

Winter Walkies!

There's a little chill in the air now, so you may need to wrap up more for the daily dog walk, but it's certainly good to have some fresh air and get those leg muscles working.... the four and two-legged kind!

Some of you may walk early morning and others late afternoon, which can mean it might be rather dusky as the sun rises or sets. **It is important that you and your dog are visible**, so to help keep you safe, consider reflective clothing for you both. Should your pet be having a run around off lead whether in the countryside or town park, there are also **lighted collars and harnesses** to help you and others see your dog in darker conditions. Even on an early winter afternoon visibility can be very poor, so an 'illuminated' pet is a real bonus!

On your winter walks remember -

- ❄ When walking past **frozen ponds or rivers** to keep your dog on the lead as their weight could cause the ice to break.
- ❄ Salt and grit on icy pavements are an **irritant to paws**, so ensure you give all four paws a good wash on returning home.
- ❄ Antifreeze for cars tastes sweet to pets, but is **potentially fatal if swallowed**. Please don't let your pet drink from puddles.



I Don't Feel Well

"Yes that's right... they are all gone except one... the orange cream!" This was one dog owner's report to the front desk, when she called for advice after her dog had eaten a box of birthday chocolates she had received. The gift was left unattended in all the excitement, and the dog seized the opportunity for a choc feast!

Amusing story, but we must say chocolate eating by dogs is no laughing matter. Chocolate contains theobromine and caffeine, which are poisonous to animals, and can cause major illness. Sadly in some cases it may even be fatal.

The effects depend on -

- time lapsed since eating the chocolate
- size of your pet
- how much and type

Plain dark chocolate is particularly dangerous, but any has the potential to make your dog poorly. In this particular case, the owner seeing the almost empty box, immediately called her vet. On arrival at her surgery the dog showed no visible signs of illness, but do not be deceived.

It is vital to treat your pet quickly!

Theobromine and caffeine can begin to affect their heart rate, increase blood pressure and inflame the pancreas. Chocolate poisoning is more likely to occur in dogs, as their excellent sense of smell can sniff out the stash! With chocolate at home in some form, especially during the festive season, please store all chocolate or foods containing it, well out of your pets' reach.

Signs of chocolate poisoning are

- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Hyperactivity
- Seizures
- Muscle Twitching
- Collapse
- Increased Heart Rate

If you suspect your dog has eaten chocolate or notice any of the above signs, call us immediately.

It is helpful to know when calling us -

1. The type, e.g. plain or milk, biscuits, cake, powdered etc.
2. When it was eaten and the quantity.
3. Breed and weight.

This information helps with our calculations to give you the best advice.



Hours

The Veterinary Hospital
Hungerford
01488 683999
Mon to Fri 8am - 6pm
Sat 8.30am - 12.30pm
Belmont Veterinary Clinic
Pewsey
01672 563413
Mon to Fri 8.30am - 6pm
24/7 Emergency
01488 683999



Weighting for Christmas?!

Love it or hate it Christmas is coming, and with it plenty of indulgence in the food department. Well it is only once a year, and the guilt is softened with the promise of diets, detox and exercise in the New Year. Here at the practice, we enjoy a big celebration dinner and a second slice of chocolate log just as much as the next person, but it's not just our expanding waistline we must watch - it is our pets' too.

✗ Overfeeding, an incorrect diet, titbits from the family, extra treats and lack of daily exercise, all contribute to pets being overweight.

✗ Obesity in dogs and cats can cause diabetes, arthritis, heart disease and breathing difficulties.

✓ Watch how much and exactly what you are feeding them, and keep treats to a minimum. Exercise daily, enjoy activity or games, and involve the whole family in keeping your pet healthy. Pop into the surgery and weigh your pet regularly.

✓ A well-balanced healthy diet with suitable exercise, will help keep your pet fit, maintain an ideal weight and enjoy a better quality of life.

Try not to give in to those pleading eyes. You can still give your pet plenty of treats like extra cuddles, trips to the park; play games with your feline friend! If your pet does need to shed a few pounds, visit us, where we can discuss a diet and exercise plan, plus provide you with plenty of support and encouragement. Just call reception for further information.

Fireworks continue through the festive season and to welcome in the New Year. Please spare a thought for the animal world during this time. We have plenty of helpful advice if your pet is anxious. Please do contact us in advance of the fireworks, so we can suggest a plan to help your pets through their fears.



Think Ahead

If you require food, medication or other pet supplies for over the festive season, please do order well in advance, as the surgery and our suppliers opening hours vary from normal during this period. Please call us to ensure you have a full cupboard before Christmas Eve!



Cats and Diabetes

Every part and organ in your pet's body has a function to perform to keep them healthy, but at times there is a hiccup in the system. **Diabetes Mellitus** is quite a common condition in animals, and is when the body has difficulty in regulating blood sugar levels.

What goes wrong?

In the pancreas, cells produce insulin. If these fail to work, it affects sugar metabolism in the body. Sugar, in the form of glucose, is an essential part of digestion and energy. Insulin is required to help the utilisation of glucose by the liver from the bloodstream. If insulin levels are low, glucose levels are excessively high and this affects metabolism. The kidneys then tip this 'waste sugar' into the urine. If left untreated, diabetes can lead to a form of blood poisoning called ketosis.

Causes can be

Obesity ~ Inactive Lifestyle

Overeating ~ Incorrect Diet

Damaged Pancreas

Diabetic signs in your cat

Are they drinking more water than usual?

Urinating frequently?

Lethargic?

Lost weight despite an increase in appetite?

If you have answered 'yes' to any of the above questions, then please bring your cat along for a check-up. If after examination we suspect diabetes, tests can be done to confirm the condition.

Treatment is available for diabetes and although not curable, it is manageable with medication and a dietary change. Your cat will occasionally need to visit us, so we can check their sugar and insulin levels, plus we provide all the help and support you need. Once regular treatment is in place, your cat should enjoy a good quality of life.



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Beware

Mince Pies, Christmas Cake and Pudding all contain sultanas and raisins that are poisonous to your pets. Call us should your pet eat these festive foods.



The Veterinary Hospital
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Hungerford RG17 0HE
01488 683999 24/7 Emergency

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