



Spot the signs campaign



FAB (feline Advisory Bureau) have launched a campaign supported by Boehringer Ingelheim to help the owners of elderly cats spot the signs of arthritis.

Cats are natural athletes and highly active, but over the years this can take its toll. As a consequence, older cats may suffer from wear and tear on their joints. According to veterinary experts, many older cats suffer with arthritis, and with cats living longer this is a growing problem.

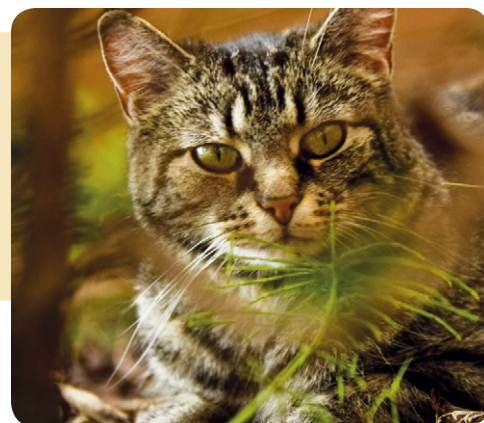
Cats are known and loved for their independent nature and athleticism, yet these qualities can make it difficult for us to identify when they are in discomfort. Furthermore, cats have evolved to instinctively hide signs that they are in pain.

As cats are relatively small and very agile they can hide mobility difficulties caused by arthritis. For instance, unlike dogs, cats with arthritis don't generally limp. Instead cats are more likely to show subtle changes in their behaviour. If you answer yes to any of the questions below, you are probably best advised to make an appointment for your elderly cat to visit a vet for advice.

- **Reduced mobility** – Have you noticed your cat hesitating or being more reluctant to jump up or down e.g. into your lap/the furniture/through a cat flap?
- **Reduced activity** – Have you noticed your cat slowing down e.g. sleeping more, especially in one place, or moving stiffly?
- **Changes in grooming habits** – Have you noticed deterioration in your cat's appearance e.g. matted or scruffy coat?
- **Changes in temperament** – Have you noticed any changes in your cat's attitude lately? is he less tolerant around people, or more withdrawn?

Until the end of March we are offering a **FREE 'Elderly Cat Check Up'** where our vets will carry out a full examination to ensure your elderly cat is healthy and happy and will advise on any areas they find cause for concern. Why not take advantage of this offer and call the surgery to make an appointment.

If you visit our website at www.powisvets.co.uk you will find a link to the FAB website where you will find lots of help and advice on anything feline. The official Spot the Signs website can be found at www.spotcatpain.co.uk.



Microchipping – a must

Microchipping is the most effective way of reuniting pets with their owners. This is especially true for cats. Collars and tags can be easily lost or taken off but a microchip stays put for life! Cats are wanderers by nature, they love to explore their surroundings and this can lead to them getting lost!!

We have successfully reunited many cats with their owners over the years all because of this little thing, no bigger than a grain of rice that holds all the information needed to get your

cat back home to you. Many cats that are not microchipped will be sent to rescue centres and rehomed, leaving their owners distraught with never knowing what happened to them.

The cost of microchipping your pet is £14.84, this is a small price to pay for the peace of mind that if your pet is lost or even stolen, with a microchip inserted the chances of being reunited are much, much higher. For more help and information, please telephone the surgery.

Happy Hamsters

Staff News

Josh Somers, our Student Veterinary Nurse, has now passed his 2nd Year of his BSc in Veterinary Nursing with Business Management and is now working towards his 3rd Year of the degree course. Well Done Josh!!!

We would like to welcome **Ceri Tupper** BVSc, MRCVS, to the practice. Ceri graduated from Liverpool University this year and we are hoping she will become a valuable member of our team and be happy working here with us in the Black Country.

Carole Stewart, our Practice Administrator and a Nursing Assistant, has just passed her Think Dog! Certificate, a unique and applied foundation in the subject of dog training and behaviour. She is now working towards the next level, Think Dog! Intermediate to increase her knowledge and understanding in the subject. She has also completed a continuing professional development course in an introduction to cat behaviour.

Opening Hours

8.30am – 7.00pm weekdays
10.00am – 12.00pm Saturdays

Consulting Hours

9.00am – 10.30am,
2.30pm – 4.30pm &
5.00pm – 7.00pm weekdays
10.00am – 12.00pm Saturdays

Consultations are by appointment only,
please call the surgery to book.

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Many people think of hamsters as herbivores mainly eating grain, but they are officially omnivores as in the wild they will eat insects as well as plant material. Their natural diet consists of grasses, seeds roots and bugs!! The ideal diet for domesticated hamsters is a high quality, complete dry mix (sometimes known as muesli-style food) with plenty of fresh water and small quantities of fresh fruit and vegetables as a treat.



Hamsters front teeth are classed as open rooted which means the teeth grow continuously throughout their life. The best way to keep a hamsters teeth worn down is to offer them wood chews or gnawing blocks. This should prevent any dental problems.

Hamsters have elastic cheek pouches so they are able to hoard most of their food in them at one sitting! They like to hide their food and save it for later. It is always

advised that owners check their hamster is eating his food and not just keeping it stored away. An empty food bowl in a hamsters world doesn't necessarily mean that they are eating normally, it is natural behaviour for them to hide food in their pouches, even if they are feeling unwell. Cheek pouches can be damaged easily so care should be taken to avoid feeding any hamster foods or husks with sharp edges.

Feeding a high quality muesli diet with a Recommended Daily Allowances (RDA) panel which shows that the food is complete, will ensure they get a balanced diet and don't miss out on any essential nutrients contained in the less palatable components.

Feeding fruit and vegetables will provide dietary variety and also behavioural enrichment for the hamster.

The following are foods that are suitable but should only be fed occasionally as a treat as hamsters too can suffer from obesity if over fed:

Broccoli, cucumber, sweet potato, sweetcorn, carrot, melon, blackberries, apple.

The following are foods that should not be fed to a hamster:

Potato and potato tops, avocado, tomato leaves, rhubarb, mushrooms, apple seeds, kidney beans, human chocolate.

Finally hamsters are coprophagic animals – this means that they will eat their own faeces!!!! This is a perfectly normal behaviour and the re-digestion process is essential for maintaining a healthy gut. So, don't get all grossed out if you see your cute little fluffy hamster doing this, it is perfectly normal!

