



The
hidden danger
that can **kill** your dog

lungworm.co.uk

**be lungworm
aware**

SYMPTOMS CHECKLIST

Breathing problems

- Coughing
- Tiring easily

Poor blood clotting

- Excessive bleeding
- Nose bleeds
- Bleeding into the eye
- Anaemia

General sickness

- Weight loss
- Poor appetite
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea

Changes in behaviour

- Depression
- Tiring easily
- Seizures (fits)

Visit www.lungworm.co.uk
for more information

Dear Dog owner,

You may have noticed a number of reports in the press recently about the potentially life threatening parasite *Angiostrongylus vasorum*. Unlike intestinal worms, once inside the dog's system, this parasite travels through the body eventually ending up in the heart. If the infection is left untreated, the dog's health can rapidly deteriorate, often resulting in death.

The parasite is carried by slugs and snails, and the problem arises when dogs purposefully or accidentally eat these common garden visitors when they are rummaging through undergrowth, eating grass or drinking from outdoor water bowls.

The latest research conducted by the Royal Veterinary College suggests that the parasite is spreading beyond the areas that it has previously been seen in the UK, and cases have now been confirmed in northern England and Scotland.

It is thought that the spread of this parasite is due to a number of factors such as:

- The increase in fox numbers over the last 40 years (foxes are carriers of this parasite)
- Warmer, wetter winters see slugs and snails living longer and sometimes not dying off at all
- The increased movement of dogs in and out of areas of infection

This worm is not treated through the conventional use of worming tablets. However, treatment and prevention for lungworm, as well as more commonly found parasites such as fleas and intestinal worms, is available in the form of a prescription spot-on which is available following a clinical assessment at our practice.

Lungworm infection – what to look out for.

Any dog can potentially become infected with *Angiostrongylus vasorum* if they happen to eat a slug or snail carrying the larvae of the parasite. Symptoms are many and varied but can include breathing difficulties, ranging from a lack of energy to coughing. Dogs may also show general signs of being unwell including weight loss, reduced appetite and vomiting. Persistent bleeding, even from minor cuts is also a sign to watch out for. However, the symptoms can be varied so if you are concerned about your dog's health, you should seek veterinary advice immediately.

If you would like further advice on this parasite, as well as information on how to protect your pet and family from the risks posed by fleas, worms, mites and lice, please give us a call to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Veterinary team at Powis and Partners

ANGIOSTRONGYLUS VASORUM IN THE UK – A NATIONWIDE POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Lauren Ashley, Georgina Limon, Javier Guitian, Carlos Hermosilla & Mark Fox Royal Veterinary College, University of London, UK

Winter bird care tips

The onset of winter can be a difficult time for our wild feathered friends. November usually marks the real start of the winter feeding season and is a month of transition between the seasons, summer visitors are long gone and most autumn arrivals are well established. Although natural food supplies in the wider countryside are still readily available, worsening weather may bring many birds in to our gardens to search for food. For the next few months it is vital to ensure a regular supply of food and water.

If you have never provided peanut cakes or other fat based products before, this is a good time of year to try them out. In cold weather try to avoid disturbing the feeding area at the beginning and end of the day, as these are the most important times for the birds to feed. Provide a regular supply of water for bathing and drinking. During cold spells you should keep your birdbath free from ice by using warm water.

Visit www.rspb.org.uk for more information

Staff news

We would like to welcome **Suzanne Muirhead** BVMS(Hons) MRCVS. Suzanne joined us in August and is already a valuable member of our team.

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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Choosing a puppy

With Christmas creeping up on us many people will be thinking of making a puppy part of the family and even buying puppies as gifts. This is a huge decision and one that should only be made after careful consideration. When deciding where to find your puppy the following information should help.

Many potential puppy owners inadvertently support the puppy farming trade without realising. The Dogs Trust recently carried out a survey asking owners if they would consider buying a dog from a puppy farm. Although almost 95% said no, when asked where they had got their dog from 15.1% (potentially 900,000 dog owners) admitted they had got them from an advert in the newspaper, the internet, a pet shop or a pet superstore, all outlets often supplied by puppy farms.

It is a sad fact that calls from concerned dog owners whose puppies have suffered illness and in some cases died as a result of being bred at puppy farms are on the increase. Breeding bitches are often kept in tiny cages without natural daylight or contact with other dogs. They suffer mental cruelty of having little contact with people and having no exercise or opportunity to play. They are bred from continuously until they are too old and are then discarded. A pup from a puppy farm could have genetic or other health problems relating to its poor breeding conditions. It could also have behavioural problems as a result of being taken from its mother at too young an age.

If you chose to get a puppy from a breeder, follow these tips to ensure the puppy you are taking home is happy and healthy;

- Puppies should not be leaving their mothers before the age of 10 weeks old. Make sure you see the pup playing and interacting with its littermates and mother.
- The breeder should be happy to allow you to handle the puppies
- Visit the breeder at least twice before you finally bring puppy home.
- Check that the puppies have regular access to human contact, it is far better that the puppies are being raised in a home environment, rather than a kennel, so that they become familiar with everyday sights, smells and sounds.
- Check that the environment is clean and the puppy seems alert and healthy, there should be no discharge from its eyes or nose or any sores, bald patches or scabs on the skin. The pup should be alert and show no obvious signs of illness such as coughing.
- Find out whether the puppy has been wormed and vaccinated, some breeders will vaccinate puppies at 8 weeks of age before letting them go to their new homes.
- Beware of any breeder wishing to meet you somewhere with the puppy, bring the puppy to your home or does not let you see the rest of the litter and the mother. These are tell tale signs that the breeder is a puppy farmer and has something to hide from you.

Finally, when making the decision to add a dog to your family why not think about rescuing. There are thousands of dogs and puppies all over the country needing a second chance in life. If you adopt a puppy from a rescue centre, they are there to help you make the right decisions when choosing a dog or puppy and for support for the rest of its life. Visit www.dogstrust.org.uk for more information.