



New member of the Kitten to Cat team

We are delighted to welcome a new member of staff to the team at Kitten to Cat. Eva has worked as a veterinary nurse for five years. She qualified in June 2010 and soon realised the benefits of a calm cat only environment, making her a perfect addition to the team! Eva lives in Old Windsor with her partner Brian and cat Frank.

Wellness Package

There are multiple conditions and illnesses that can affect our feline patients as they begin to age. There will often be no obvious external signs in the early stages of these conditions, but if they are detected early, can be managed successfully providing increased longevity and quality of life

We have designed a 'Wellness Package' specifically for routine screening of the healthy cat aged seven years and older. The package includes blood pressure measurement, urine analysis and a comprehensive blood test which includes thyroid hormone level assessment. As a screening package, these tests are available at a cost of £122.80 for Kitten to Cat Health Club members and £138.15 for non health club members.

Monday is to become 'Visit' Day!

New in 2012, Kitten to Cat owner Zeta will be running a weekly 'visit' day.

If your puss cat doesn't take too kindly to trips to the vet and feels more secure at home, Zeta will be on the road on Mondays and able to come and visit you and your cat at home for routine and non routine consultations.

The visits will be run on an appointment basis so if you would like to arrange one please contact us at the clinic! New clients will need to come into the clinic to register first, but there is no need to bring your little nervous one along.

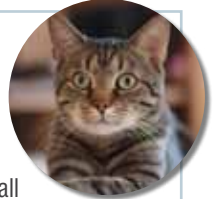


Good News! Luxury Boarding Reopened!

We are pleased to be able to announce that from January 2012 we are able to offer our boarding facilities again. As before, your feline family members will be cared for by fully qualified veterinary staff. We have a choice of our large walk in Salmon and Tuna suites or our slightly smaller but oh so comfortable Seahorse and Starfish mini suites.

Behavioural Talk

Renowned feline behavioural expert, **Francesca Riccomini** BSc(Hons) BVet Med, MRCVS, DipAS(CABC), CCAB, will be holding an evening talk in St Lukes Hall opposite the clinic April 19th. Francesca's previous talk proved to be extremely popular with our clients and we are delighted to be welcoming her back. The topic will be general feline behaviour with top tips on how to tackle some of the more common yet horribly frustrating problems encountered such as urinating in the house. There will be light refreshments and a raffle with prizes to be won on the night. If you or anyone you know would like to attend, please call or email the clinic to reserve your place.



Acupuncture at Kitten to Cat

Osteoarthritis (OA) in cats as they age is extremely common, and sadly probably under diagnosed. Incidence figures of around 20% in mature cats aged 8-13 years, and up to 90% in senior cats over 14 years of age, have been reported. Clinical signs of OA in cats can be subtle and therefore difficult for an owner to detect. Your cat may spend more time sleeping which you may simply associate with him or her getting a little older, but in fact, could be due to joint discomfort. Have you noticed your cat using a chair or footstool as a 'stepping' stone to get to a favourite spot on the sofa or vantage point from the window sill? Has your cat stopped coming upstairs to curl up on the bed with you at night time, instead choosing a warm spot on the ground floor to sleep? If you answered yes then it is possible your cat has OA.

So what can be done? Firstly simple home adjustments: softer deeper bedding to support sore joints; making sure litter tray sides are low enough for your cat to navigate comfortably, and thinking about whether the litter you use might be uncomfortable for tender paws to stand in; moving upstairs litter/feeding resources downstairs so your cat doesn't have to negotiate stairs every time he or she needs to relieve himself or have a drink; provide a step up to the sofa or bed. We also have several therapy options available to us. Hill's and Royal Canin both make high quality complete diets (j/d and mobility respectively) containing combinations of glucosamine, chondroitin, green lipped mussel and essential fatty acids. These have been clinically shown to aid joint function and comfort in species such as the dog and horse, and are believed to be beneficial in the cat also. If your cat is on a specific diet that cannot be changed, or you do not wish to change, there are a variety of palatable joint support supplements available containing similar ingredients.

We also have options for managing the pain associated with OA. Traditionally a class of drugs called non steroidal anti inflammatories have been used, but these are not without risk. Now it may not be the first treatment option you might consider for your furry family member but acupuncture can be hugely beneficial in treating an array of medical conditions seen in feline patients, including alleviating pain caused by OA.

