

# Animal Care Knowledge Organiser

A.1

## MONITORING THE SIGNS OF GOOD AND ILL HEALTH

Why **daily visual checks** are carried out:

- To minimise stress to the animal
- To check for changes in behaviour and health
- Change handling if the animal is: pregnant, very young, ill, aggressive, venomous or poisonous.

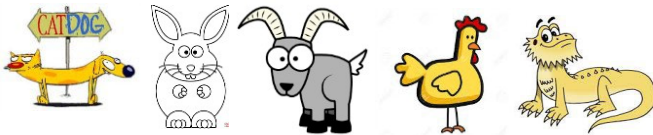
### Behaviour and temperament visual checks:

Observe when animal is in a stress-free state to:

- Get a more accurate observation.
- Know what stressed animals look like.

- Assessing temperament may also indicate when the animal is not suitable for handling for a physical health check
- Impact of overall temperament of animal (scared, aggressive, friendly, playful) on choice of equipment needed to restrain animal

NORMAL	ILL	STRESSED
1/CD Alert, responsive	Aggression, fear, stress	Panting, crouched looking away
2/R responsive	Withdrawn, lethargic	Large eyes, tense, ears back, flinching
3/G walking, chewing,, grazing responsive	Lethargic, loud, not eating, alone	Butting, bleating pawing, alone
4/C walking, alert scratching, pecking	Lethargic, not eating, loud, alone	Loud, pacing aggressive
5/BD responsive, basking, moving	Lethargic, placid, hissing, puffed	Not eating lethargic Erratic shedding



1CD

2R

3G

4C

5BD

### Posture and movement visual checks:

Signs of pain vocalisation ,hunched posture reluctant or slow to move, a limb not being used, or limping, holding limbs or head in an unusual position or to one side.



### Urine colour checks:

#### • Healthy urine colour:

- o light straw colour in dogs, cats and goats
- o light straw colour including dark orange or red tinges in rabbits

#### • Signs of unhealthy urination, including:

- blood or pus in the urine (indication of infection)
- **Chickens and bearded dragons** do not produce urine but a semi-solid product called urates, which are passed in combination with faecal matter.

## Faecal consistency and colour checks

healthy	unhealthy
1/ CD - well formed, cigar shaped, dark brown	Off colour, bloody. Soft or liquid
2/ R -dry pellets. sticky clumped pellets (caecotrophs) are eaten	Runny
3/G- small round dark brown pellets	Loose, pale
4/ 5/C BD - white urates (crystal urine), dark section (faeces)	Off colour, bloody, liquid or soft.

### Food and water intake checks:

#### check daily –

- all food is eaten.
- water consumption is normal.

**problems over time** – increased consumption with no weight gain or reduced consumption with weight loss .

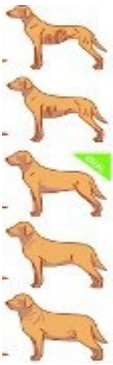
- measure and record food eaten/water drunk over a period of time to monitor changes.

#### General appearance checks (species specific):

- look at overall appearance for any signs that a more in-depth health check may be necessary, including:
  - o obvious signs of discharge from eyes or nose
  - o signs of excessive scratching
  - o bald patches/damaged scales or skin

### body condition of mammals (body condition score):

- 1 –Ribs, spine and pelvic bones are easily visible, obvious loss of muscle mass, no palpable fat on the chest
- 2 –Ribs, spine and pelvic bones visible, obvious waist, minimal abdominal fat
- 3 –Ribs, spine and pelvic bones not visible but easily palpable (felt through skin), obvious waist, little abdominal fat
- 4 –Ribs, spine and pelvic bones are hardly palpable, waist is absent, heavy abdominal fat deposits
- 5 –There are massive fat deposits over chest, spine and abdomen, lack of waist, distended abdomen.



## Weekly physical checks – more in-depth Start with eyes (clean hands)

healthy	Ill health
<b>eyes</b> – clear, bright round, no discharge	Discharge, 3 <sup>rd</sup> eye, cloudy, bloodshot
<b>ears</b> – movable, clean, responsive, warm	Unresponsive, dirty, head tilt, mites, wax
<b>nose</b> – moist (rabbit dry), clean, no discharge	Dry and cracked (rabbit wet), discharge, crusty
<b>mouth/teeth</b> – teeth present, pink gums Chicken beak even	Missing or overgrown teeth, bad breath, drooling, red gums, overgrown beak
 <b>coat</b> – full, glossy	Dull, greasy, knots, patchy
<b>skin</b> – elastic, no bumps/ cuts, not red Scales – flat, shiny, even	Flaky, red, swellings, cuts, not elastic Scales – stick out, uneven
<b>feet, paws, hooves</b> – free moving	Cuts, tender, dirty, holding up.
<b>claws hooves</b> - good length, no splits (cats retracted when walking)	Cracked, overgrown, uneven, curled. Overgrown hoof tips, red
<b>Anogenital</b> - clean, hot red, empty glands	Red, swollen, discharge, faeces, worms, impacted

