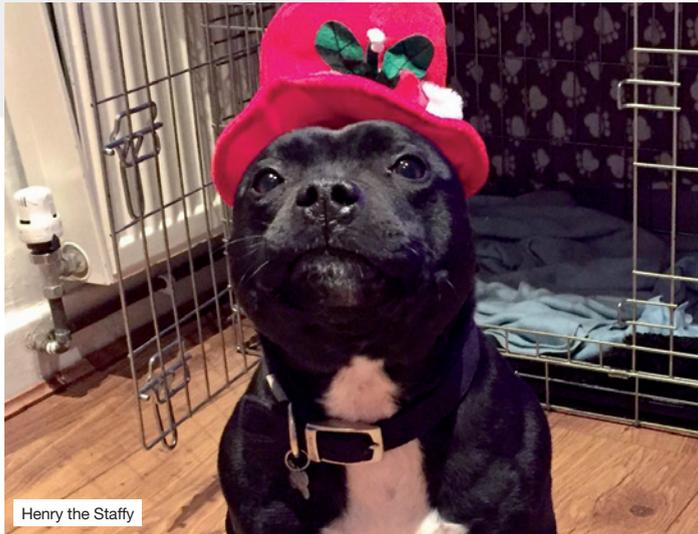


# MY GUIDE TO CHRISTMAS DAY BY HENRY THE STAFFY

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM DR BART NIETRZEBA, MScMedVet MRCVS



Dr Bart and Henry



Henry the Staffy

**Hello all. Henry the Staffy here! It's really busy here at Blacks Vets so I'm giving my colleagues a break and writing this edition's article for them. With Christmas just around the corner, I've decided to write about the big day from a canine perspective. No, you didn't know dogs could type, did you? Read on for more doggy discoveries...**

## 7am Christmas morning

It's awfully quiet upstairs and I'm wondering if my Dad was working late last night. He's Dr Bart and he's one of the super team of vets at Blacks. As Blacks offer 24-hour care, 365 days of the year, at their accredited veterinary hospital in Dudley, Dad and his veterinary friends can sometimes be out helping pets get better at all times of the night. I'd better wake him up as I could really do with visiting the garden. Here goes: 'AROOOO... AROOOOO... AROOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!'

## 7.05am

Ah, here he comes now. Thanks Dad! Oooh that's better. Whilst I have a mooch around in the garden sniffing for reindeer, Dad gets the kettle on and starts making our breakfast feast. Mmmmmm I LOVE this time of year. So many delicious things to eat! If I hang around in the kitchen long enough maybe I'll get some scraps? The only problem is that Dad is really careful about what he feeds me as he says that he sees lots of poorly pets over

Christmas who have eaten food that is too rich for them, or worse, stuff that is poisonous. But, as he's filling my bowl up with my usual food, he's got his Santa hat on, so things are starting to feel festive.

## 10am

The Christmas tunes are on, Dad's wearing his gingerbread man jumper and the doorbell is ringing. Visitors! I adore visitors! I greet them with my usual jumping and rush off to bring them a selection of my very best toys. If I'm lucky, maybe someone will play with me and my pully toy. Hey, I'm a Staffy and I'm brilliant at tug of war! Our visitors are laden down with parcels which can mean only one thing...

## 11am

PREZZIES!!!! It's time for opening presents and I'm quite giddy with excitement! There are lots of gifts under the Christmas tree and some of them smell wonderful. I'm sure if I can... just... get... this... wrapping... off... HEEYYYYYYYYY! Dad has quickly taken my parcel off me and told me 'NO!' He says that there's chocolate in there and if I eat it I could become seriously ill. Apparently, chocolate can cause kidney failure in dogs and so can other tasty goodies like mince pies and Christmas pudding. Raisins, currants, chocolate and alcohol

are all big no-no's for dogs so it's best to keep them out of the way of temptation. The same goes for crinkly and delicious smelling gift wrap, bows and tape. Lots of fun to play with but not so much fun when it ends up in a pet's tummy!

