



## Introducing new cats to each other

Cats are independent animals and share common ancestry with the African Wild cat, a species still found today. The African wildcat lives in the savannah with a sparse concentration of prey so individuals live far away from each other and are solitary to avoid competition for the small amounts of food available.

Like their ancestors, cats want to maintain an independent territory and are generally happy to live without any other cats for company. In fact, many cats living together under the same roof only tolerate each other to gain access to resources such as food, water, toileting areas and outdoor access. This can result in anxiety and stress, which is not always obvious, especially as cats often spend time together to access the resource.

The introduction of a new cat to existing cats can cause stress for both parties, and if an appropriate gradual meeting is not followed, may lead to behavioural problems such as spraying or inappropriate toileting.

Multi-cat households can be harmonious. If the cats are carefully introduced and each one has the ability to access separate and sufficient resources such as food, water and litter trays, without having to interact with any other cat, or face potentially stressful situations, such as children, dogs, noisy household appliances, in other words they are able to choose an independent life if they wish.



African wildcats are small predators and rely on staying fit for survival. As a solitary animal, they cannot rely on others in their group to hunt for them if injured. They would much rather avoid conflict by running, climbing or hiding than staying to fight. Like their ancestors, domestic cats are the same, so providing them with places to hide or get up high will lower the stress levels in their environment.

If you would like more information on the behaviour of your cats and how to ensure a happy life for cats living together, you will find links on our website to International Cat Care (formerly known as FAB).

## Behaviour Tip – Preventing food guarding in dogs

For some reason, many dog owners seem to think they should be able to remove food items from their dogs without the dog showing any signs of complaint. Why? If you were tucking into your favourite meal and someone marched over and took it from you wouldn't you have something to say about it? We need to be able to retrieve dangerous items from our dogs, but once we have given them their food or a tasty treat this is theirs!!! By removing valued items from dogs, we are actually making them more likely to guard them and become very suspicious of us.



Most puppies will go through a period of food or object guarding but it is how it is dealt with that will shape their future behaviour. If your puppy or dog gets hold of something he or she should not, do not use any form of physical punishment to retrieve the item. Also, do not enter in to a game of chase with them; this will turn the event into a game for him or her. Instead, use a high value reward to retrieve the item.

Most dogs are food motivated so showing the dog a tasty treat will hopefully encourage your dog to drop the forbidden item, you can then safely retrieve it. A good exercise is to teach a puppy or dog 'leave it' from a very early age. If you visit our website you will find details about Carole, how behaviour and training advisor who will be happy to help with any guarding behaviour shown by your dogs.

# Choosing the right diet for your pet.

**Deciding what food to feed your pet can be a bit of a daunting subject as there are so many commercially available choices out there.**

Often, it can be down to cost when making this decision but beware, the cheaper the food, the more likely it is to be not quite so nutritionally balanced for your dog or cat. And, did you know that what your dog or cat eats not only has effects on their health but can also affect their behaviour. For instance, a diet high in preservatives, colours and additives can cause your dog to display hyperactive behaviour; it can also affect the general health of a dog which in itself can cause distress and irritability. Very often, better quality diets will work out the same cost as a poorer quality diet as the amount to be fed is normally less due to it containing much more nutritional ingredients.

Also, all dogs and cats are different and what food suits one may not be suitable for another. Throughout their lives, their nutritional requirements will change, such as during puppyhood, after neutering and as they get older.

**Here at Powis and Partners we stock Royal Canin VCN (Vet Care Nutrition) diets.**

They have designed a range of diets to suit dogs and cats through every stage of life one of which is the Neutered range. Neutered dogs and cats are prone to weight gain due to a change in hormones that affects metabolism and appetite. In studies, dogs and cats that continued to be fed their normal diet for 16 weeks after neutering all put on weight and some even became obese. Once the calorie intake was reduced, they all maintained their ideal weight.

The Royal Canin neutered programme helps maintain ideal healthy weight after neutering thanks to its exclusive formulas, adapted kibbles and adjusted rationing. Not only does this range help to maintain weight, it also is designed to promote oral hygiene, containing sodium polyphosphate which helps to reduce the risk of plaque and calculus forming on the teeth. It is also designed to be digestive tolerant and to guarantee that it will promote a urinary environment unfavourable to stone formation within the bladder and the rest of the urinary system. This is especially good for neutered cats and small dogs in which bladder stones are more common.

We stock all of the foods to support dog and cats through stages in their lives so if you would like to discuss any of these you can either call us or pop in during surgery hours.

If you decide to change your pets diet, always do it gradually, including a little of the new food with the old food until just the new food is available. This will help to prevent digestive upsets and also, your pet is more likely to take to the change if done gradually.



# Pesky Parasites

**Did you know that your pet could be at risk from different parasites every day!**

There are two types of parasites, internal or, endoparasites and external or, ectoparasites. Types of internal parasites are roundworm, tapeworm, lungworm, hookworm, heartworm (although this is not found in the UK or Ireland but can be a threat to pets travelling in Europe and around the world), fox lungworm and whipworm. These all harbour, feed and breed inside the pets internal organs. They are contracted by ingesting poo and other organisms, including fleas, slugs, snails and mice. The health problems and disease risk associated with these can be fatal.

Types of external parasites are fleas, ticks, ear mites, sarcoptes and biting lice. They will fly, jump or crawl on to a pet. The subsequent biting can cause irritation and discomfort and could lead to a major health problem if left untreated.

**Here are some facts about these pesky parasites;**

- Dogs can pick up roundworm eggs if they come into contact with contaminated soil. The eggs can survive in the environment for a very long time! This parasite can also affect humans, which is one of the important reasons that we should all clean up after our dogs. Although not common, in extreme cases of humans coming into contact with roundworm eggs it has caused blindness. One pile of dog poo can contain 1 million roundworm eggs!
- Hunting cats are at particular risk of being infected by tapeworm as mice are a favourite host for them.
- Hookworms latch on to the intestinal wall and feed on blood, they live in the small intestine.
- Lungworm is transmitted by slugs and snails, this parasite can kill dogs.
- Only 5% of the flea population is on the animal, 95% is in the environment. If you see fleas on your cat or dog, you should treat the entire house and other areas your pet may go.
- Ticks live in long grass, waiting for an unsuspecting host to come by. They have highly developed mouth parts, which allow them to pierce a hole through the skin to feed on blood.

There are many products available in pet shops, supermarkets and on the internet for dealing with these unpleasant visitors. However, none of these will be Veterinary prescribed as the legislation governing prescription items does not allow them to be sold by these individuals. To be sure you are giving your pet the best protection you can against internal and external parasites, a Veterinary Prescribed application is highly recommended. Most products are applied to the pet at monthly intervals and now there are products that every application covers a wide range of parasites. They are quick and simple to use and cause no stress to your pet. Also, there are often special offers on our parasite control products so keep an eye on our website for these at [www.powisvets.co.uk](http://www.powisvets.co.uk).



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## Opening hours

8.30am – 7.00pm weekdays  
9.30am – 12.00pm Saturdays

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

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