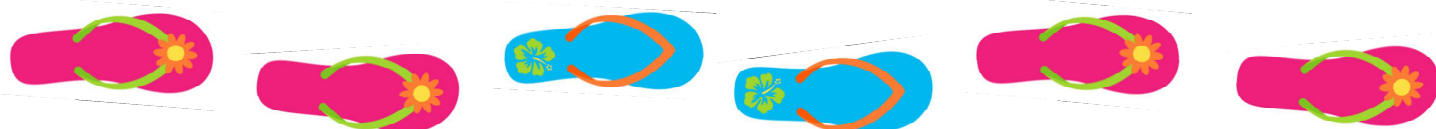


VIKING NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2015
IN THIS EDITION:

LATEST GOSSIP
DENTAL CARE
MULTI-CAT HOUSEHOLDS





Latest gossip

We have recently updated our website, why not check it out at: <http://www.vikingvets.com/> to keep up to date with the latest news and events. We would love to hear your feedback on what you think.

We will be raising awareness on wildlife do's and don'ts throughout July and running a collection for Secret World to help with the amazing work they do for our wildlife. If you find an injured wild animal it is advisable to observe it first to see how badly injured it is. If the animal doesn't appear to be injured, **DO NOT PICK IT UP**. Please leave the animal alone and leave the area for at least two hours. If you return after a period of 2 hours and the animal is still in the same place it is advisable to contact a wildlife rescue centre. If you find yourself in a situation with a wild animal and are unsure of what to do, you can contact Secret World for advice on 01278 783250 or you can contact ourselves on 0117 9505888.

The Viking staff had a VIP tour at Secret World to see some of the work they do and had a chance to meet some of the british wildlife currently being rehabilitated there.

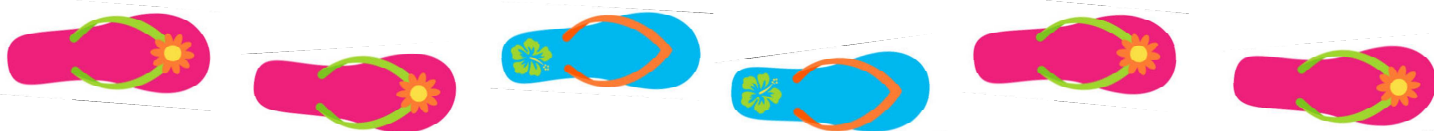
During August we will be running a dental campaign to raise awareness of the importance of good dental hygiene in our pets. We will be offering dental scale and polish FROM £80 during August so to take up this offer please make an appointment with our dental nurse or call us on 0117 9505888 to find out more.

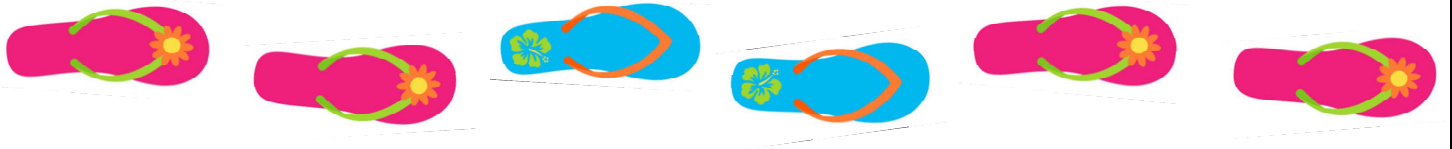
Viking Vets had a stall at the Bristol and Wales cat rehoming show in March to raise awareness of our new gold standard cat friendly facilities. It was a great opportunity to speak to the public about our new facilities and see Bristol and Wales cat rescue in action! The event was a great success with 20 cats finding new homes! We also raised £60 for the rescue centre in our 'Find the Id chip in the tiger' competition.



Amy joined the Viking Vets team in September to fill the position of kennel maid. She has finished her third year at the University of Bristol studying Veterinary science. She has been working with animals for 9 years and wants to become a small animal veterinary surgeon. She spends her spare time looking after her pet rat Yellow and enjoys going to the theatre.

