



IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE



1. SEVEN COMMON BUG BITES ON DOGS AND CATS

It can be difficult to know if a bite or a sting from an insect is dangerous or not. Similar to human health, our pets may also have allergic reactions, which can potentially be very dangerous.

2. UNRAVELLING DOMINANCE IN DOGS

Aggression is the canine behavior most likely to lead to relinquishment or euthanasia. To understand how dogs socially interact and how to manage conflict are therefore of particular importance to pet owners and veterinary professionals alike.

3. PLANTS & FOODS THAT ARE POISONOUS TO PETS

Every home contains hazards for pets, including ones that are seemingly benign. Know what the most common toxic foods and plants are that may be lurking in your home presenting hazards for your pet.

4. MY PET HAS BEEN BITTEN BY A SNAKE!

At the beginning of spring, when snakes first become active, their venom glands tend to be fuller and their bites at this time are much more severe.

SEVEN COMMON BUG BITES ON DOGS AND CATS

Bug bites and stings are common occurrences faced by all pet owners. Just as numerous are the types of bugs that go after our beloved dogs and cats. That's why recognizing, treating, and preventing bug bites is an essential component of responsible pet ownership. To help with the first part, here are a few common bugs your pet may encounter and clinical signs associated with their bites.

Remember, though, insects can transmit life-threatening bacteria, parasites, or viruses so it's crucial to focus on prevention by using veterinary-prescribed topical, oral, or collar-based medications. Concerns that your pet has been bitten or stung should also be immediately addressed with your veterinarian.

1. Fleas

Fleas are bloodthirsty insects that leap onto our pets' bodies and zoom across the skin surface. The head, neck, groin, perineum (area around the anus) and tail base are common locations where fleas congregate, bite, and irritate the skin. As a result, your pet will lick, chew, or scratch in an attempt to alleviate the irritation. Flea saliva is very allergenic, so the bite of a single flea can cause a dog or cat to itch all over his body. Skin lesions from flea bites can exhibit swelling, redness, hair loss, crusting, and oozing.

2. Ticks

Ticks opportunistically latch onto fur of animals that brush against a blade of grass, leaf, branch, ground, or other environmental

surfaces. Ticks are slow moving creatures that crawl across the skin surface until they find a suitable location to bite through layers of the skin to take a blood meal.

The face, head, ears, and sides of body (flanks), and limbs are common sites where ticks are discovered on dogs and cats. Non-engorged tick bodies measure only a few millimeters in diameter and may go unnoticed until they feeding and become engorged. Redness can occur around the tick bite; swelling and crusting can then occur once the tick is removed or falls off.

3. Mites

Mites like mange (Sarcoptes, Demodex, etc.) are microscopic insects that burrow deep into the layers of the skin to feed and live. Chewing their way through your pet's skin creates inflammation and leads to secondary infections (bacteria, yeast, etc.).

Skin-lesions from mange can manifest all over the body, but the armpits, groin, ear margins, and areas having minimal hair (elbows, etc.) are most commonly affected. Swelling, redness, hair loss, crusting, oozing, or other lesions can occur secondary to mange.

4. Mosquitoes

Pets feel the sensation of a mosquito bite penetrating the skin, so sudden licking, chewing, or scratching directly at the bite site commonly occurs. All body surfaces are prone to mosquito bites, but larger surface



areas (back, flanks, etc.) of the body provide broad surface areas to be bitten. Swelling, redness, and hives can be seen post-mosquito bite. The body's inflammatory response will motivate a pet to itch for minutes to hours, but will not likely have long-term effects.

5. Bees, Hornets & Wasps

Like mosquitoes, the sting of a bee, hornet, or wasp, tends to be localized to the point of entry into the skin and can occur anywhere on the body. However, the sting from these insects causes significant pain that can lead to sudden onset vocalization, lameness, itching, or other signs. Additionally, their venom creates a significant inflammatory response leading to swelling, redness, hives, and more systemic signs like vomiting, diarrhea, stumbling, collapse, and low blood pressure (hypotension) in sensitive pets.

