

Enjoy a Cough free Summer

Pre-planning for your dog's vaccination requirements will save time if you are arranging to board your pet over the summer holidays. To ensure they remain happy and healthy during their stay in kennels, we advise that you include protection against a debilitating disease called Canine Infectious Tracheobronchitis (Canine Cough).

Canine cough can spread like wildfire when dogs are in a close environment and can be very unpleasant for your pet if it is not protected! It is highly contagious, affects the respiratory tract and is easily passed from dog-to-dog by airborne droplets (coughing or sneezing) and direct nose-to-nose contact. In fact, a single infected animal is enough to cause a whole outbreak within kennels!



No dog is safe, whatever its age, unless protected. Signs include a harsh, dry, whooping-type cough which can last for several weeks. In some cases, more serious complications can arise, such as pneumonia, which could prove fatal in old, weak or very young dogs.

However, protection is at hand. Our practice uses a vaccine which will safeguard your pet and offer immunity for a full 12 months – so you can protect your pet for the summer holidays and Christmas in one visit! The vaccine is easy to administer - just a few drops gently trickled into one nostril – and gives immunity in just 72 hours! Ideally your dog should be vaccinated at least two weeks before arrival at the kennel, leaving you free to prepare for your summer break.

Avoiding the pitfalls of the Dog - Days of Summer

The summer holiday season is already upon us and these days an increasing number of us choose to take our dogs with us be that within Ireland or abroad. Whether the intended destination is the coast or countryside, summer is a fantastic time to enjoy taking your dog out and about but it always pays to be prepared for perhaps unfamiliar potential hazards.

One potential hazard is the heat- dogs do not manage excessive temperatures as well as we do, with panting being their main mode of heat loss and sweating really occurring only through the feet. It is all too easy to forget about how hot cars can get and this can prove a serious and potentially fatal hazard all too easily.



Never leave your dog in a car unattended in the summer weather- even a small amount of sunshine can rapidly heat the car and deaths occur every year even when dogs are left for a few short minutes even when windows are partially open. When travelling with a dog in the car allow plenty of free ventilation, and ready access to cool water and regular comfort stops.

One risk on country walks is the parasites that can be picked up and especially significant are ticks and the potential risks posed by the diseases they can carry. Ticks are blood-feeding parasites which are widespread and can inhabit woodland, scrub and rough moor and grassland. Often feeding on deer and other wildlife, ticks lie in wait until they detect an animal (or human!) wandering past whereupon they attach and commence feeding until fully engorged with blood. An adult tick can ingest as much as 8ml of blood in one meal, so infestations with multiple ticks can be particularly unpleasant.



An engorged tick attached to dog's skin

An adult tick fully engorged looks like a smooth blue-grey wart or bean attached to the skin. Close scrutiny with a magnifying glass however will reveal a set of legs at the skin surface.

Ticks are unpleasant not only because they feed on blood but also because they can carry a range of unpleasant diseases. Whenever ticks attach it is important to remove them as soon as possible being careful to ensure that they are removed intact. Never burn them or simply pull them off since it is all too easy to partially remove them leaving the head or mouthparts embedded in the skin. Tick removal devices make this a far easier procedure and these are available at the surgery with appropriate advice on use.

Even with care, physical removal can still be tricky so taking steps to **prevent them** attaching is better than cure! .At the practice we sell a range of products that are effective against ticks, both removal devices and preparations to prevent them. Some products have a very useful dual action both helping repel these parasites and subsequently killing them. Useful products effective against ticks include a collar giving convenient season-long protection, as well as spot-on products which can be effective for short term protection.

So, if you are planning to take a holiday with your pet or packing the sun lotion, sunglasses and insect repellent that you need don't forget to consider your dog's health on your list of things to consider!

Whether you are taking your dog out and about at home or abroad talk to reception to find out more about the steps you need to take to give your dog a safe, healthy and happy summer break.

An altogether drier answer

Does your bitch leave wet patches on bedding or leak when she gets excited?

You might be concerned that her house training is deteriorating or she has behavioural problems.

The problem, however, may be that she has developed urinary incontinence.

Whilst there are a number of reasons for urinary incontinence, the most common cause in adult bitches is Urethral Sphincter Mechanism Incompetence (USMI).

The urethra is the tube that runs from the bladder to the outside. This tube is kept flattened by muscles, preventing the flow of urine, until the bladder becomes full and the dog is ready to urinate. USMI is when the muscle tone of the urethra has become weak and your dog loses the capacity to 'hold it in' especially, when the bladder is subjected to the pressure of the dog lying down or from stresses caused by barking or jumping around. It is a condition most often seen in large breed, spayed bitches.

Long-term urinary incontinence can cause your bitch to smell and even develop sores and skin infections from extended skin contact with urine. In addition, the stress of having to clean up after your dog can take away from the enjoyment of spending time with her.

We can help you as there is a solution to this incontinence. A simple once daily tablet is available that helps treat the cause of USMI. The treatment restores muscle tone and puts your dog back in control. It is important that your dog is brought to us if you are concerned that she may be incontinent so that the cause of the problem can be determined.



Sticky eyes...

Does your pet have dry, sticky eyes with a stringy discharge? Does the eye appear red and inflamed? If so, it is important that your pet be examined by a vet. In many cases it may be an uncomplicated case of conjunctivitis which will resolve quickly with the appropriate medication. However, it may also be a condition that is seen in one out of every 22 dogs known as 'dry eye'. The disease is even more common in certain breeds such as Westies and Shih Tzus.

Dry eye is due to a decreased or complete lack of tear production. Without tears, eyes become irritated, the conjunctival tissues around the eyes become red, the cornea itself in time will turn brown in an effort to protect the eye, and a gooey, yellow discharge predominates. Blindness can result. This is a very painful condition but the good news is that prognosis is very good if the condition is diagnosed early and treatment instigated straight away. The diagnosis is easily made using a special paper strip to measure tear production. Treatment in most cases, involves the use of an eye ointment to prevent further damage and to stimulate natural tear production which will maintain vision and keep your pet comfortable.

BUT the key is early diagnosis so if you are aware that your pet has any of the above signs please bring him in to be examined by the vet.

Test strip measuring tear level



Dry eye