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what is required to maintain the pet in good health. A couple of good phrases that apply to getting a new pet are, 'knowledge is a good thing' and 'be pre-warned and pre-armed'!

A useful new web-site has been launched by the PDSA in Britain on choosing a pet (www.your-right-pet.org.uk). This site gives a lot of basic information. We suggest you also look at our own website www.isabellevets.co.uk which provides invaluable information about pet health and pet management in Guernsey. This web site gives you access to data on not just the Practice but many common health queries and conditions.

If you are thinking about getting a new pet and have any doubts or questions, make an appointment with your vet to talk through the requirements of pet ownership. We will be pleased to provide you with advice and peace of mind.

Happy Hoppy Bunny Clinic

With our 'Happy Hoppy Bunny Week' proving to be a success with many clients we are offering our veterinary nurse, 'Happy Hoppy Bunny Clinic' as a routine service at the Practice. We know that many of our clients love their rabbits but are not too sure how to look after them or what health care is required. Rabbits are now very much household pets. With regular handling they are proving to be interesting companions and can be housetrained and given access to secure gardens in much the same way as a dog. Their antics are highly

amusing and will interact with other animals in the house. The clinic will prove interesting and covers a variety of important issues:

- Caring for your rabbit
- A clinical health check
- Weight check / dietary advice
- Disease risk in Guernsey
- What vaccine to use
- Parasite prevention
- Information leaflet provided

Regular health checks will help keep your bunny healthy.

Choose a pet perfect for you

We enjoy consulting with people about the suitability of a prospective new pet and what facilities and care will be required to provide the new addition to the household with 'best care'. Many people have fairly fixed ideas about what they want and just need a little additional knowledge to secure their choice. Should it be a

Cocker Spaniel or a Westie? What inherited problems might they have? What is the best way to look after a rabbit? How should my 6 year old daughter hold the guinea pig? The questions are endless; all sensible and pleasant for vets to discuss and answer. We see that this is an important service to offer and we are very happy doing so.

Choosing the right pet is important. Equally important is how much time and finance is required to look after the pet properly and to know exactly



Do you have a stressed out pet?

Unfortunately they exist. Modern day living with high density housing, restricted gardens for dogs and many cats per square mile, plus many other factors, can lead to stressful pets. In an ideal world we would provide them with an improved environment and behavioural modification that could lead to happier stress free dogs and cats.

In many cases this is impossible to provide and as vets we are often asked by clients what WE can do to help the situation. No vet likes reaching for the 'medicine chest' of

anti-anxiety and behaviour modifying drugs that are available and we should look at alternative ways of improving our pet's lot.

However, if all else fails, a novel way to help a stressed dog or cat is to try a product called Zylkene. Many of us are aware that the suckling of Mum's milk has a calming effect on the newborn whether it is a human, puppy or kitten. It is not just the suckling action that has this calming effect but also a 'bioactive peptide' called alpha-casozepine which is produced in the new born from mum's milk.

Alpha-casozepine is an anxiolytic that does not have the usual side effects of classical anti-anxiety medications. It works by binding to receptor sites in the brain but without

the deleterious side effect such as dependency, heavy sedation or disorientation that may occur with many traditional drugs.

Zylkene is a natural product with no known side effects that can make a stressed pet more relaxed and happier in their home. Have a chat with your vet if you have an anxious pooch or a snarly kitty!



A fat cat is not a very happy cat

Cats are living longer, with Isabelle Vets seeing many animals happily living well past 16 years of age. Many are becoming lazier as their required task of 'barn ratter' is removed due to modern day living and the new feline form, the 'pampered couch potato cat' (PCPC) emerges.

PCPC is a very happy, lazy cat with doting owners. PCPC likes food as it brings his owners attention to him and by lots of meowing and rubbing against legs and looking pleading will get fed as much as he wants, many times every day. He is very fat.

This type of cat is common to our Practice. They are usually lovely cats but obesity causes many problems. We are seeing more and more diabetic cats. Diabetes can occur because of a range of reasons but the most common feature is the fat cat. Diabetes can also occur for reasons such as pancreatic disease and genetic factors but overindulgence is the primary cause in the cat. It can be treated in most cases very successfully using tablets in mild cases but more often the use of insulin injections. It would, however, be so much easier to prevent diabetes by preventing your cat from becoming obese in the first place.

Obesity also leads to many other problems. Heart conditions and

arthritis are exacerbated by obesity. However skin disease is probably our major contender in obesity related conditions. Fat cats find it very difficult to groom. They can't groom out the hair or fight fleas. Hairballs, excessive skin oiling, parasitic infestations are all more common in fat cats.

We offer FREE of charge nurse weight clinics where we have a computer program to determine calorie requirement, best diet and health advice. Good advice and care in restricting your cat's weight may save his/her life.

Beautiful urine!

For thousands of years certain medical men and religious sects have claimed to be able diagnose disease from assessing urine. The concept is intriguing and to a degree has truth in that many diseases can be diagnosed from assessing urine. For instance, acute diabetes causes urine to have the odour of 'pear drops' and types of liver disease also produce distinctive odours.

In modern medicine we test urine in a variety of ways and the results,

once collated can either produce a diagnosis or give guidance for further diagnostic tests. The most routine test is the 'multistix'. This is a dip stick test which checks a large number of parameters from glucose being present, to acidity, density, the abnormal presence of blood or proteins etc. This is a guidance test but abnormalities point you further.

Another useful test that we perform routinely in the Practice is the 'sedistain' where the urine is placed in a centrifuge, the fluid spun and removed and the 'solid materials' (yes, urine has cells and solids) is placed on a slide, has specific stains applied and then viewed through a microscope. And this is where urine is beautiful! The colours and shapes can be amazing and the findings can dictate the diagnosis of many diseases. (The photo, taken through our microscope, is of a bilirubin crystal, a product of liver function).

Of course there are countless other tests that can be performed. If your pet is ill it will do no harm to bring a urine sample with you. The vet may just discard it but quite often it may open the door to diagnosing your pet's condition.