6. Ant bites

Ant bites also cause localized pain and swelling but typically do not have significant whole-body effects. Ants crawl on animals at the contact

point between a body part and the ground, so standing pets get bitten on their feet and lounging animals can be bitten anywhere on the body having contact with the floor. Itching, redness, and lameness are most commonly associated with ant bites on dogs and cats.

7. Flies

Like fleas and ants, fly bites tend to cause pain and swelling but typically do not have significant whole-body effects. A fly can land anywhere on your pet, so fly bites have no specific location where they occur. Newborn, geriatric, and mobility-compromised animals are most prone to the consequences of fly bites, including itching and redness.

Flies may deposit eggs on your pet's skin, especially in open sores. Within days, the eggs hatch into larvae which crawl around on the surface or burrow within deeper skin layers and lead to swelling and secondary infection (bacteria, etc.).

Source: <http://www.petmd.com/dog/slideshows/parasites/common-bug-bites-on-dogs-cats>

UNRAVELLING DOMINANCE IN DOGS

Aggression is the canine behavior most likely to lead to relinquishment or euthanasia. To understand how dogs socially interact and how to manage conflict are therefore of particular importance to pet owners and veterinary professionals alike. Prevention, accurate diagnosis and effective treatment of problem behavior should carry equal weight to the care of an animal's physical health. The first step to achieving this is understanding the natural behavior of the dogs and factors that can influence it.

Traditional approaches to the prevention and management of canine aggression advocated owners to assert themselves as 'pack leader' through routine control of all resources and correction of any perceived challenge for them. At its most extreme this included punishment and steps to inhibit any initiative by the dog, including free movement and social interaction. The theory evolved from early to mid-20th century research into captive wolf behavior, embellished by subsequent generations of dog trainers and behaviourists. However, more recent research into the behavior of non-captive wolves and domesticated dogs, both in the home and living ferally, has brought the dominance theory into question. Perhaps more importantly, progress in the fields of animal welfare and training have highlighted ethical concerns and risks associated with the punitive methods of handling and training. Modern approaches to modifying and managing the behavior of the domestic dog use scientific principles to understand the motivation for their behavior. Change is then

facilitated through management of triggers, changing the dog's emotional response to them and manipulating things the dog wants, to encourage preferred behavior.

Studies comparing the efficacy of behavior modification based on rewarding wanted behavior, rather than punishing unwanted behavior, have shown the former is more effective than the latter. Dogs exposed to positive reinforcement were all significantly more responsive to positive reward and performed when using rewards to teach recall or address predatory chase behaviour better on new tasks, suggesting an ongoing effect on the dog's trainability. Studies also showed that owners reported greater success.

If you are experiencing behavioural problems with your dog, talk to your vet. Your vet will be able to provide you with information and also refer you to a qualified dog behaviourist/trainer for more professional advice and guidance. Most problem behaviours can be rectified with patience and love.

What is Positive Reinforcement Dog Training?

- Teaching dogs desirable behaviors using SCIENCE-based & REWARD-based methods.
- Helping dogs learn and succeed step by step.
- Motivating dogs with fun exercises and games. No force! No pain!
- Encouraging dogs to think more for themselves.
- Valuing dogs' voluntary behaviors.
- Understanding dogs' feelings from their body language.
- Understanding how dogs learn, their needs and wants.
- Using methods that work humanely with ANY dog. Big dogs, small dogs, puppies, senior dogs, disabled dogs, fearful dogs, reactive dogs... can all learn and have fun!



Source: *The Veterinary Nurse*, April 2017, Vol 8 No 3

PLANTS & FOODS THAT ARE POISONOUS TO PETS

There are thousands of chemicals including drugs, pesticides, household products, cosmetics and toiletries in addition to human foods, plants, fungi and venomous animals that pose a potential risk to pets and livestock. There are also various factors that affect the toxicity and risk of particular toxins; obviously this includes dose, but species differences, breed, age and pre-existing conditions, co-ingestants and for plants, seasonal risks, differences in the distribution of the toxin(s) in the plant parts, and the effect of cooking or drying may also play a role.

