

Seasonal tips

for a pawsome festive season By Dr Emma Pacione MRCVS, BVMS



With November upon us here are a few top tips to take good care of our pets through the Winter season.

Fireworks

When puppies are young they easily acclimatise to loud and unfamiliar sounds. This makes them much less likely to develop fears and phobias as they mature so early socialisation and exposure to loud noises is important.

- 🐾 Dogs that develop noise phobias can be helped - a programme of noise desensitisation can be embarked on with the help of a CD designed to build the intensity of noise thereby desensitising. Medications can be used to help reduce anxiety and a dog's response to loud noises can gradually improve over time, talk to your vet for advice.
- 🐾 Where such an approach isn't possible, short term treatment with medication that reduces anxiety may be used on and around times of fireworks such as Bonfire Night, Christmas and New Year. Feeding your dog and exercising him/her earlier than usual in the evening to avoid walkies / necessary garden visits at the height of the fireworks time helps too.
- 🐾 Playing loud music, shutting the curtains and providing a comfy bed with lots of blankets to hide under can all be helpful. Reassuring frightened dogs can encourage anxious behaviour, so in some cases it is best to try and ignore them, given that they are safe and otherwise comfortable.
- 🐾 Poinsetta, lillies, mistletoe, holly and holly berries - all things we enjoy seeing over winter but make sure they are well out of reach of household paws as they are poisonous.
- 🐾 Alcohol - you may enjoy a tipple but alcohol is toxic to our pets.
- 🐾 Foods containing grapes, raisins and currants (such as fruitcakes) can result in kidney failure in dogs.
- 🐾 Chocolate and cocoa contain theobromine, a chemical highly toxic to dogs and cats. Ingestion in small amounts can cause vomiting and diarrhoea but large amounts can cause seizures and heart arrhythmias.
- 🐾 Many sugarless gums and sweets contain xylitol, a sweetener which is toxic to dogs. It can cause a life-threatening drop in blood sugar and liver failure.
- 🐾 Leftover, fatty meat scraps can produce severe inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis) leading to abdominal pain, vomiting and bloody diarrhoea. Watch out for bones too which can cause serious internal injury.
- 🐾 Christmas decorations such as tinsel and tree decorations can be dangerous if ingested. Cats and dogs love a bit of mischief so again keep a close eye to make sure you all enjoy a happy festive season.

Do fleas take winter holidays?

No! They do prefer summer but with central heating on in winter, fleas are now problematic all year round. Fleas can lay over 50 eggs per day and so eggs can build into the thousands trapped in furnishings and carpet. They can lay dormant for many months before hatching so all year round protection is a must for good



Winter Poisons

We all want to enjoy Christmas time so there are few common poisons to be aware of:

- 🐾 Anti freeze is highly toxic, particularly to cats.

health care. Look out for money saving clubs to keep routine costs down such as our Healthy Pet Club which can give savings of up to 40% on a range of routine care.

Curiosity killed the dog

Lungworm, it's a killer, it can occur all year round and it is in the Midlands. It is preventable with routine care so please make sure your dog is protected. Foxes, slugs and snails carry Lungworm and the incidence of detected cases is on the increase - a quick type in of a 'DY3' postcode on www.lungworm.co.uk illustrates 189 confirmed cases in a 50 mile radius at the last count, it is very easily



transmitted. Advocate, the only proven control for Lungworm can only be prescribed by a vet and needs to be applied monthly which you can do at home. Call us on 01384 252509 for advice, prevention and to save up to 40% on the cost.

Remember Small Furies

Hamsters, guinea pigs and rabbits will appreciate you double checking that they are warm enough in winter months. Make sure water is not frozen, hutches are free from leaks and plenty clean warm bedding and hay available. Check 3 times a day.

24/7 Veterinary Emergencies - 01384 252509 - Plumb it in to your mobile!

Blacks Vets at Dudley is your nearest Accredited Veterinary Hospital with our own staff and advanced diagnostic equipment to help your pet when they might need it most.



After our recent refurbishment at Sedgley we are looking forward to our opening evening soon so watch out for dates on our website www.blacksvets.co.uk.

Wishing you and all the paws and claws out there a Merry Christmas and a happy healthy 2016.



Dr Emma Pacione MRCVS, BVMS, Veterinary Surgeon & Branch Manager at Sedgley

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