide an important tool in veterinary diagnostics. These black and white images allow us to make clinical decisions on a variety of cases.

On an xray air shows up as black and tissues shows up as whiter depending on density. Bone is denser than muscle so it will appear whiter.

Although we may be familiar with images of bones we can



also use xrays to to image 'soft tissues' such as the gut, kidneys and bladders.

We can get an idea if there is an obstruction of the gut or tumour in the abdomen, by looking for abnormal densities or accumulations of gas.

We sometimes need to highlight certain areas with "contrast" the best known being the gut using a Barium meal. Similarly we can use air to visualise the bladder and iodine to identify the spinal column, and blood vessels.