

small talk

Christmas hazards for your pet



Christmas is an enjoyable time for everybody, and that includes your pets.

However, there are some festive items that can be dangerous to your pets. Here is our list of top Christmas hazards to look out for during the festive period.

Antifreeze – This is the time of year that people start to use anti-freeze. It is sweet tasting and therefore attractive to pets. It can cause kidney damage and be fatal. Please ensure you clear up spillages and do not leave anti-freeze anywhere that animals can get to.

Christmas decorations – They should always be placed away from easy access to animals. Ribbons or tinsel when ingested can cause gut obstructions. Baubles, especially glass ones, can cause perforation of the gut when broken and eaten.

Christmas greenery – Many are toxic to animals. Please keep foliage such as holly and mistletoe away from pets. Pine needles from trees can cause irritation or perforation of the gut, and can get stuck in animals paws so vacuuming and keeping your tree's water topped up should reduce the likelihood of fallen needles being eaten or stepped upon.

Chocolate – Chocolate is toxic to pets. Please also be mindful of chocolate tree decorations as pets will reach up to find the decorations potentially pulling over your Christmas tree also.

Fruit – Grapes are toxic to pets. Also toxic is dried fruit so mince pies, Christmas cake etc need to be out of the reach of your pets.

Bones – Dogs being fed at the table or investigating the waste can encounter turkey bones. They can cause choking and damage to your dog's gut. Please dispose of turkey carcasses properly.

These are just a few of the hazards we encounter at Christmas. If you think your pet has eaten something that is causing irritation, please contact your vet immediately. **Early treatment can save your pet's life.**





This month we asked David Marks, our Practice Manager about his passions outside of work.

My primary interest in life is understanding the world around me by constantly absorbing ideas and images about the situations presented to me. This makes me quite flexible and able to adapt well to a wide range of tasks. By being quite rational and logical in reaching conclusions and combining that with being quite resourceful when solving problems, I can find solutions others might not consider. While at work I am a conversationalist, and enjoy verbal sparring with others. Debating issues is something I enjoy. While out of work I am much quieter and like time to myself. We live in a world of possibilities, and it's easy to

Staff Focus: David Marks

become excited about concepts, challenges and difficulties. When presented with a problem, I'm generally good at improvising and quickly come up with a creative solution.

My background takes in animal husbandry, purchasing, retail, hospitality and for the last 10 years veterinary, working as a qualified nurse and practice manager. I have over 20 years in management roles doing everything from running lodges in Africa to working as a business support manager for several UK based veterinary practices.

I have always been a bit animal crazy and have had many pets over the years. These days that is limited to a cat called Archie, a dog called Merlin, about twenty birds and some fish.

My love of animals took me into what was once deepest darkest Africa where I was fortunate enough to work in some of the greatest places on earth for seeing exotic animals. I helped run several projects across southern Africa and had the pleasure of doing conservation work with leopards, cheetahs, desert adapted elephants and wild dogs. While in the UK I was also lucky enough to work as the lion keeper and Elephant keeper at Woburn Safari Park and again on my return from Africa I helped set up and run the

first luxury Tented Safari camp in Europe at Port Lympne Zoo where clients stayed in tents inside the park and woke up to giraffes and black rhino visible from their tents.

Scarsdale Vets are at a very exciting stage in our development where as a business we are hoping to grow and become the benchmark that other practices try to emulate. I am looking forward to being able to take part in this growth and hopefully help steer us towards our shared goals. For me watching the teams around me grow and develop will be extremely rewarding as there is nothing more satisfying than seeing people exceed their own expectations and realise their potential.

News Roundup



Bertie is a 9-year-old Miniature Schnauzer who was first referred to our surgery department last year.

Bertie had been attacked by another dog and had severe large wounds to both his flanks.

Over the following few months Bertie underwent many anaesthetics and procedures, including big reconstructions where skin from his stomach was used as a flap to cover some of the deficits.

Bertie came back in to see us recently and as you can see has made an amazing transformation. You wouldn't know if it wasn't for his unique hair style, where the skin flap used from his stomach now grows hair longer and darker across his sides!