# A.2 Recording Health Assessments

- record on paper-based health check sheets and databases
- record the following identifying information: species/breed, pet name, identification mark (microchip number, freeze brand, breed ring for pedigree rabbits), age, sex

A.2

## A.2 Quantitative Checks

**WEIGHT ASSESSMENT** - Weigh monthly (goats 6-12 months) in grams or kilograms. Young and pregnant should gain, older should gradually lose weight. If weight gain/ loss is unusual, weigh more often (illness?) Zero scales/ use a container if the animal moves (subtract the container weight)/ goats use a specialised crush.

**TEMPERATURE** - TPR (temperature, pulse, respiration)  
Use a digital thermometer anally. Check batteries-switch on to check power-check case for cracks (damage)-check suitable size-sterilize. Restrain animal securely then apply a small amount of aqueous-based lubricant to the bulb end of the thermometer. Insert thermometer gently into the anus with a gentle twisting action, with thermometer pointing upward at a gentle angle so that it touches the top of the rectum. Hold in this position for 30-60 seconds (depending on instructions) then remove, clean and read temperature.

**PULSE** - measured in beats per minute (BPM)  
- is always taken with fingers, not the thumb (because of faint pulse in the human thumb)  

- taking an animal's pulse: safely restrain the animal/ find the artery with the fingers (usually the femoral artery)/ apply firm pressure to the artery using at least two fingers/ count the pulsations for 1 minute
- abnormalities in animal pulse rates** could be a sign of: Anxiety, stress, infection (ill health), shock, exercise/ **slow heart rates** can be caused by sleep, unconsciousness or hypothermia
- high heart rates** (tachycardia) can be caused by stress, pain, early shock, exercise, excitement and fear.

 Respiration is measured in breaths per minute  
 -observe the animal when at rest (not sleeping or panting)  
 -watch the movement of the chest, counting either breaths in or out (but not both) for 1 minute

**RESPIRATION** - measured in breaths per minute.  
Process for measuring respiration:  
 - Observe the animal at rest (not sleeping or panting).  
 - Watch movement of chest, counting EITHER breaths in or out for 1 min.

**VET PRACTICE CHECKS**  
 egg count - every 3-6 months, collect faecal samples screen for intestinal parasites  
 blood test - presence of bacteria, increased white blood cell count, calcium levels, magnesium levels and sugar levels  
 Urine test- presence of blood, sugar and bacteria  
 TPR checks- temperature/ pulse/ respiration

# T.P.R.

## TEMPERATURE ABNORMALITIES

## RESPIRATION ABNORMALITIES

SHOCK, circulatory collapse, giving birth.	BACTERIAL/viral infection, severe pain).	HYPOTHERMIA (Reduced temperature)	HYPERTHERMIA (Raised temperature) Heat stroke, exercise, pain, seizures).	PYREXIA (A fever)	DOGS, CATS, RABBITS, GOATS AND CHICKENS	Symptoms	Slow or decreased breathing rate.	BRADYPNOEA
						Cause	Sleep, unconsciousness or hypothermia.	TACHYPNOEA
Shock, circulatory collapse, giving birth.	Bacterial/viral infection, severe pain).	HYPOTHERMIA (Reduced temperature)	HYPERTHERMIA (Raised temperature) Heat stroke, exercise, pain, seizures).	PYREXIA (A fever)	DOGS, CATS, RABBITS, GOATS AND CHICKENS	Rapid or increased breathing rate.	Rapid or increased breathing rate.	TACHYPNOEA
						Cause	Stress, pain, fever, exercise, excitement or fear.	DYSYPNOEA
Shock, circulatory collapse, giving birth.	Bacterial/viral infection, severe pain).	HYPOTHERMIA (Reduced temperature)	HYPERTHERMIA (Raised temperature) Heat stroke, exercise, pain, seizures).	PYREXIA (A fever)	DOGS, CATS, RABBITS, GOATS AND CHICKENS	Difficulty in breathing.	Difficulty in breathing.	DYSYPNOEA
								Cause
Shock, circulatory collapse, giving birth.	Bacterial/viral infection, severe pain).	HYPOTHERMIA (Reduced temperature)	HYPERTHERMIA (Raised temperature) Heat stroke, exercise, pain, seizures).	PYREXIA (A fever)	DOGS, CATS, RABBITS, GOATS AND CHICKENS	Difficulty in breathing.	Difficulty in breathing.	DYSYPNOEA
								Cause

HYPERTHERMIA  
(Raised temperature)  
Heat stroke, exercise, pain, seizures).