We are sad to say goodbye to a member of our nursing team, Jenna, who left us in April. We wish her the best of luck in her new job and every happiness for the future!





Dental care for cats and dogs

Why is dental care so important?

Dental disease is VERY common and most animals at some point during their lives will suffer from dental problems. Poor dental hygiene can cause severe pain and discomfort for many pets. Bacteria from the mouth can enter the blood stream causing problems or exacerbating previous ailments elsewhere such as the heart, kidneys or liver. Dental disease is often considered an older pet problem but unfortunately animals of all ages can suffer. For this reason prevention is the best option.

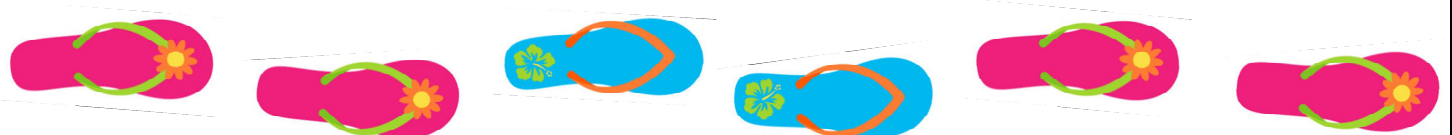
How will I know if my pet has bad teeth?

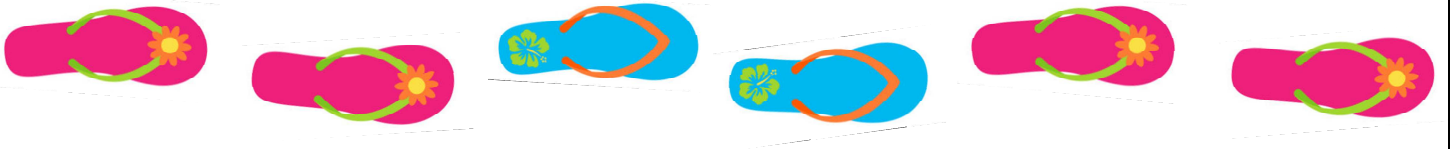
Animals are very good at hiding when they are in pain or discomfort and don't tend to stop eating food. Have a look in your pet's mouth for any of the following:

- Plaque (a white/grey sticky film which builds up on the teeth)
- Tartar/calculus – This is when plaque mineralises, it is a hard substance and looks chalky/yellow or brown
- Gingivitis (reddened gums) – this tends to start where the gum meets the tooth
- Halitosis (bad breath)
- Compare both sides of the mouth, the teeth/gums should be almost symmetrical
- Check for worn or fractured teeth

If you are unable to look in your pet's mouth some other signs that could indicate dental disease are:

- Dribbling
- Brown saliva or a stained coat after your pet has groomed themselves
- Trouble eating or only eating on one side
- Bleeding from the mouth
- Discharge from the eyes, nose or mouth
- Swelling around the mouth





How can I care for my pet's teeth?

The best way of caring for your pet's teeth is much the same way we look after our own. There are many different products on the market to help with dental hygiene but the most beneficial is to brush your pet's teeth at least 4 times a week, any less than this won't be enough to keep plaque at bay. It is very important to use a pet friendly toothpaste as human ones aren't designed to be swallowed and can be harmful. Introduce the whole process slowly to your pet and they will be more accepting of having their teeth brushed. A finger brush or a baby toothbrush is ideal to use and are small enough to reach the back of the mouth. A video of how to brush your pet's teeth can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbTeao2Vb9k>

We can advise on the many different products and diets on offer and recommend dental home care individualised to your pet.