One year I tried to play with the lovely, shiny baubles that were hanging on the bottom branches of the tree, but when I picked one up, it shattered into lots of sharp pieces. Dad said I was very lucky I didn't swallow any and made sure that we moved all the decorations up out of my way. Apparently, December is the busiest month of the year for removing foreign bodies from pets' tummies so please don't let any of your four-legged friends join their numbers.

Just in case, Dad always makes sure I have really good insurance cover so that if an accident should happen, we don't have to worry about costs. Christmas is such a busy time of year that it's really easy for mishaps to occur. At Blacks, we even have a brilliant, dedicated department who help our customers with their insurance claims. For owners, it's one less thing to worry about and they can then focus on getting their pets well again.

## 2pm

Oh, this is the best bit. Lunchtime! The turkey smells divine and I think

I can also sniff the mouth-watering scent of roast beef. I think I'll just hang around casually beneath the table to see if anyone drops anything. I'd absolutely love to get stuck into a juicy bone but as delicious as they may be, I know they can be really dangerous for dogs. Shards of bone can become dislodged and cause choking or damage to the oesophagus which sadly cannot be treated. Horrible thought! Instead, Dad has bought me an extra strong chewy toy which I intend to have a good chomp on later by the fire. I've also spied a packet of yummy treats in my Christmas stocking, formulated especially for dogs. Well, everyone is allowed a little treat at this time of the year.

## 5pm

Everyone is stuffed and snoozing in the living room. The fire is on and I'm feeling warm and content. Aaaaahhh this is the life. Suddenly, Dad stretches and strolls into the kitchen to fetch my lead. My ears shoot up as I hear its familiar jingle. It's walkies time! Woohoo! There's a nip in the air so Dad puts me in my nice snuggly pet jacket and we head out to the park. Routine is really important for me and helps me feel

safe and calm when the house is full of new people, smells and sounds. Up ahead I can see my friend Buster who I love playing with and I go charging off into the distance. Dad is shouting me but I can see my buddy and nothing is going to stop me!

When dad finally catches up with me he isn't very pleased. I'm not sure he felt like a sprint so soon after lunch. Did you know that lots of pets get lost at this time of year when it gets darker earlier and family routines are different? Luckily, I have a microchip which means that if I did wander off, I could be quickly scanned and united with my Dad. **The nice people at Blacks are offering their microchipping service for just £15 between October and December, so it's a great time to go and get one if you haven't already.** It's now a legal requirement for dogs to be microchipped and for our contact records to be kept up to date, so ask your human to log onto [www.blacksvets.co.uk](http://www.blacksvets.co.uk) for more information. Blacks also like to microchip cats, rabbits and tortoises, so that everyone can stay that little bit safer.

## 6pm

Back home and I'm warm and settled again on my spot in front of



At the heart of veterinary excellence

the fire. Dad has recovered from his unscheduled burst of activity and I decide to go and flop onto his lap for a cuddle. Although my Dad is a vet, he still likes reminders that help him remember my regular treatments like vaccination boosters, flea and worming medication, which is why I'm a member of Protect My Pet Club. This brilliant club helps cut down the cost of preventative treatments and also sends my Dad reminders when I need a top-up application so that no matter how busy he is, he always knows he's on top of my care. Dad also likes to save money and membership starts at just £8.99 per month. As a member, you can actually save between 30-60% on standard prices, depending on your size and species.

**Feet and paws up, we can finally relax and enjoy a lazy evening. It won't be long until we are both snoring loudly... Merry Christmas everyone!**

## PROTECT YOUR PET AND YOUR POCKET

**Health care for Dogs, Cats and Rabbits**

from ONLY **£8.99\*** per month

- Full annual vaccination / boosters**
- Comprehensive worming programme**
- Flea control programme**
- Added parasite control programme**
- TWO nose to tail health assessments per year**
- FREE nail clip during 6 monthly nurse & vet check**
- One additional FREE veterinary consultation**

\*Terms and conditions may apply.

