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Jet-setting pets? Brexit may have consequences...

Brexit looks set to have an impact on most areas of our lives, so it probably isn't a surprise to learn that it may affect your pet. There are many areas of the veterinary profession that could see changes after March 29th 2019 including: pharmaceutical regulation, veterinary public health, animal health and welfare legislation and veterinary recruitment issues. However, the impact that may have the most direct effect on you and your pet are the potential alterations to the pet passport scheme.



Currently, if you want to travel abroad with your pet, they must fulfil certain regulations: be microchipped, vaccinated against rabies at least 21 days before travel, have a valid pet passport and be treated for tapeworm within 24 and 120 hours of returning to the UK.

There are various potential consequences for pet travel after Brexit depending on negotiations before 29th March. Whatever the outcome of Brexit, you will be able to travel with your pet around Europe, however what you and your vet need to do to enable this may be different.

Although it has not been decided how pet travel will be handled when we have left the European Union, there are three possible scenarios:

1. We become a listed Part 1 'Third Country'

The UK would operate under the same EU Pet Travel Scheme rules as EU member states and actions would not change much from the current system. Some small changes would be needed to the

documentation for pet passport travel but there would be no changes to health preparations.

2. We become a listed Part 2 'Third Country'

The current regulations would still be in force, but there would be additional requirements. These include:

- i. An 'Official Veterinarian' (who has additional certifications) would need to issue a 'model health certificate' (MHC). This is a temporary health certificate and relates to rabies vaccination status. It would only be valid for ten days after the date of issue for entry into the EU, and four months for onward travel from the EU back to the UK. A new MHC would be required for each trip.
- ii. On arrival in the EU, pet owners travelling with their pet would be required to report to a Traveller's Point of Entry.
- iii. There would be no requirement for a blood titre test.

3. We become an unlisted 'Third Country'

This would be the most complicated scenario and would add the most complexities when preparing for travel after 29/03/19. This scenario would be the result of a no-deal Brexit. This would mean:

- i. Preparations for travel would take in excess of four months due to required waiting periods after vaccination and blood tests. Therefore, if you are intending to travel soon after 29th March 2019, you must contact your vet as soon as possible just in case no-deal Brexit occurs. Failure to adequately prepare could mean it is not possible to take your pet abroad. Four months would be the absolute minimum amount of time to complete travel preparations – we recommend seeing your vet as soon as you know you would like to travel as preparations could take longer than four months.



We are open seven days a week:

Mon - Fri, 8.00am - 7pm

Sat, 8.30am - 5.30pm

Sun, 10am - 1pm

Molecare Pet Vets (office hours): 01626 835002
EVES Emergency Service (out of hours): 01392 284217

molecarepetvets.com

Jet-setting pets, continued...

ii. Pets would have to visit their Official Veterinarian to undertake the following before travel:

1. You must get your dog, cat or ferret microchipped and then vaccinated against rabies before it can travel. Your pet must have a blood sample taken at least 30 days after the rabies vaccination. You'll need to talk to your vet about whether you need a rabies vaccination or booster before this test. Pets that have previously had a blood titre test, and whose rabies vaccinations are up-to-date, would not be required to repeat the blood test before travel.
2. Your vet must send the blood sample to an EU-approved blood testing laboratory.
3. The results of the blood test must show that the vaccination was successful.
4. You must wait three months from the date the successful blood sample was taken before you travel.
5. You must take your pet to an Official Veterinarian (OV), no more than 10 days before travel to get a health certificate.

If there's no deal, current pet passports issued in the

UK would not be valid for travel to the EU.

None of this information is set in stone; it is simply advice provided by DEFRA and APHA to allow pet owners and vets to prepare for the worst-case scenario. The above information may change as a result of Brexit regulations, and a deal may even be reached before this newsletter is published! If you are planning on travelling abroad with your pet, please keep in touch with your vet for updates and plan well in advance!

Visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) for more information about potential changes to the veterinary profession after Brexit.



Christmas toxins



'Tis the season of over-indulgence and tasty treats, but remember, many of our favourite morsels can be incredibly toxic to our pets. Dogs are the main offenders for pinching and eating poisonous foods, and the main worries are the usual suspects... chocolate and raisins! But why are these toxic, and what do they cause?

