

The Pets Choice Newsletter

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once bitten

Sandie is a young, friendly & very inquisitive Labrador retriever bitch.

In early June, she was out walking on Cleeve Hill. Suddenly, she leapt 8 feet in the air & let out a loud cry. Her owners, familiar with the possibility of a snake bite rushed to the scene to find an adder disappearing into the undergrowth.



When examined at the Leckhampton surgery shortly after the incident, swelling was evident in the jowl & ventral neck.

Sandie was hospitalized to facilitate intravenous fluid therapy together with the administration of antibiotics & shock-reducing corticosteroid therapy. Fortunately, the swelling abated & no progression of the symptoms occurred.

Following the discharge of Sandie, treatment comprised prophylactic antibiotic therapy, administered at home. A speedy & full recovery was seen.



Snake bite is commonly seen each year in the Cotswold Hills surrounding Cheltenham.

If a snake bite is suspected, the surgery should be contacted immediately on **01242 234 392**, and the patient presented for examination & treatment as soon as possible.

Any delay lessens the chances of a successful outcome & generally leads to a more prolonged recovery period.

In extreme cases, snake bites may prove fatal.

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Kidney failure, Diabetes or Hyperthyroidism



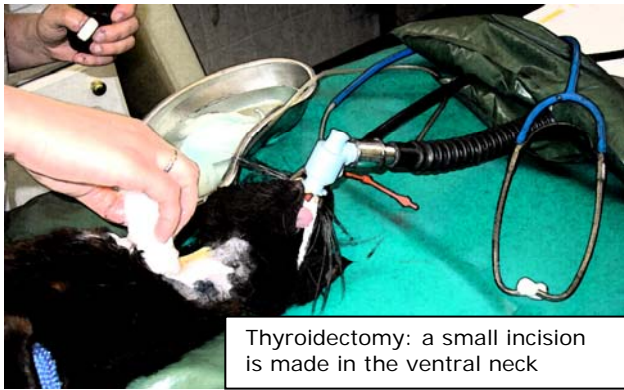
Weight loss together with an increased thirst in older cats is often associated with either kidney failure or diabetes. A third & surprisingly common differential diagnosis that presents with similar signs is feline hyperthyroidism.

Mammals have two thyroid glands, one on each side of the neck located just below the larynx or Adams Apple.

Older cats commonly develop a benign tumour in one of these glands later in life. This leads to an increased production of Thyroid Hormone, which in turn increases the speed of the body's metabolism.

If hyperthyroidism remains untreated, the disease will lead to dramatic weight loss & may cause liver & heart failure.

Diagnosis of hyperthyroidism & elimination of diabetes & kidney disease can be done by performing blood tests at the surgery.



The disease may be treated medically by the administration of tablets daily for life. Alternatively, the diseased gland may be removed surgically under a general anaesthetic.

Medicating cats with tablets is notoriously difficult & intolerance to the medication is sometimes seen. As a consequence, in most cases we recommend initial medical treatment to stabilise the patient followed several weeks later by surgical removal of the diseased thyroid gland.

Surgical removal of the thyroid gland is necessarily performed in older cats often with weakened hearts & in relatively poor body condition.

The anaesthetic risks are therefore significantly higher than those seen with other forms of soft-tissue surgery. Close monitoring of the patient throughout the anaesthetic with specialised equipment together with the right choice of anaesthetic agents ensure that an extremely high success rate is achieved with this operation.

Five Thyroidectomy operations were performed in May & June at the Leckhampton Surgery on cats ranging from 13 to 18 years of age. In each case a smooth anaesthetic was seen & a full & rapid recovery achieved following surgery.

Ironically, because the body is functioning at a higher rate of metabolism immediately following surgery, full recovery from surgery is often seen within 7 days.

As the thyroid levels fall to normal levels, body weight is normally restored to healthy levels within several weeks.



Rupert is comforted shortly following recovery from the anaesthetic