Acupuncture is the technique of inserting thin needles through the skin at certain points on the body to control pain and other symptoms. The needles block and modulate pain messages that the brain receives and also stimulate the release of molecules that block pain transmission.

Emma, one of the vets at Kitten to Cat has several years experience in treating cats with acupuncture, after undergoing training run by the Association of British Veterinary Acupuncturists in 2008, and is very happy to accept acupuncture referrals. Furthermore if you think your cat may have OA, we have an arthritis screening option included in our new wellness package. Please contact the clinic on **020 8940 0014** or **info@kittentocat.com** for more information.

Happy Endings for our Feline Friends

On one chilly December morning Max, the gorgeous Maine Coon, was brought into my consult room looking very sorry for himself. Normally a mischievous and playful ball of fun, Max was lethargic, had an uncomfortable abdomen and hadn't eaten much over the last couple of days at all. He had also vomited a large amount that morning. His Mum and Dad were understandably worried about him, and so I decided to bring him in for further investigation.

When a cat presents with acute-onset gastrointestinal signs then there are a few questions that need to be asked: has their diet recently changed? Have they had access to any toxins (such as lilies or, more seasonally relevant, poinsettia)? Has the owner seen them eat or chew anything they shouldn't? Max is an indoor cat only and due to previously having tummy upsets as a kitten was only being given a sensitive diet food and there were no plants in the house. He was, however, an oversize kitten who loved to chew his toys...

So the first tests to be performed were blood tests to ascertain Max's organ function and see if there were any causes for concern. The blood test results showed signs consistent with gastrointestinal disease, but happily nothing else at this stage. He was dehydrated (due to lack of appetite and the vomiting) and so he was placed onto a drip to replace the fluids lost, given anti-nausea drugs to encourage him to eat and given pain relief to help relax his abdomen. Max was also spiking a temperature and so was started onto antibiotics. At this point it was highly possible that Max had just picked up a viral gastroenteritis and just needed supportive care. 24 hours later Max was much happier and more comfortable, but his abdomen was still tense and he was refusing to eat. Even though he hadn't eaten anything now for a couple of days he vomited fluid and bile as I lightly palpated his abdomen (which was very unusual) so I therefore decided to xray his abdomen. The xray showed lots of dilated loops of intestine indicating that gas was trapped against an obstruction and unable to pass along, increasing the suspicion of an ingested foreign body. There was only one decision: we had to open Max up and find the cause of the obstruction.

Max was anaesthetized and taken to surgery. Lodged in part of his small intestine I removed a 2-3cm piece of coloured foam that was preventing anything from passing. Two hours later Max was happily sat up in his cage recovering from the surgery and I was describing to the owners what we had found.. It transpired that Max had chewed his way through a sponge cat toy and unfortunately swallowed part of it whole! Although the owners had taken it away when they thought they saw Max starting to nibble it, it seems that he already done the damage.

Another 24hours later and Max was back to his normal happy and playful self – and causing chaos in the hospital with his antics: flicking water at us from his bowl and eating enough for a small horse! He was sent home on antibiotics and pain relief and has



continued to do well at his check-ups. Needless to say Max's Christmas stocking was free of all foam-related cat products!

Reassuringly for the owners, Max had been insured with Petplan since he was a kitten. The total cost of his bill to cover blood tests, xrays, three days and two nights monitoring in hospital on a drip and with surgery to remove the foreign body was £1600 – and this was thankfully without any further complications and with a relatively quick recovery. The owners were permitted to pay £90 of the total bill as an excess, and the rest was covered by the insurance policy – meaning that Max and his owners could still have the Christmas they wanted!

The moral of the story is that if you are planning to take on a kitten, or even if you have an older kitty that may need treatment in the future – look into getting them insured. Private healthcare for our little furries is costly and you don't want to be having to discuss costs at a time when your main concern is your cat's health.



Max isn't the only pusscat in the last few months who decided eating something other than food was a good idea! Vladena (left) ate a sewing needle which had to be removed from the hard palate and Webber (right) ate a penny which lodged in her small intestine. Thanks to the Marshalls, Hassals and Chapmans for allowing us to share their stories!