HYPERTHERMIA  
(Raised temperature)  
Heat stroke, exercise, pain, seizures).

# B: Diseases causes transmission treatment

B.1/2

## B.2 modes of transmission



### BACTERIA

(e.g. Leptospira):  
 -single-celled  
 -invisible to the naked eye  
 -Do not need a host to survive  
 -Has a cell wall

### VIRUS

-Not a living cell - only reproduce in plant or animal cells (need a host to survive)  
 -Only visible under a microscope  
 -Do not have a cell wall (have a protein coat)

### FUNGI -

Include mould, yeast, mushroom  
 -Many can be seen by the eye - Many live in the environment  
 - They do not need a host to survive.

- Direct contact:** occurs when one part of an animal comes into contact with the body of another animal (e.g. when skin surfaces touch, or one animal licks another's body)
- Indirect contact:** occurs when two or more animals come into contact with the same materials (bodily secretions : blood, saliva, vomit, faeces, mucus, sneeze droplets) or inanimate objects (bedding, food bowls, drinking bottles, accommodation, fencing). They act as a source of infection .
- Vector transmission:** disease is spread by biting insects and ticks (they carry the disease but are not affected by the disease).

**Zoonotic diseases:**  
 -can be transmitted from animals to humans  
 -some parasites can also be defined as zoonotic.

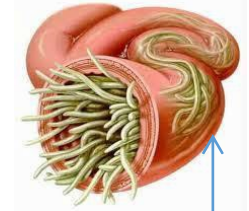
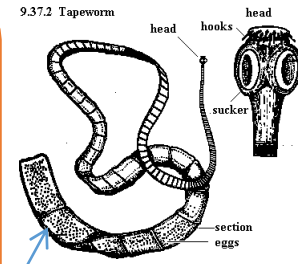
**Notifiable diseases:**  
 -A disease named in the Animal Health Act 1981 (or an Order made under that Act)  
 -Must be reported immediately to the local authorities, vet., animal health officer or Defra (reduce disruption to the food, farming and tourism industries and to protect public health). -either a health risk to humans or extremely contagious; infected animals are isolated/ possibly killed and carcasses disposed of safely -include rabies, avian influenza (bird flu), and foot and mouth disease.

### Prevention of diseases, including:

- Vaccination:** modified bacteria or virus is injected into the animal -stimulates the immune system to fight it off. If the animal is infected by the same microorganism their immune system can respond faster
- Good husbandry techniques** - cleaning and disinfecting animal equipment (housing, fencing, bedding, food bowls, water bottles)
- Measures to prevent spread of disease:** isolation of sick animals , quarantine of new animals to prevent spreading , culling and euthanasia.

# B.2 Common diseases in animals

	Salmonella (bacteria)	Myxomatosis (virus)	Ring worm (fungus)
Symptom	Effects all but more common in reptiles and birds./ zoonotic/high temperature/ prolonged diarrhoea/ Lethargy/ weight loss/ septicaemia (blood poison)	Lumps over the body, swelling of eyes, head and genitals/ conjunctivitis (yellow/green discharge - eyes)/ Lethargy, loss of appetite/ fever, <b>secondary bacterial infections</b> e.g. pneumonia from low immune system	<b>In mammals zoonotic</b> raised red circular lesions / hair loss/ excessive scratching and thickening of the skin.
Treatment	-Fluids to replace loss from Diarrhoea -electrolytes -antibiotics -Anti-diarrhoeal drugs	-Keep the animal warm and comfortable -Bath eyes with warm water -Fluids -Antibiotics for <b>secondary bacterial</b> infections	-Antifungal creams -Antibiotics to treat secondary skin infections may be needed if the animal has scratched and damaged the skin
Prevention	-Quarantine new animals -Isolate infected animals -Good hygiene/ control of pests (rats, mice, flies).	Vaccinate yearly, every six months in areas where it is common control insects (flea treatment, mosquito screens) Isolate sick rabbits	-Clean, disinfect enclosures and fences. -Isolate infected animals -PPE (disposable gloves, overalls)



