



SMALL ANIMAL

Practice News

In June, we strengthened our out of hours emergency service by welcoming a new vet **Georgina Marshall** and a new nurse **Lisa Lines** to the team. Alongside vets **Pete Crossan** and **Bill Lees** and nurses **Alice Jones** and **Emma Copley**, they make up a branch of The Minster Veterinary Practice called York Emergency Vets. Along with the daytime vets and nurses, they enable round the clock emergency care for your pets any time of the day or night.

The Small Animal Hospital at Salisbury Road is undergoing some building work to improve and modernise our facilities. We are looking forward to the future when we will be able to offer more services to our patients.

We welcome another team member **Carolyn Lawrence**, who joined us in March. Carolyn joins our wonderful reception team who are here to welcome you and your pet. We would also like to announce huge congratulations to two members of our team - **Sally Whitehead** who welcomed a beautiful baby boy, Jonty and **Laura Plews** who welcomed a lovely baby girl, Grace into the world in the Spring. We wish them all the best with their new bundles of joy!



Topics in this issue:

- *Arthritis alert – is your pet affected?*
- *We're sure about insurance, are you?*
- *Feeling ticked off?*
- *A word in your ear!*
- *Autumn Awareness!*

Arthritis alert – is your pet affected?



As the weather cools down, signs of arthritis can become more noticeable in many pets. Arthritis is a painful and debilitating condition caused by inflammation and damage in the joints. It is more common in older pets, affects all species and breeds and can strike at any age.

The joints most susceptible to arthritis are those permitting limb movements – called synovial joints. The ends of the bones which meet at these joints are covered by smooth articular cartilage and the joints are lubricated by synovial fluid. Arthritis develops when the smooth cartilage that lines the joints becomes roughened and cracked. This can be due to general ageing but poor joint conformation, like hip dysplasia, will exacerbate issues and cause problems earlier in life.

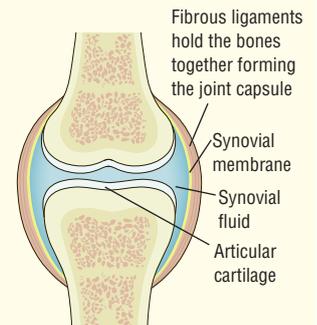
Signs of arthritis can be difficult to pick up on at first, particularly because our pets are great at hiding chronic pain and often changes such as resting or sleeping more, slowing down on walks or general grumpiness can be easily put down to 'old age'. Cats especially are absolute masters of disguise when it comes to arthritis and despite the fact that a huge 80% will suffer once they are older than twelve years, very few are actually on any treatment.



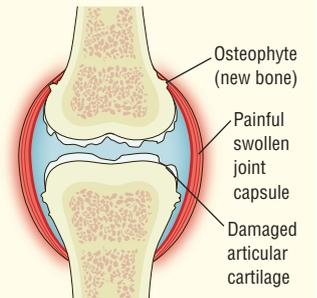
Arthritis is usually diagnosed with a combination of a clinical examination (looking for stiffness, pain and roughness in the joints), plus a history of changes compatible with the disease. X-rays can be helpful, confirming the degree of bone changes and allow assessment of the joints affected.

There are many different treatments for arthritis and as every patient and their joints are different, there is no set protocol to follow. Pain relieving medications are the mainstay for most pets and these are safe, effective and available in various formulations. Supplements can also be very helpful, as can physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and acupuncture. It is also vital to keep arthritic pets slim and fit, so their joints don't have too much weight to carry. If you think your dog or cat may be showing signs of arthritis, please come and see us for a check-up today!

Joint Anatomy



Healthy synovial joint with smooth articular cartilage



Arthritic synovial joint with damaged articular cartilage

We're sure about insurance, are you?

Are your pets insured? If not, it is definitely something worth considering and we would certainly recommend it! When looking for policies there are a few things to consider; some will offer 'lifetime' cover, which means they will pay for any on-going conditions for the lifetime of your pet, whereas others will have a time limit, usually twelve months, which means they will cover costs for that period and then exclude that problem from the policy. Others will set a limit on how much they will pay per condition (and this can include lifetime policies, so you need to read the small print!).

With appropriate pet insurance we can hopefully ensure that any treatment decisions are made on the basis of need rather than cost, so be sure to get your pets insured today!



Although we tend to think of traumatic emergencies (such as bone fractures) as the main reason for insurance, many *medical* conditions, such as **heart disease** or **skin problems** can be very costly to treat – especially so if they are life-long conditions.