Chocolate



The chemicals in chocolate that cause the toxicity are theobromine and caffeine. The amount of these chemicals varies depending on the type of chocolate, with dark chocolate containing the most. The toxins are easily absorbed by the gastro-intestinal tract and then inhibit certain neurotransmitters which in turn causes stimulation of the central nervous system potentially initiating seizures. The toxins also affect calcium movement between the cells in the body and heart meaning that the muscles cannot work properly. Symptoms

usually appear within 6-12 hours of consumption and can range from mild problems such as vomiting, diarrhoea and drinking more up to severe effects such as increased temperature, hyperactivity, heart problems and seizures. Chocolate poisoning can be life-threatening.

Grapes and raisins



Grapes and raisins can cause severe kidney failure if ingested by dogs. The exact mechanism of the toxicity is not known but even very small numbers of the fruit can cause toxicity. Some dogs seem particularly sensitive to the effects and others relatively less vulnerable but there is no way of knowing your dog's sensitivity until problems arise. Most dogs develop vomiting and diarrhoea 6-12 hours after ingestion, potentially leading to kidney failure 24-72 hours later and subsequently death.

What to do...

If you think your dog has eaten chocolate or raisins, contact the practice as soon as possible for an appointment. If at all possible we will give medication that causes your dog to be sick, but we only have a very limited period of time before the poisonous food moves along through the gut. We will likely recommend that your pet is administered oral activated charcoal, and is put on a drip to help protect kidney function. If your pet is suffering from seizures we will give appropriate medication.

Pyo-what?

At Molecare, we recommend that any bitch not intended for breeding is spayed. One of the main reasons for this is the risk of pyometra.

What is pyometra?

Pyometra is a life-threatening infection of the uterus (womb) and must be treated quickly and aggressively. The infection is a direct result of hormone fluctuations after a bitch's season/heat.

There are three main factors that contribute to the development of pyometra:

1. During your bitch's season, white blood cells from the immune system are reduced in the reproductive tract to permit safe passage for sperm to allow fertilisation. These white blood cells would normally protect against infection, so the womb is at risk of infection when these are low. The bacteria involved are often those normally found in the vagina in small numbers that move through the cervix when it is more relaxed during oestrus ('heat').
2. The reduced white blood cells generally don't cause problems while bitches are young, however with each season that passes, the lining of the womb will become thicker and can be prone to developing cysts. The thickened, potentially cystic lining of the womb will release fluids that provide the perfect environment for bacteria to thrive and numbers can increase.
3. Add to this that high levels of a hormone called progesterone reduce movement in the muscle wall of the womb, meaning that the uterus cannot contract to expel accumulated fluid or bacteria.

Pyometra generally starts to affect the bitch between two and eight weeks after the end of the season.

Which dogs are affected?

As the infection involves the womb, only female dogs are affected. The combination of the factors above mean it is easier for bacteria to take hold as a bitch becomes older. Older bitches are at a much higher risk of developing the infection, and they are in a poorer position to cope with the impacts on the body. Spaying a bitch almost eradicates the risk of infection as the womb is usually completely removed during surgery.

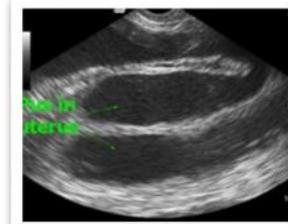
Symptoms

The severity of symptoms will depend on whether the cervix is open or tight shut, but it is likely that the bitch will be drinking more regardless. If the cervix is open, smelly discharge may be seen around the vulva. She may be lethargic, off her food and feverish. If the cervix is closed, the pus is not able to drain from the womb and as it accumulates, the womb stretches to bursting point.

The bacteria release toxins in to the blood and these dogs may become seriously ill very quickly. They are often completely off food, listless and depressed and may have vomiting or diarrhoea.

Diagnosis

Our diagnosis will be based on the history you give us as well as our clinical examination. If we are concerned about pyometra we will recommend an ultrasound to check the womb and a blood test.



Treatment

Generally, we recommend surgical treatment to remove the womb and ovaries and therefore remove the infection. This is emergency surgery and if deemed necessary, must not be delayed.