Healthy teeth



Dog

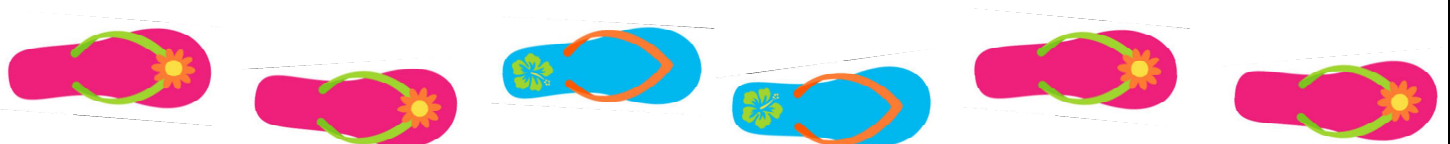


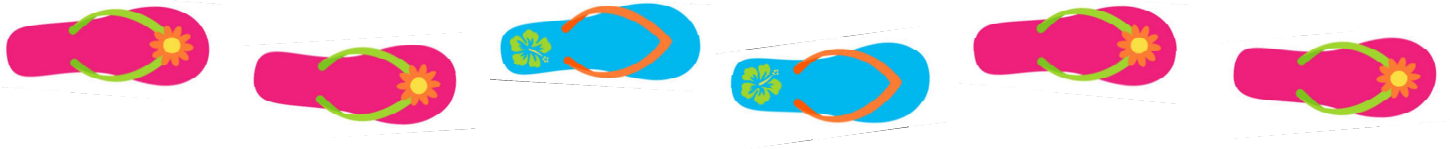
Cat

Services we offer?

- Dental check with our nurse (free of charge) where your pet's teeth will be examined and dental care discussed.
- If more than home care is required we can scale and polish your pet's teeth, perform extractions and take x-rays (this is performed under general anaesthesia).
- Follow up dental appointments are available to help ensure your pet's teeth remain in a good condition and dental disease is avoided.
- Hill's Vet Essentials Diet Range- available at Viking, this diet has integrated tooth technology that reduces plaque and tartar build-up to keep teeth and gums healthy.

If you have any concerns about your pet's oral health, please do not hesitate to contact us





The Multi-Cat Household

Many people open their homes and hearts to our feline friends and want to provide them with the best care. However, the assumption that cats need the company of their own species is based on the human perception of sociability. This article looks into the multi-cat household and how to minimise stress for the feline residents.

Cats are capable of forming strong social bonds with other cats as long as they are compatible individuals; however, they are generally very territorial animals that prefer to live alone. Some cats can become easily stressed if they have to share resources such as feeding stations, litter trays and beds which can result in behaviour problems.

Strong indicators of sociability between cats include chirrups when greeting each other, sleeping together, grooming each other, rubbing against each other to exchange scent and playing together.

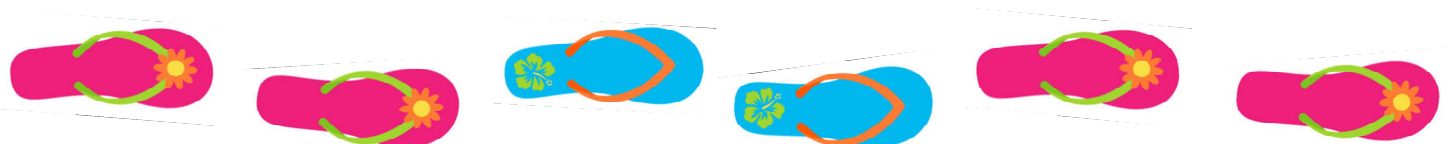
In the domestic situation we provide our cats with enough food; however they are still highly motivated to protect their territory and may feel threatened by each other's presence. So what are the causes of inter-cat aggression? There could be a number of reasons why cats are not getting on in the house including:

