

HILLSIDERS

Spring edition

Spring keeps trying to arrive. As the days get longer and warmer, it becomes more enjoyable to house train your new puppy. But please be aware that most garden bulbs are toxic to dogs, some fatally so; and puppies love to dig! The better weather is also encouraging us to get them out on the scenic walks, but remember those legs are mainly supported by cartilage in the first year, so you've got to do the thinking and restrain both of your enthusiasm.

The other thing that is trying to arrive is the Practice Web site, www.hillsidevet.co.uk. This is under construction and should provide a ready source of information about the Practice.

Thank you, to all that have supported Mary, our daughter and occasional receptionist. She is with-in reach of her target for Breakthrough Breast Cancer. The marathon is on the 13th April.

KENNEL COUGH

Warmer weather means getting out and about. This is the time when dogs meet each other more frequently, in the park, show ring or kennels. This is the time when we see more contagious diseases. Kennel cough is chief amongst these. The major cause *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, causes similar symptoms as Whooping cough (*Bordetella pertussis*) of malaise, productive cough, fever and rare cases pneumonia. The good news is that there is an intra-nasal annual vaccine (nose drops) that will increase the protection against this disease. This can be incorporated into the yearly health check.

LAST SUMMER WAS WET, WINTER WAS MILD

What does that mean for this spring? Fleas and ticks galore! Environmental health officers have reported a serious increase. Both feed on blood, and we get interested when it's our pets blood. Even more so if it ours! Beside from the irritation and allergies associated with these parasites, there is a lesser known worry of the transmission of blood bourn diseases. Lyme disease is transmitted by ticks. Fleas can carry *Rickettsia felis*(Spotted fever) and/or *Bartonella henselae*(cat scratch fever).

What is a tick?

Ticks look like small grapes hanging from the skin of the animal. Closer inspection will reveal 8 legs. You can't just pull a tick off, the mouth parts will stay behind and the contents of the tick may be squeezed back into the animal. We use a simple plastic lever. They are attached to suck blood until



they are swollen ; then they drop off. In the process they put an anticoagulant into the animal and any diseases it may be carrying.

There is a spot-on that repels ticks and biting flies, it also kills ticks. This is required as part of the PETS passport for coming back to Great Britain but is best used at least in Spring and Autumn. These products can be toxic to cats.

What is a flea?

A flea is an insect that comes to its host to dine. It doesn't live permanently on the dog or cat but in the areas around them, especially bedding and carpets. Even wood flooring will house fleas, larvae and eggs.

To exterminate fleas, all stages must be attacked. There are safe household sprays that cover the stages with a silicone substance, others that are hormonal blockers and stop the cycle and some that kill fleas dead. Various spot-ons are available, but beware the repellents and some of the older treatments: they either don't work or may cause toxicity problems.



PLEASE TALK TO THE STAFF ABOUT WHICH IS THE BEST PRODUCT FOR YOU.

LUNG WORM

Angiostrongylus vasorum, known as lung worm or French Heartworm, is increasingly being diagnosed in England. One hot spot is in south Wales. This infection can cause coughing and breathing difficulties; limb swelling, bleeding , gait abnormalities, fever, not eating and collapse. It is caught by dogs eating slugs and snails.

SUN

April also means increasing UV light. From now until October white-eared cats and pink-nosed dogs should be wearing their sun block. Animal friendly lotions are available. And it is not too early for heat stroke in cars!

Hibernated tortoises should be waking up – time to check.

