

## **Telemedicine: taking video and photos of your pets**

In the coming weeks we at Portland Vets will be trying to reduce the need for you to bring your pets to the clinic for minor problems. An important part of this is being able to help you and your pets using consultation via phone or email.

When we are trying to assess a problem photographs and videos can be extremely useful.

Here are a few hints and tips to help you get the best images and in turn give us the most information to help your pets

### **Photos:**

1. Lighting- try to take pictures in a nice bright setting, especially with our handsome dark coated animals. Outdoor natural light is best, but if that is not possible then make sure that you have a nice strong overhead light and that there are not any shadows over the area we need to examine.
2. Keeping still- our pets aren't always the most willing to be still for a photograph. Try to get someone at home to help you. A nice gentle cuddle will allow you to focus on getting the best image you can.
3. Using an object for scale- when you are zoomed into a scratch or wound for example, it can be difficult for us to gauge how big or small things are. Either pop a coin or the end of your finger into the edge of the picture or take a series of photographs from different distances to help us work out how big or small a problem might be. A series of pictures from varying angles is also really helpful for us to work out where on the body we are looking.

### **Videos:**

This can be the hardest thing to get right- often what you are trying to film is not happening all the time so it can be easy to miss your chance to capture the moment well.

1. Again good lighting is your best friend here- "Nice and bright and you'll be alright!".
2. Try to keep the camera as still as possible. Imagine trying to focus on a face while shaking your head from side to side- it's nearly impossible! If you can keep the camera as still as possible we can see a lot more detail.
3. Distance- this depends on what you are trying to show us. If it's a very subtle muscle tremble for example then you might need to be quite close. If there are problems all over your pets body for instance with a seizure or collapse then ideally try to keep all of your pet in view by taking a few steps back (this can be especially hard when your instinct is to rush to be by your pets side and comfort them).
4. How long to film? It would be nice to have about a minute of continuous video in most cases. As a general rule a little bit too long is better than not enough.
5. Commentary/ noise- again this depends on what you are trying to show. If you are trying to record your pet making an odd noise, then ideally the quieter the background the better.