

# Aireworth Vets

SMALL ANIMAL



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Visit our website:

[www.aireworthvets.co.uk](http://www.aireworthvets.co.uk)

Winter 2011



## Shape Up!

Have you noticed that your four-legged friend may have started piling on the pounds? Possibly not, as many owners do not recognise that their cat or dog is overweight. Excess weight can lead to or worsen many medical conditions including:

- Joint & ligament problems
- Increased blood pressure
- Diabetes mellitus
- Breathing difficulties
- Decreased stamina and heat intolerance - to name a few!

Here at **Aireworth Vets** we are offering **FREE** weight checks to all cats and dogs to help owners identify if their pet is overweight.

Jenny, one of our senior nurses said "Although it is believed that around 65% of the nation's pets are overweight, owners often don't realise that their pet is part of this statistic. We often only see the animal once it has developed an obesity related condition such as diabetes or heart disease."

The great news is that there are plenty of ways to help your pet lose weight and we offer lots of support for pets and owners with our weight clinics.

If you are interested in finding out more visit us at **Aireworth Vets** for a **FREE** weight check or call the practice for more information.



## The big chill - a seasonal survival guide



With the onset of colder winter weather, just how prepared are we, and our pets, for the colder weather? Outlined below are a few tips to keep your pet fit and well.

Now is the time when many of us start to feel aches and pains and our pets are no exception! Look out for any limps and difficulties in rising after rest; these are signs

that your pet may have some joint stiffness - usually made worse by the cold or damp weather. If your pet is showing any signs of stiffness or limping, please get in touch.

Remember that whilst many dogs love playing in the cold and snow, slim/fine coated breeds find it much harder to conserve their body heat and may benefit from dog coats. Also be aware of winter hazards such as frozen ponds and lakes.



Around the house, as well as food, pets are often on the look out for anything else they can eat! Christmas decorations, in particular ribbons and tinsel are very attractive to pets and if swallowed may lead to upset tummies. On the subject of edible items, don't forget that **chocolate**, especially the plain varieties can be very toxic to dogs.

This is also the time of year that many car owners prepare their cars for icy weather. **Antifreeze** smells and tastes very sweet to cats & dogs. If swallowed, even in small amounts, it can cause kidney failure and usually death.

Winter is also a difficult time for all animals that live outside, especially pet rabbits and guinea pigs. It is important to ensure that their hutches are warm and dry, and in a sheltered position. Give them fresh food and water every day and check the water bottle regularly to ensure that it has not become frozen. If you would like further information on any of these topics, please just give us a call!

## Ticker Trouble! Is my pet affected?

Whilst most pets take normal heart function for granted, heart disease is nevertheless surprisingly common in cats and dogs.

The heart is essentially a muscular pump responsible for supplying the tissues of your pet's body with oxygen and nutrients, allowing them to lead a normal active life.

Phil, one of our vets said "Heart Disease can be gradual or sudden in onset. It is recognised as the *loss* of the normal pumping action of the heart. Whilst there are many possible causes of heart disease, the most common are usually associated with either **heart valve** problems, or a problem with the **heart muscle** itself."

In **dogs** it is generally more common in older pets, but in certain breeds it is more prevalent at an early age. In **cats**, heart disease is quite commonly linked with thyroid gland disease.

Heart disease is associated with a range of symptoms including:

- Coughing
- Laboured breathing
- Tiring more easily
- Reluctance to exercise
- Pale or blueish gums
- Fainting or collapse



The good news is that new methods of diagnosis and novel forms of treatment are now transforming the lives of many affected pets. If you are concerned that your pet is showing *any* of these signs, please come and see us for a full clinical examination with a vet.

## ❄️ WINTER WORDSEARCH ❄️

M I S T L E T O E B C	TINSEL	STRESS
M C B A Q F L X P A S	BAUBLE	ICE
G B L P X K M E I U S	ALCOHOL	❄️ ❄️
E J P J A S I T W B E	MISTLETOE	❄️
B L E S N I T A O L R	POINSETTIA	
R I C T K E E L E E T	NUTS	
G O A H S N B O N E S	BONES	
H M F N N G V C V D I	CHOCOLATE	
V Y I U L O H O C L A		
X O Q T L F J H P Y S		
P R K S T X I C E U H		

### Christmas & New Year

#### Opening Hours

<b>Fri 23rd Dec</b>	<b>Normal Opening Hours</b>	<b>8.00am to 8.00pm (appts)</b>
<b>Sat 24th Dec</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>8.30am to 4.30pm (appts)</b>
<b>Sun 25th Dec</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Mon 26th Dec</b>	<b>Boxing Day</b>	<b>10.30am to 12.00 noon (emergencies)</b>
<b>Tue 27th Dec</b>	<b>Bank Holiday</b>	<b>9.00am to 5.00pm (appts)</b>
<b>Wed 29th Dec</b>	<b>Normal Opening Hours</b>	<b>8.00am to 8.00pm (appts)</b>
<b>Sat 31st Dec</b>	<b>New Year's Eve</b>	<b>8.30am to 4.30pm (appts)</b>
<b>Sun 1st Jan</b>	<b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>10.30am to 12.00 noon</b>
<b>Mon 2nd Jan</b>	<b>Bank Holiday</b>	<b>10.30am to 12.00 noon</b>
<b>Tue 3rd Jan</b>	<b>Normal Opening Hours Resume</b>	<b>8.00am to 8.00pm (appts)</b>

If the surgery is closed, please call our usual number: **01535 602988** for emergencies

## Keeping your Guinea Pig fit and well!



As many owners will know guinea pigs come originally from South America and are social animals that make great family pets. They thrive on a mixture of hay, fresh greenstuff, fruit and vegetables and can be given small amounts of commercial concentrate.

Relatively trouble free, they require no vaccinations but we do recommend regular health checks so their teeth and nails can be monitored. Problems to look out for include **chest infections**, **diarrhoea**, **skin disease** and **dental problems**.

We are here to help! If you would like any further information on any aspect of guinea pig care, or if you would like a checkup for your pet, please contact the practice.

### Skin Problems

Skin problems may occasionally occur and the most common of these is an infestation with a mange mite.



Affected guinea pigs are itchy and develop scaly skin, which is often most obvious on the ear tips initially. If untreated, areas of hair loss, self inflicted wounds and skin infection can develop.

Kirsten Pantenburg one of our vets runs a skin clinic for all pets with skin problems, if you would like to know more please visit our website.