

## COMPANION ANIMAL NEWS NOVEMBER 2005

**ANIMAL POISON CONTROL** – As we come near to the holiday season, we would like to touch on the issue of poison control for your pet. Recently we joined the ASPCA poison control center Veterinary Lifeline Partner Program. This is a unique, emergency veterinary poison hotline that we can use 24-7 for your pets. If we have a known toxin ingestion, we can access this hotline to help us decide what course of action to take, giving us specific treatment protocols to follow. Alternatively, you may call the hotline directly to determine if you need to come in and see us. Their number is 888-426-4435. They do charge a fee for their services.

Here are a few poison prevention tips recommended by the ASPCA poison control center. Just as you would child proof your house, you would pet proof your house.

- Keep **medicine, household cleaners, pesticides and automotive products** locked up or stored out of the reach of pets and children.
- Make sure that your vehicles do not leak **antifreeze**, and that you do not store any in an open container.
- Before using any household or yard product, always read the label first and follow instructions exactly for safe use, storage and disposal.
- Never give any medication or supplement to your pet unless you have talked to your veterinarian about using it. What is helpful to humans can be dangerous or even deadly to pets.

**Cat owners:** NEVER give TYLENOL or aspirin to your cat!!!!

- Always read the label before using any flea control product on or around your pet. For example, if the product says “for dogs only”, do NOT use on cats.
- The usual **Holiday toxins** include poinsettias, Jerusalem cherries, yew, azaleas, Christmas tree additives, liquid potpourri, tree flocking, and of course chocolate! Did you know that unsweetened baking chocolate is the most toxic type of chocolate? Another toxin in candies and gum is the sweetener xylitol. If taken in large amounts, it can cause a sudden drop in blood sugar, resulting in seizures and incoordination. Please keep your pet away from these things.
- **Tinsel** is always a bad idea in households that have cats. They can cause intestinal obstruction if eaten. Watch the **electric cords** from all those lights that your pet doesn't chew them.

You can put together your own **poison safety/treatment kit** with the following items: 1 bottle of 3% hydrogen peroxide, 1 can of soft dog or cat food, a turkey baster or large bulb syringe to administer the peroxide, saline eye solution to flush out eye contaminants, artificial tear ointment to lubricate the eyes after flushing, mild grease-cutting dishwashing liquid for the animal after skin contamination (Dawn dish-soap), rubber gloves, tweezers to remove stingers, muzzle, towel.

If you have any questions about the ASPCA poison control center or any of the toxins mentioned here, just give us a call.

**SENIOR WELLNESS EXAMS** – Thanks to the advances in veterinary medicine and nutrition, our pets are living longer than ever before. However, your pet ages much faster than you do. That's why we stress the importance of yearly wellness exams for all pets, especially those over

the age of 7. Diagnostic tests can help detect many diseases before your pet displays signs of a condition. Even if results are normal, the findings give us a good baseline to identify and monitor changes in your pet's health as the years progress. This is why we offer our SENIOR WELLNESS EXAMS. They include a blood chemistry panel, a complete urinalysis, and a red blood cell count to check for anemia. For cats, we also include a thyroid test to check for hyperthyroidism. Some early conditions are very responsive to diet therapy or medications. The next time you bring your senior pet in for their yearly wellness exam, don't be surprised if we ask you about doing the Senior Wellness Program. Feel free to ask us about it too!

Remember to check out our website at [www.grasslandvet.com](http://www.grasslandvet.com). Thanks to all of you who took our survey! Our webmaster is collating the results so we can decide which features to add next. Remember that you can contact us through our website. Another nice website to visit for pet health is [www.veterinarypartner.com](http://www.veterinarypartner.com). It can answer many of your pet questions.

Have a wonderful holiday season!! Keep safe and warm!

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