We are all so pleased with how well he has done and it's always nice for us to see an old familiar face and waggy tail!

Human verses animal medication: which is best?

Robert Woodward BVetMed MRCVS



Every day veterinarians are prescribing medications for animals under our care.

Although the initial answer to the question appears easy and we would always endeavour to prescribe a veterinary medicinal product that is licenced for use for a species and condition, there are cases where a licenced veterinary product many not exist. In these cases, the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 allows us to prescribe other medication especially if the medication will help our beloved pets to avoid unacceptable suffering. In these cases, a product that is licenced in another member country/state, or even a human medication may be best in that they provide the required treatment activity, dosage and safety of use (this is classified as "off-label" use).

The decision to provide an off-labelled medication is not made likely and a strict cascade is always followed by vets before a human medication is prescribed. This will always involve an active discussion with our clients to advise why we have prescribed the medication, what its anticipated effect will be and what side effects could occur. If both parties agree, then

we will often ask our clients to sign a form to confirm that they have understood the medications off-label use so that we can demonstrate our good practice to our governing body.

We do often get people calling about giving human medications to their pets and I must say we really do appreciate these calls day or night. We would much rather have the opportunity to provide the value of our clinical education on the appropriate use of human medication for your animal rather than human medication being used and it then having a detrimental rather than a positive effect on your pet. We certainly have several cases every year where animals have been given a human medication that has resulted in hospitalisation and treatment because the said treatment may cause, or have the potential to cause harm. A phone call is always preferred than treating a potential toxicity case.

Remember we are always here to help day or night, 365 days of the year. We care about you and your pet and we will do all that we can to help.

How to check if your dog/cat is an ideal body weight

Charlotte Turpie

RVN C-SQP, Senior Clinic Nurse

In the UK, 39 % of cats and 59 % of dogs are overweight to some degree so it is important as pet owners that you can identify what is an ideal Body Weight or Body Condition Score (BCS) for your pet.

During our Nurse Clinics we will usually assess your pets BCS and let you know how we think they are doing, you may not even notice us doing it as we tend to do this while we are checking them over.

Keeping a record of your pets Body Condition Score on their file along with an up to date weight means we can easily see what their ideal Body Weight would be if they do ever lose or gain weight for any reason.

The technique of Body Condition Scoring has removed the need for Breed Standards which give unrealistic ideas of what each breed should weigh as it is not able to take into account the individuals build and height, especially now we have more mixed breeds where a lot depends on what characteristics they take from each parent.

Body Condition Scoring uses a scale from 1 to 9, with 1 been very underweight, 9 being very overweight and 4 or 5 being ideal.

Learning to Body Condition Score your pet at home will help you keep them at their ideal Body Weight and change their feeding as required.

Body Condition Scoring your pet at home

When your pet is relaxed, you want to start by looking at their profile which will help you start to pick what score you are going to give them.

- Can you see an obvious waist?
- Does there abdominal tuck up just in front of their back legs?
- Can you see their ribs? – for an ideal Body Condition Score you shouldn't be able to see them.

Next you want to start to stroke your pet from their head down towards their tail, including stroking across their chest, you should be able to feel the ribs without excess fat covering and just feel the top of their spine without feeling like they are prominent.

If you are unsure about your pet's Body Condition Score or you want advice about your pets weight then please book a free of charge nurse appointment so we can help guide you through the process and discuss any concerns you may have.



What an ideal Body Condition Score would look and feel like (4/9 or 5/9)

- Ribs easily felt without excess fat
- Waist easily noted when viewed from above
- Abdominal tuck seen from the side



What an underweight Body Condition Score would look and feel like (1/9, 2/9 or 3/9)

- Ribs, lumbar spine and pelvic bones easily visible from a distance or minimal fat coverage felt
- Little or no body fat
- Loss of muscle mass
- Obvious waist and abdominal tuck



What an overweight Body Condition Score would look and feel like (6/9, 7/9, 8/9 or 9/9)

- Ribs felt with difficulty or with significant pressure, with heavy fat cover
- Fat deposits over chest, spine and base of tail
- No waist or abdominal tuck
- Obvious abdominal distension may be present



24-Hour Emergency Cover

The Pride Veterinary Centre Vets at Night team work on-site throughout the night to give dedicated care to emergency cases and hospitalised animals. The vets and nurses have further training and considerable experience of critical care, and emergency surgery and medicine.

