

**SPRINGTIME & OUR PETS HAVE A SPRING IN THEIR STEPS**

At Hook Veterinary Centre our work certainly varies with the seasons.

With Spring finally in the air we see the effect this has on humans and animals alike. People seem perkier, they start talking about holidays and DIY, getting outdoors and barbecues!

Kittens born at the end of last year will be approaching maturity; females start to come into season and males become very aware of this. Often it is impossible to tell if a female cat is on heat, some may show changes in behaviour, but many do not.

Sometimes the first owners know about it is when their young cat suddenly gets a fat tummy and then shortly afterwards produces a litter of kittens.

Young tomcats, previously home loving, will take off sometimes for days on end in search of females. Unfortunately this is the time that many get run over, trapped in sheds or into fights.

We recommend neutering of cats at 6 months of age and ideally kittens should be kept indoors, or at least supervised when out, until they are neutered.

This greatly reduces the numbers of unwanted kittens that then may not find a suitable home in the summer. Female cats are thus prevented from having a pregnancy when they are scarcely more than kittens themselves, and the males tend to remain around home more, staying safer.

Neutering involves a short operation under general anaesthetic. The males are castrated. This quick procedure doesn't require any stitches and the cats really seem to take it in their stride with most being back to normal by the following day.

The females have their ovaries and womb removed so it is a longer procedure and they have a couple of stitches on their side which are removed after 10 days. They may be sleepy for a day or so and need to be checked to make sure they aren't trying to pull their stitches out – but again recover remarkably quickly.

If anyone would like further information on this or any veterinary matter then please give us a call on 01256 764771.