

COMPANION ANIMAL NEWS – DECEMBER 2002

OBESITY: Are We Doing Enough To Help Our Pets?

Obesity is the most common nutritional problem seen in small animal practice. So often owners are not even aware that their pet is overweight. A variety of medical problems have been linked to obesity including diabetes, skeletal problems, high blood pressure, and fatty liver. Obesity becomes more prevalent with age. Aged pets are more likely to suffer from medical problems and obesity compounds these problems. We as veterinarians must help owners identify animals that are overweight and help them manage their pets' weight.

DIABETES: A direct link has been demonstrated between obesity and diabetes in dogs, cats and in humans. Weight reduction is an important management tool and, in some cases, can resolve the diabetic state.

ARTHRITIS: It is not clear whether obesity CAUSES arthritis, but it does cause increased pain in the joints from increased WEIGHT on the inflamed joint surfaces. Weight loss in dogs with hip dysplasia improved their condition. Overweight animals are much less likely to run and play. That means they have a harder time maintaining muscle mass. Also a prolonged recovery time from surgery or trauma can be expected in overweight animals.

FATTY LIVER: Hepatic lipidosis is a complex disorder. It predominantly affects cats that lose weight rapidly. When diagnosed, it is hard to treat and a certain number of affected cats die.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE: Obesity is known to be associated with significant increases in blood pressure in humans and in dogs. This causes the heart to work harder and can lead to heart failure.

We would like to help your pet live longer and have an active and playful life. Ask us about Eukanuba® Restricted Calorie and Eukanuba® Optimum Weight Control diets for dogs and cats. These diets come in dry kibble and in canned form. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back if your pet is unhappy with the food.

Introducing Veterinary Pet Insurance

You do all you can to ensure your kitten or puppy lives a long and healthy life. Typically, the first year includes several trips to the veterinarian for vaccinations, spaying or neutering, and other routine care. And as you know, a pup or kitten can be accident-prone, swallowing things they should not and getting into things that can harm them. What if a major accident or illness occurs? Will you be able to afford treatment? That's why we are excited to announce our new partnership with Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI), offering the leading health insurance plan for pets for more than 20 years. The Iams Company is especially pleased to bring you an exclusive "Two Months Paid" health insurance coverage offer - - value of up to \$49.00 - - when you sign up for a 12 month policy for your puppy or kitten before 12 months of age. Peace of mind for \$25.00 a month. All for a low monthly premium, your animal gets the following coverage through VPI:

- Routine care, including vaccinations and exams - - up to \$213.00 annually!
- Protection from major medical expenses, up to \$14,000.00 in annual benefits, with coverage for more than 6,400 medical problems and conditions as a result of emergencies and accidents, illnesses and injuries, and low deductibles of \$50.00 per incident
- Choose any licensed veterinarian, anywhere.

VPI has policies for all adult animals as well. Please call us if you have any questions regarding this new offer or check out www.petinsurance.com

Holiday Dangers For Pets

As you decorate your home for these festive holidays, please remember there are many dangers for your pets. Here is a list of things to avoid:

TINSEL: This is a big **NO-NO** if you have cats in the house. They may swallow it and get an intestinal obstruction that requires surgery.

GREENS: Any type of pine, balsam, juniper and fir can have volatile oils in the sap that can cause skin or eye irritation.

TREE PRESERVATIVES: Please stick to plain water or sugar water. Anything else can be dangerous if ingested.

SPRAYS/FLOCKING: These are low in toxicity but may still cause vomiting and depression. It is best if these are avoided.

CHOCOLATE: Contains theobromine which acts similar to caffeine. Diarrhea, restlessness, weakness, seizures and coma can result from eating chocolate. Please don't leave any chocolate out where your pet can get at it.

PLANTS: Amaryllis, mistletoe, holly, Jerusalem cherry and poinsettias are all considered toxic. Nausea and vomiting are the most common reactions. The most toxic is the Jerusalem cherry, which can cause cardiac arrest.

TABLE SCRAPS: Although it seems like you are giving them a treat, feeding tablescraps can make your pet very sick. Vomiting, diarrhea and pancreatitis (severe inflammation of the pancreas), are all common sequelae to feeding high fat foods. Buy them a special dog or cat treat instead!!

If you think your pet has come into contact with any of these things and you are not sure what to do, give us a call. Even after hours, the phone number is the same (715) 238-7686.

Dr. Jean's Acupuncture Courses!

Dr. Jean has completed the first phase of her acupuncture class. Only 3 more to go! If you have questions about veterinary acupuncture, please feel free to call her. She has started treating a few patients already!

***WE AT GRASSLAND VETERINARY SERVICE WISH YOU AND YOURS A SAFE AND
HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!!***