If the cervix is open, it is sometimes possible to control the pyometra medically with hormone therapy. Antibiotics alone will not resolve the infection as it is being driven by hormones...the hormones themselves need to be targeted. Without treatment the condition is often fatal.

If surgery goes well, the majority of dogs will go on to make a full recovery. Relapses are more common if medical hormone treatments are opted for.

If you are concerned about pyometra in your dog, contact the practice to make an appointment on 01626 835002.



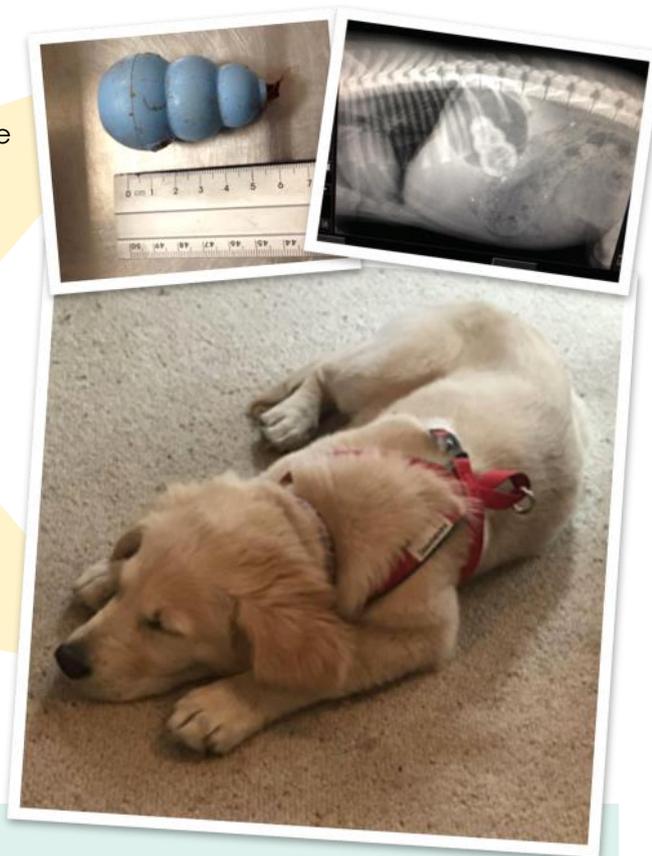
Pet Superstar

Since Daisy was a tiny puppy she has had a favourite Kong toy – one designed for little puppies. As she grew bigger she still loved this toy and chewed it under supervision. One day, Daisy was a naughty dog! Instead of just chewing the Kong, she decided to swallow it... whole. Quick as a flash. Her owners didn't even have a chance to take it off her.

We saw Daisy to remove the offending Kong toy. Once X-rays had been taken to confirm that she had swallowed it and locate where it was in the digestive tract, she was taken to surgery. Daisy did really well and had a smooth recovery afterwards.

Her owners wanted us to share this story to highlight how important it is to carefully select toys for your dog. Whilst the toy was perfect for a little puppy, as daisy grew bigger, the Kong became too small for her, and therefore a choking and swallowing hazard.

Remember to buy correctly sized toys for your pets, replace toys as your puppy grows and only buy reputable toys designed specifically for dogs.



Staff news

Across the South West (as well as nationally), there is a recruitment crisis amongst the veterinary profession. This includes both vets and vet nurses; there simply aren't enough around! The veterinary professions are soon expected to be added to the short occupation list, and the scarcity of these professionals means it can take a long time to recruit the right person for the job. This is why you may have seen the occasional unfamiliar face while we looked for new team members, but we have good news...

We have two new lovely nurses joining the team over the next month!

Genevieve joined us in October 2018. She has previously worked in referral hospitals and has a wealth of knowledge and cheerfulness to add to the team. Genevieve's skills don't stop there as she is also training to be a veterinary physiotherapist!



Amy joined us at the end of Autumn this year having previously worked in both first opinion and referral level small animal practices. We are all greatly looking forward to the skills and experience that Amy will bring to the Molecare team.



We also have some sad news. We are sorry to wave goodbye to our fantastic nurse Amy, who has been with the practice for many years and is a much loved member of our team. We are sure you all will also miss her greatly after the years of care she has devoted to your pets. We wish her every success in her next chapter. Good luck Amy!

