



SMALL TALK



THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE SMALL ANIMAL TEAM - ISSUE # 9

DECEMBER 2008

WHAT NOT TO FEED YOUR DOG THIS CHRISTMAS

With the festive season fast approaching, it is a timely reminder to warn you of the dangers of our canine companions taking advantage of a lot more food being on offer. Chocolate poisoning still seems to be the big one around Christmas (and Easter), especially dark chocolate. Chocolate has a chemical that dogs can not metabolise (we thankfully can!) and if consumed in sufficient quantities will result in over stimulation of the dogs nervous system and possibly death. Doggy chocolate specifically for pets is perfectly safe and is readily available at pet stores.



Onions left over from the BBQ can be irresistible to dogs but unfortunately can damage the animals Red Blood Cells if consumed in large quantities. Grape toxicity is an emerging problem recently as well. The exact mechanisms behind the toxicity is so far unclear, but dogs and cats will die from the complications of kidney failure. Raw grapes, raisins, and fruit cake all pose a potential problem.

If you are being good and health conscious, cutting off the fat from steaks and chops is a good idea but feeding these off-cuts to dogs and cats is not. A high fat meal has been shown to lead to pancreatitis which can be a very costly medical disease to treat and can be fatal in advanced cases.

Bones. BBQ's are a great provider of bones, as is the traditional Christmas roast. Nine times out of ten they won't cause a problem, but when bones in the digestive tract get stuck things can go terribly wrong. Vomiting, intestinal perforations and constipation can all result from bones consumed in the diet. A much better idea are pigs ears and rawhide chew items for your dog, which rarely cause problems if gulped down in bigger pieces.

SEASONAL PROBLEMS

A timely reminder of two important health care tips for our pets with the coming summer months. Barley grass will be coming soon. So for your pets that like to explore out in the open grass lands, be careful that there is no barley grass around. The seeds of this grass are spear shaped and move in only one direction. They can burrow in between toes, get under the third eyelid flaps of the eyes and commonly make their way down ear canals. Get into the habit of checking your pets feet and ears daily to make sure one of these hitch hikers are not about to take a one way trip towards trouble!



Heat stroke in our pets can occur in Southland during our hot days over summer. Dogs locked in cars with the windows up will get into trouble within 10 minutes as they start to overheat and cats locked in garages without any water will also dehydrate and get into physiological trouble in a very short time.

Vetco's Christmas Function

The annual Christmas BBQ is to be held at the Edendale Clinic on the 12th of December, starting at 5pm. The best prime cuts of steak, top quality sausages and healthy salads will be served along with beverages of your choice. All of Vetco's clients are welcome to attend as an acknowledgement of your support over the last 12 months.



CASE OF THE MONTH – OLIVER

Oliver was a very unlucky dog. He had not one, but two life threatening diseases in quick succession. Thankfully he is now on the way to a full recovery. His first problem was a bladder stone that was forming in his urinary tract. While it was bouncing around inside his bladder his problem was subclinical until the stone moved out of his bladder and got stuck in the urethra (the plumbing pipe that goes to the outside) blocking the outflow of urine. The urine backed up, filling the bladder and consequently put a lot of pressure on his kidneys. Emergency surgery was performed to remove the stone from his bladder and he was discharged as he began to make a good recovery. Unfortunately bad luck must have

come in two's for Oliver as he had an overactive immune system that had taken offence to one of the drugs that was used in his anaesthetic or surgery. As a very rare reaction that is individual specific, his red blood cells were coated with an antigen that his body began to attack and destroy resulting in his red blood cells being destroyed quicker than he could replace them. Urgent blood tests were done and the immune mediated destruction of the red blood cells was diagnosed. Treatment was initiated immediately and thankfully the levels of red blood cells began to rise again and Oliver had returned back to normal and we are presently weaning him off his medication and monitoring his blood values.



Facts on Cats and Dogs

- A one year old dog is mature, physically as a 15 year old human.
- A cat's heart beats twice as fast as a human heart—at 110-140 beats per minute.
- The Russians trained dogs during World Ward II to run suicide missions with mines strapped to their backs.
- Only 40% of cats are ambidextrous, the other 60% tend to favour their left or right paw.

- Greyhounds can run up to 72km/hr!



- Tortiseshell cats are almost always female. The odds of having a male tortoiseshell are about 1000-1.
- Chocolate contains a substance known as theobromine which is poisonous to dogs.
- The correct way to refer to a group of kittens is a 'kindle' whereas a group of grown cats is referred to as a 'clowder'.



- Dalmatian puppies are completely white when they are born.

BUILDING RENOVATION

The builders are working like men possessed on the new surgical and hospital facilities at Kennington, and we are on track to having everything up and running to full capacity again early in the new year. We hope the noise and temporary consultation rooms haven't been too much of an upheaval for those of you have visited us over the last 3 months. The light at the end of the tunnel is getting bigger by the day (our hearing is getting worse!) and we are looking forward to moving in to much better facilities. We will have the capacity to hospitalise a lot more animals, even giant dogs with several walk in kennels. Separate cat cages that are separated away from the dogs will result in more pleasant stays for all concerned!



And speaking of new things being built, we are currently redesigning our website for Vetco Ltd. The new site will have staff profiles, archived information on various small and large animal issues. We will let you know when the site goes live.

<u>KENNINGTON</u>
11 CLAPHAM RD 03 230 4689
8AM-5PM MON-FRI
LATE NIGHT TO 8PM THUR

<u>EDENDALE</u>
14 SWEENEY ST 03 206 6170
8AM-5PM MON-FRI