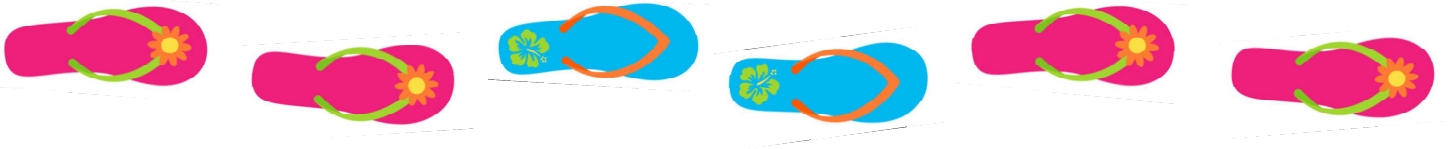
- ❖ Incompatibility of cats in same household.
- ❖ Invasion of the core environment (your home) by another cat.
- ❖ Re-directed aggression (from one cat to another) triggered by a threat from an external source.
- ❖ Return from hospital or an absence from the household (failure to be recognised due to scent change).
- ❖ Introduction of a new cat.
- ❖ Misdirected predatory play.

There are a few subtle signs that may indicate that your multi-cat home is not a happy home. Signs can include staring which can be threatening to the other cat and pouncing on a sleeping cat. Some cats may claim access to owners or resting places resulting in the other cat hiding away or becoming less affectionate. The more dominant cat may also block thorough-fares by sitting directly in front of the cat flap denying entry and exit to desired areas. They may also block access to litter trays indoors resulting in unwanted elimination in the house.

To minimise the need for social conflict it is important to provide the cat with plenty of resources and enrichment opportunities. Here are a few key suggestions to help keep harmony in the home.

Feeding- It is recommended to have several feeding stations as cats do not like to feed together and if they are made to do so this could cause more tension between the cats. Providing dry food





allows the cats to graze and it should be hidden in various locations around the house making them work for their food and providing enrichment. Wet food can still be fed but it is advisable to split into several small meals throughout the day. Water bowls should be located in different areas to the food as cats do not like them close together. Cats in multi-cat households are unlikely to override social tension to get to water which can be a risk factor for medical conditions such as cystitis.

Private resting places- It is important to provide high resting places, beds and private areas in a sufficient number. This allows the cats to choose their favourite area and keep a vigilant look out on their core territory. Shelving can provide an excellent sanctuary if a small area is cleared for the cat's use and allows them to observe events. The private areas should allow the cats time out from the owner and other cats. These places can include under the bed, inside cupboards or wardrobes or even behind the sofa. The cat should never be disturbed while using these areas to allow them to hide without fear of being discovered.

Scratching posts- sufficient scratching posts should be available and located near beds, feeding stations and entrances. This allows the cat to maintain their claws and mark their territory in areas of potential competition; it also allows the cats to timeshare areas.

Litter trays- there should be one litter tray per cat in different locations plus one extra for choice. The locations should be discreet, away from feeding stations and water bowls and busy thoroughfares. Providing sufficient litter trays will help reduce stress in the multi-cat household and avoid conflict.

Entry/ Exit points- There should ideally be two separate entry and exit points to the property to avoid the risk of guarding or blocking of this area. This can be done through cat flaps, doors or windows and allows the cats to get indoors and outdoors unhindered.

Pheromones- There are synthetic pheromone products such as Feliway, to help create a relaxing atmosphere for cats. Diffusers of these products should be used in the room which is most frequented by the cats and is a safe and happy area for them. It should not be placed in an area where conflict has occurred. Scent sharing may also develop the bond between the cats (if they are not already doing this themselves by rubbing together, grooming each other or sleep touching). This can be done by wiping a linen cloth across the cat's cheek area to pick up its scent and then presenting it to the other cat (and vice versa) by placing it nearby when they are playing or feeding. This will hopefully give the scent a positive reinforcement.

Reducing competition for resources should reduce stress in the multi-cat household and prevent fighting. These are initial steps to try to create a more harmonious environment for multi-cat households and in some cases further steps may need to be taken. For further information please contact us on 0117 9505888 as we have dedicated cat advocates that will be happy to help.

