

a word from the boss...

Your Cat and Kidney Disease

"He's just not himself recently. He's become very picky with his food and has lost quite a bit of weight. Oh yes...and

I've noticed that he's drinking more than usual these days".

This is a very common starting point for a consultation when a middle aged or older cat is brought to us for treatment.

Several potential diagnoses go through the mind of the vet, but in many cases we are dealing with chronic kidney disease (CKD for short). One third of all cats over nine years of age will have some degree of kidney failure. Some cats show no signs of kidney disease until about two thirds of their kidney tissue has been damaged.

How does CKD develop?

In general it is the result of recurring infections, or age-related degenerative changes in the filtering mechanism of the kidneys. The kidneys are vital organs for life, and their primary role is to filter toxins from the blood stream to ensure that just the right amount of water and essential electrolytes are either excreted or reabsorbed as appropriate.

When the filter is damaged things begin to go wrong. Protein, which is normally kept in the blood stream, starts to leak out in increasing amounts into the urine - less water is retained - large amounts of dilute urine are produced. The blood pressure in the kidneys increases in an attempt to force them to work more efficiently, but all it does is lead to high blood pressure centrally, and further damage. Finally a complete imbalance occurs in blood electrolytes, which are crucial for health - e.g. high phosphate and low potassium levels.

Together, these effects lead to the principal signs of kidney failure

- ❖ Excess drinking
- ❖ Weight loss
- ❖ Weakness
- ❖ Reduced appetite
- ❖ In many cases anaemia

What can and should we do in these cases?

Well, as with all disease processes, the trick is to try catching them early! A combination of dietary management, medication to lower blood pressure and reduce protein loss together with antibiotics where appropriate, will all help control the symptoms of chronic kidney disease.

Early diagnosis using blood and urine tests can lead to early control. This can help ensure extra years of good quality life for our feline patients. So if your cat is 10 years or older, why not consider asking your vet to screen for early-stage kidney disease when you're next in the clinic?



With a little extra help from Louis

Blood transfusions for animals?... Yes, this does happen, and just this summer we had one particular animal who required some special help from another one of our four-legged friends. Severe blood loss in animals can happen for a variety of reasons, and it is vital that blood replacement therapy is given as soon as possible.

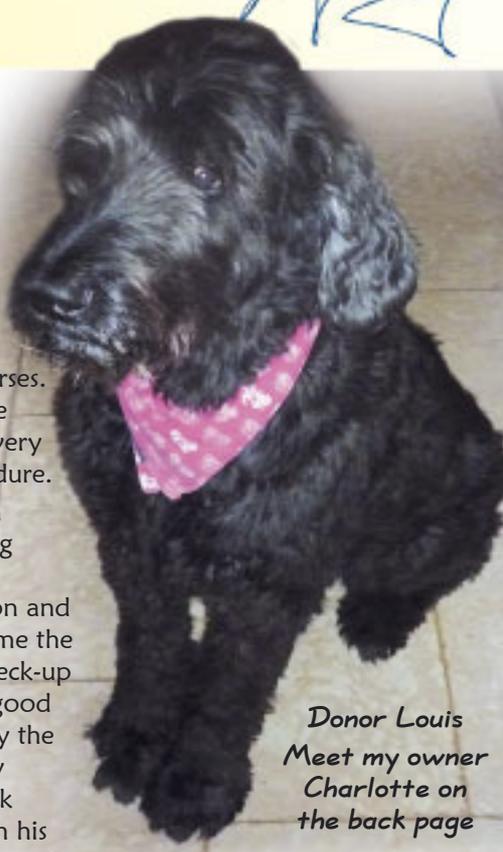
Our patient Charlie, a 12-year-old Staffordshire Bull Terrier. On the 4th August our client Mrs Gillett, brought her dog to the surgery. Charlie had collapsed, his gums were very pale and he was in shock. On examination, our vet Denise suspected a ruptured mass on his spleen and internal haemorrhaging. An emergency operation was needed, where a tumour was found and successfully removed. It weighed 2.25kg!

The operation went well, but Charlie's condition remained serious as blood samples showed a critically low red blood cell count, so it was decided that an immediate blood transfusion was required.

Donor Louis, a 10-year-old Briard.

He belongs to Charlotte one of our nurses. At 9.30pm, a brave Louis arrived at the surgery ready to give blood, and was very patient while we performed the procedure.