Roundworm

## C.1



## Ectoparasites



	Flea	Tick	Mite
Description	Small, six-legged, wingless insect that possesses specially adapted legs for jumping and specialised mouth parts for piercing skin and sucking the blood of their host.	-Small, 8-legged, wingless arachnid/piercing mouth/ sucks mammal blood/ adult females feed/ saliva has a mild anaesthetic and anticoagulant. It stops blood clotting so they keep feeding	Small, eight-legged, wingless arachnid. A burrowing parasite. Feeds on the skin of mammals, zoonotic so take care when handling animals and bedding suspected of mite infestation
Symptoms	-Scratching/ biting fur/ patchy fur loss/ thickening of skin/flea dirt /red, irritated skin/fleas may be visible/ some are allergic to flea saliva/ young/ old - weak & lethargic	Visible grey dots attached on the skin mostly commonly where there is little or no hair on the animal/ fever/ lameness / lethargy /joint pain	Hair loss (alopecia), excessive scratching , crusty skin which can be broken by excessive scratching and become infected
Prevention treatment	Treatments applied directly to the skin/fur, sprays, tablets injections or shampoos -regular washing of pet bedding or removal of dirty pet bedding / vacuuming carpets and disposing vacuum bags/ treat the area to kill flea eggs and larvae and break the life cycle.	Tick tweezers—grab hold of head- twist anticlockwise until tick comes away from animal - ensure the whole tick has been removed/ suffocate tick with petroleum jelly. -treat on animal's fur, sprays, tick repellent collars/ avoid common	Can't prevent infestation. Severe infestation likely when immune system is low (stress, ill health). Keep animals away from areas known for foxes (often infested). Treat on skin/fur, sprays, shampoos, powders. More drastic treatments- lime sulfur dip/ other organophosphate dip (may be toxic, so wear PPE including overalls, gloves and face masks).