Our telephones will be answered throughout the night by experienced staff. We have an ambulance service available for animal transportation to and from the hospital should you require it.

All patients are supervised by our own fully qualified vets and nurses at the hospital 24 hours a day.

For all emergencies, please call **01332 678333**



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Essentials for your new puppy

Verity Loughton
BVetMed MRCVS

After careful research and consideration you have chosen your new family member but it is also important to ensure you have the correct items at home to make the transition as smooth as possible. Here are a few essential things to consider for your shopping list.

1. Bedding

Puppies will have accidents so ensure the bedding is washable. Specially made blankets like vet beds do help to keep your puppy dry if they are prone to accidents. Also they are going to grow so keep in mind the eventual size when choosing your bed.

A lot of owners now crate train puppies from a young age so they have a safe haven in the house. Always ensure if you decide to do this that they can comfortably stand up and stretch out, and seek advice on how to train them correctly.

2. Collars and leads

Your puppy will not be able to go for its first walk until it is fully vaccinated but your puppy should wear a collar with a name tag. Also consider whether you will be using a collar, harness or halti for walks so training can gradually be introduced. It is important to consider the breed of your dog, for example short nosed dogs like Pugs and French Bulldogs would benefit from harness walking to minimise pressure on the windpipe.



3. Toys

Playing with toys is an important part of your puppy's training and development. Puppies' teeth are just like babies so it is important to also have some toys for them to chew. Don't take shortcuts by trying things from around the house. Sticks can splinter and cause serious injuries and socks can cause blockage of the gastrointestinal tract.

It is important to get toys that are appropriate to your puppy's size, a chew toy that is suitable for a Chihuahua may be too small and too soft for a Labrador. Get advice when buying these essentials if you are unsure.

4. Grooming equipment

It is important to get your pet used to being groomed from a young age.

5. Food and water bowls

There is a wide choice available for purchase. There are also bowls designed for special problems with a particular breed. For example bowls designed to slow down eating to avoid it being gulped down in one go, or to stop long eared dogs' ears dangling in water and food when they bend down.

6. Dog appeasing pheromone

This is made by Adaptil. It is a synthetic copy of the natural comforting pheromone released by the mother to reassure her puppies so is ideal to help your puppy settle into its new home.

Contact us:

FARM & EQUINE CENTRE
Markeaton Lane, Markeaton,
Derby DE22 4NH
Tel: (01332) 294929

MAIN HOSPITAL
Pride Veterinary Centre,
Riverside Road, Derby
DE24 8HX
Tel: (01332) 678333

PARK FARM
Park Farm Centre, Allestree,
Derby DE22 2QQ
Tel: (01332) 554422

DUFFIELD
15 Town Street, Duffield
Derby DE56 4EH
Tel: (01332) 841700

MICKLEOVER
3 Vicarage Road,
Mickleover,
Derby DE3 0EA
Tel: (01332) 518585

HILTON
6 Witham Close
Egginton Road, Hilton
Derby DE65 5JR
Tel: (01283) 732999

OAKWOOD
Unit 9, Oakwood District
Centre, Oakwood,
Derby DE21 2HT
Tel: (01332) 666500

SHELTON LOCK
247 Chellaston Road,
Shelton Lock
Derby DE24 9EG
Tel: (01332) 700321

**SCARSDALE VETS
STAPENHILL**
90 Spring Terrace Road
Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent
DE15 9DX
Tel: (01283) 568162

SCARSDALE VETS STRETTON
36 The Green, Stretton,
Burton-on-Trent
DE13 0EQ
Tel: (01283) 565333

post@scarsdalevets.com

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Duffield 01332 841700	Hilton 01283 732999	Mickleover 01332 518585	Oakwood 01332 666500
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