Charlie was given his blood transfusion throughout the night, and the following morning, his blood count showed an improvement. After further observation and care, he was well enough to return home the next evening. At his post-operative check-up on 7th August, he was found to be in good health and on the road to recovery. By the 14th August, we saw a bright and lively Charlie at our clinic with healthy pink gums. His stitches removed and with his appetite back, this was now one happy dog again. So well done Charlie for coping and recovering so well from your ordeal, and thank you to Louis for being such a star!



Donor Louis
Meet my owner
Charlotte on
the back page



Meet our staff Tanya and Charlotte

With seven dogs and three horses at home to care for, **Charlotte Goss** is a very busy lady with animals in and out of surgery life! In 2008 she gained her degree in Equine Breeding and Stud Management (Bsc hons), and is currently training for her Veterinary Nurse qualification. Once she has achieved

this, Charlotte would like to further her knowledge by completing the Advanced Veterinary Nursing Diploma. She joined us at Marks Farm in November 2009, and finds all aspects of the job very rewarding. Charlotte enjoys many outdoor hobbies such as horse riding and competing in events, skiing, working her Cocker Spaniel Tinkerbelle, water skiing and spending time with friends.

Tanya with Tara and her horses



When **Tanya Hallums** saw an ad in May 2009 for a vacancy to cover receptionist maternity leave, she decided this would be the perfect job for her. Now over a year later, she has become a permanent member of our reception staff, and efficiently keeps our front desk running smoothly. As a pet owner herself, she is able to relate to and deal with the many queries and concerns that our clients

have about their own much-loved pets. Tanya really enjoys working within our dedicated group, and is a real asset to our team. Keeping her busy outside of reception duties are her two horses Shannon and Jack, rescue dogs Springer Spaniel Toby, and German Shepherd Cross Tara, Bailey the cat and two guinea pigs Caramel and Honey....and not forgetting the tortoise that Tanya found while out riding 30 years ago!

Summer Stork Delivery

Congratulations go to our Veterinary Nurse Lucy and her husband Alan, on the birth of their daughter Matilda Elizabeth Margaret Auld on 10th June 2010 weighing 5lbs 14oz. Born at 8.24pm, just a couple of hours after Mum got to the hospital, the new parents and Matilda were all back home again by 1am. Quick work!

So how are you enjoying parenthood Lucy?

"No-one in the world can prepare you for your first child, she was a real shock to the system. Even with my past experience of hand rearing kittens, puppies and fledglings - this was a whole new ball game! The first three weeks were mega intense; sleep deprivation is like a form of torture. Luckily Alan had two weeks off and was brilliant, I couldn't have managed without his help. However, now we are loving it. Matilda is sleeping through the night, and I cannot imagine our lives without her. She smiles, makes lots of lovely noises and we are totally addicted to her. She gets so many kisses I have to remember not to squidge her too tightly! Our pet dog Thomas and the cats are not bothered by her at all, and are getting along famously. Matilda's already asking me to get her a little ginger kitten, but Daddy says a definite NO! As you can see by the picture, she's sitting next to her mate 'Too' aka 'Wonder Cat'. It's even more of a mad house here now - I go around talking to the dog, cats, chickens and now Matilda. I'm sure the people in the village think I am a complete nutcase!"



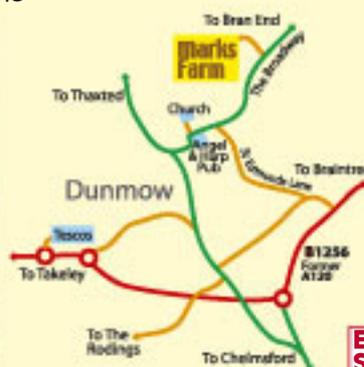
Charlotte



NEWS IN SHORT

- ❖ Welcome back to receptionist Clare, who has returned after maternity leave. Fletcher her son is over a year old now and walking!
- ❖ Congratulations to Holly, who this summer passed her Animal Nursing Assistant (ANA) course from Writtle College, Chelmsford. She continues with her studies, as she is now training to become a qualified Veterinary Nurse. Good Luck Holly.
- ❖ Caroline is enjoying the new addition to her family of cats - Delilah, a very cute little black kitten.
- ❖ Freezing temperatures and torrential rain is the last thing you would expect to experience in late summer, but on the 28th August Jerry climbed Ben Nevis in Scotland and survived these horrendous weather conditions. With two other members of his family, they made it to the summit in 4hrs 20 mins, and as it got colder and wetter the higher they climbed, Jerry realised he'd forgotten his gloves. So the spare pair of socks in his rucksack came in 'very handy' so to speak! Descent took 3hrs 10mins and although soaked and pretty tired, a great sense of achievement was enjoyed through completing this challenging climb.

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