Some plants can also present a danger for cats and dogs. While there are thousands of species of plants and flowers, only a small percentage of plants are truly dangerous and poisonous to your pet. Make sure you know which plants are most deadly to avoid your dog or cat from getting into these poisonous flowers and poisonous plants!

Every home contains hazards for pets, including ones that are seemingly benign. Below is a list of the most common toxic foods and plants that may be lurking in your home presenting hazards for your pet.

The following foods may be dangerous to your pet:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Apple seeds
- Apricot pits
- Avocados
- Cherry pits
- Sweets (particularly chocolate — which is toxic to dogs, cats, and ferrets — and any sweets containing the toxic sweetener Xylitol)



- Coffee (grounds, beans, and chocolate-covered espresso beans)
- Garlic
- Grapes

- Gum (can cause blockages and sugar free gums may contain the toxic sweetener Xylitol)
- Hops (used in home beer brewing)
- Macadamia nuts
- Moldy foods
- Mushroom plants
- Mustard seeds
- Onions and onion powder
- Peach stones
- Potato leaves and stems (green parts)
- Raisins / Sultanas
- Rhubarb leaves
- Salt
- Tea (because it contains caffeine)
- Tomato leaves and stems (green parts)
- Walnuts
- Xylitol (artificial sweetener that is toxic to pets)
- Yeast dough

The following foods may be dangerous to your pet:



- Autumn Crocus
- Azalea
- Kalanchoe
- Lilies
- Oleander
- Dieffenbachia
- Daffodils
- Lillies
- Sago Palm
- Tulips and Hyacinths

If you suspect your pet has ingested any of these items or any other questionable substance, call Pet Poison Helpline or your veterinarian for assistance. Accurate and timely identification of the suspected substance is very important. Having the container, package, or label in hand will save valuable time and may save the life of your pet.

Source: <http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/pet-owners/basics/top-10-plants-poisonous-to-pets/>

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MY PET HAS BEEN BITTEN BY A SNAKE!

At the beginning of spring, when snakes first become active, their venom glands tend to be fuller and their venom is more concentrated making their bites at this time much more severe. Pet owners need to be careful and safeguard their pets from snake bites, plus look out for the warning signs should an animal be bitten.

Dogs will often try to chase or kill snakes resulting in snake bites usually to the dog's face and legs. Cats, being hunters and chasing anything that moves, are also quite susceptible to snake bites.

The sort of reaction your pet has to a snake bite is determined by a number of factors: the type of snake, the amount of venom injected and the site of the snake bite. Generally the closer the bite is to the heart the quicker the venom spreads to the rest of the body. In addition, in spring and early summer their bites are more severe.



The tiger and brown snake are responsible for most of the snake bites in domestic pets. The tiger snakes have a bite that can be fatal to not only pets but humans. Brown snake venom is milder than the tiger snake's, but is still fatal. These snakes have a toxin that causes paralysis and also have an agent in them that uses up all the clotting factors that helps to stop your pet from bleeding. Tiger snakes also have a toxin that breaks down muscle causing damage to the kidneys.

Signs of snake bite include:

- Sudden weakness followed by collapse
- Shaking or twitching of the muscles and difficulty blinking
- Vomiting

- Loss of bladder and bowel control
- Dilated pupils
- Paralysis
- Blood in urine

If you think your pet has been bitten by a snake you should keep them calm and quiet and take them to a vet immediately. The chances of recovery are much greater if your pet is treated early, with some pets making a recovery within 48 hours. Pets left untreated have a much lower survival rate, and many will die. If your vet is some distance away, if practical, you can apply a pressure bandage – a firm bandage over and around the bite site - to help slow the venom spreading to the heart. Do NOT wash the wound or apply a tourniquet.

If you can identify the snake, tell your vet what type of snake it is - but don't try to catch or kill the snake. If it is dead, bring the snake with you, otherwise there is a blood or urine test that can identify whether your animal has been bitten and the type of snake responsible.

Once the snake has been identified your vet can administer antivenom. Please be warned that antivenom is expensive and can result in a large veterinary bill, so it is best to try and keep your pets safe and away from snakes in the first place.

Source: http://kb.rspca.org.au/my-pet-has-been-bitten-by-a-snake-what-should-i-do_444.html

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