tick areas

## C.2

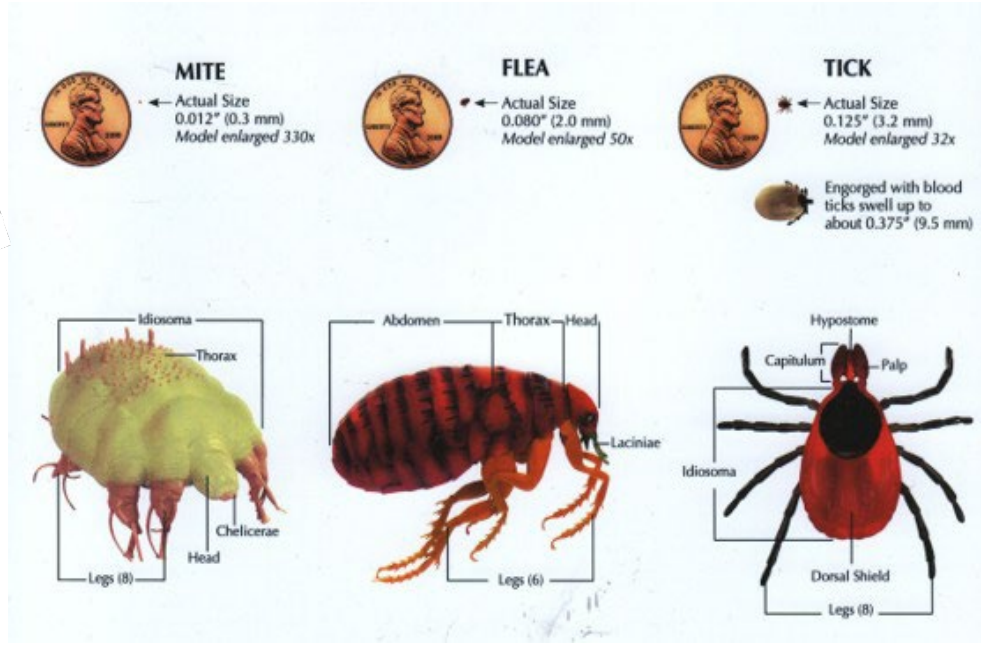
## Endoparasites

	Tapeworm	Roundworm
Description picture	The head end is called the scolex, which the tapeworm uses to attach itself to the intestinal lining of its host. Common in dogs and cats, but less so in rabbits.	Long, round worm which looks like white earthworms/ strands of spaghetti. Found in young cats (toxocara cati) and young dogs (toxocara canis).
Transmission	Zoonotic. Take care when handling infected animals, especially when dealing with their faeces (wear and dispose of gloves safely).	Zoonotic. Take care when handling infected animals, especially when dealing with their faeces (wear and dispose of gloves safely).
Signs	Bloated abdomen. Vomiting, diarrhoea, weight loss . Worm segments visible in faeces. Anal irritation indicated by 'scooting' (sitting down and dragging themselves across the floor) . Excessive licking around the anus.	Coughing , vomiting (worms may be visible in the vomit), diarrhoea, lethargy, bloated abdomen, severe infestations can lead to secondary problems such as pneumonia when larval worms migrate into the lungs
Prevention and treatment	Apply treatments to the skin/fur, tablets or liquids/paste . Good hygiene. Good ectoparasite control (because fleas are part of the dog/cat tapeworm life cycle, mites play a role in rabbit tapeworm).	Apply treatments to the skin/fur, tablets or liquids/paste .Females should be treated prior to breeding to prevent larvae migrating through the placenta, and puppies and kittens should be wormed early.

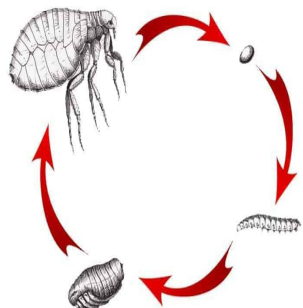


# ECTOPARASITES

# VACCINATIONS



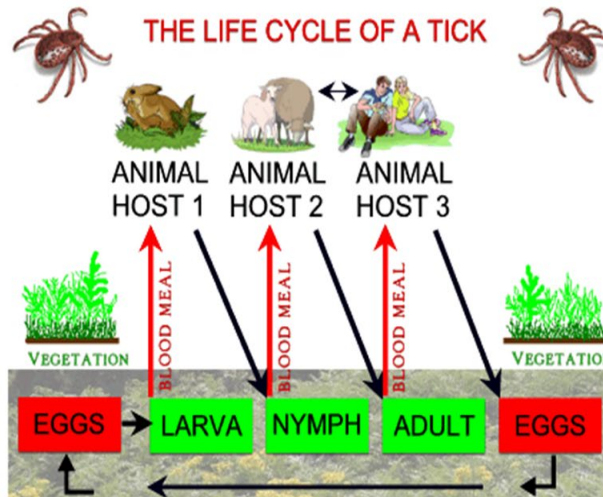
## LIFECYCLE OF A FLEA



**EGGS** – Hatch releasing flea larvae. (2-5 days)

**LARVAE** – Feed on dust and dirt, spinning a cocoon (7-20 days)

**ADULTS** – Hatch and jump onto host. (7 days)



## Dogs can be vaccinated for



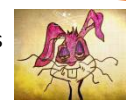
**Canine parvovirus** – many dogs dehydrate & die, they have bloody diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, hard to treat.  
**Canine distemper virus** – as above (+early flu symptoms)  
**Leptospirosis (zoonotic)** – as above (+blood in urine but better possibility of recovery. Highly contagious)  
**Infectious canine hepatitis** – coughing, cloudy eyes, pale gums & tongue. Treat with antibiotics, fluids, pain killers.

## Cats can be vaccinated for



**Feline infectious enteritis** - fever vomiting diarrhoea  
 Hard to treat, high mortality  
**feline herpes virus** - as above v + sneezing runny nose  
**Feline calicivirus** – ulcers on tongue, bleeding, fever inflamed joints pneumonia, fatal  
**Feline leukaemia virus** – fever pale gums skin infection, often fatal

## rabbits can be vaccinated for



**Myxomatosis** – spread by blood sucking insects  
 Swollen eyes, fever, blindness, often fatal  
**Viral haemorrhagic disease** – low appetite fever, spasms, often fatal

## Chickens can be vaccinated for



**Marek's disease** – paralysis, grey eyes, poor sight, high mortality, no treatment  
**Infectious bronchitis** - depression, coughing, diarrhoea, susceptible to secondary infections  
**Avian rhinotracheitis** - swollen head weepy eyes, loss of voice, nasal discharge,

## Goats can be vaccinated for



**Enterotoxaemia (clostridial bacteria)** - lethargy convulsions, death  
**Tetanus (zoonotic)** – tense head, locked jaw, stiff legs, can be fatal  
**Orf virus (zoonotic)** – sores on lips and tongue, problems eating, can dehydrate or starve

No vaccinations required

Bearded dragon

