



IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE



1. FOOD HAZARDS OVER CHRISTMAS

We want the holidays to be a happy time for you and your pet, not a time for an emergency visit to your veterinarian. The food that makes the holidays so much fun for us can be dangerous for your pet.

2. MIXED OR PUREBRED PUPPY?

It's the big question on every potential dog owner's mind: should I adopt a mutt or go with a purebred? Purebreds are attractive because they tend to have very distinct traits and physical characteristics, but mixed breeds may offer far more benefits for both you and the pet itself.

3. HOW TO KEEP YOUR PET COOL IN THE HEAT

The hot summer days are just beginning and it's important for cat and dog owners to know the signs if their pet is struggling in the hot weather – and how to keep them cool.

4. KEEPING YOUR PETS SAFE DURING FIREWORKS

Fireworks are the perfect ending to any summer celebration, but while you are oohing and aahing as the night sky lights up, your pet may be cowering in fear. Luckily, there are things you can do to keep your pet safe, calm and happy during fireworks.

FOOD HAZARDS OVER CHRISTMAS

Chocolate, Turkey Bones, Ham and other yummys!!

Even if your dog looks at you with pleading eyes, resist the urge to throw holiday table scraps his way. Rich, fatty foods, like gravy or grease, can cause problems ranging from stomach upsets to pancreatitis resulting in pain, vomiting, and dehydration. Dogs with this serious condition often require hospitalization for treatment and in rare occasions can be fatal. Ingested bones can splinter and cause an obstruction or lacerations of your dog's digestive system. Other foods that we find delicious can in fact be fatal to some animals.

- Chocolate, which stimulates the nervous system and the heart, should be kept far away from four-legged friends. Although all chocolate should be avoided, dark chocolate poses a greater risk than sweeter varieties, such as milk chocolate. Problems from ingestion range from diarrhoea to seizures and death. Unsweetened baking chocolate and dark chocolate are the worst culprits, but all chocolate, fudge, and other candy should be placed out of your dog's reach.

- Bones from fish, meat, or poultry can also cause problems if swallowed. Even small bones can splinter causing lacerations throughout the intestinal tract. So, no matter how big or how little they are, be sure to avoid all bones.

- Abundant in many cookies and candies, certain nuts should not be given to pets. Almonds, non-mouldy walnuts and pistachios can cause an upset stomach or an obstruction of your dog's throat and/or intestinal tract. Macadamia nuts and mouldy walnuts can be toxic, causing seizures or neurological signs. Lethargy, vomiting and loss of muscle control are among the effects of nut ingestion.

- The artificial sweetener, xylitol, that is present in some gums, breath mints, candy, and other human food can be very toxic to dogs and can cause his blood pressure to drop to dangerously low levels.

- Grapes and raisins contain a toxin which can damage the kidneys.



- Pets should never ingest alcoholic beverages because alcohol depresses the nervous system.

- Alcohol may cause vomiting, disorientation, diarrhoea, lethargy, lack of coordination, difficulty breathing, tremors, coma, and seizures.

Helpful Hints: Theobromine is the toxic compound found in chocolate. If your animal ingests any chocolate give us a ring and we can calculate the amount of Theobromine ingested and advise you on the course of action to take.

Remember when trimming the ham/chicken or turkey that fat trimmed from meat, both cooked and uncooked, has a high risk of causing pancreatitis.

Well-intentioned family and friends may share holiday foods with pets. To control excessive food intake by your pets and meet your guests' desires to feed the pets, dole out the treats your pets would normally receive and let your guests "treat" the pets.

If you want to get festive, mix some of your pet's regular food with water to make "dough" and roll out and cut into festive shapes, then bake until crunchy.





Rubbish bins contain all kinds of hazards for your dog especially at Christmas time. Remember, dogs have an exceptional sense of smell – juices on plastic or aluminium foil left on countertops are very tempting. If ingested, plastic or foil wrap (cellophane candy wrappers or food wrap) can cause choking or intestinal obstruction.

Meat-soaked strings from rump roasts are also enticing. Ingestion can cause a surgical emergency called a 'linear string foreign body' in the intestines.

To be safe, put away food immediately and pet-proof your garbage. Feed your pet(s) before a party so they will not be so apt to beg or steal food. Clean up glasses after holiday parties. Dogs are often attracted by the sweet taste of drinks, especially eggnog.

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MIXED OR PUREBRED PUPPY?

There has been a longstanding argument amongst dog lovers and experts alike on the merits of a mixed-breed versus a purebred puppy. Some believe that there are many advantages to getting a mixed-breed for a pet, saying that a mixed-breed has a better disposition and can more easily adapt to its new home. And without a doubt, mixed-breeds are sold at lower prices compared to purebred dogs.

Of course, in some instances, the price of a mixed breed may be higher, depending on whether particular breeds were intentionally bred to produce a new breed (such as Puggles – Pug+Beagle), but in general, mixed breed dogs are sold for very reasonable costs. The best place to get a mixed-breed puppy is often an animal shelter, where the cost is mostly limited to the adoption, spay/neuter and vaccination fees, with the added benefit of knowing you have actually saved the life of a puppy.

A mixed-breed puppy often has the advantage of having a much lower chance of being born with inherited congenital diseases, since the mating process naturally leaves out the defective genes. This is a general truism.

There are many dog lovers who are devoted to mixed breed dogs. They feel that mixed breeds are much less likely to exhibit the results of interbreeding, such as temperament, intelligence and health issues. This is generally true, but being a mixed breed is not a guarantee of superior health. There are occasionally cases where a mixed breed puppy is born with the negative genetic traits of the breeds it is descended from.



Over-breeding on the other hand can have disastrous results including serious genetic disorders.

Some selective, appearance-oriented breeding has led to a plethora of problems for example in bulldogs—even the “perfect” ones—including cancer, respiratory diseases, blindness, and heart problems. They also have severe trouble giving birth, which seems like the kind of thing breeders would actively want to avoid. And that’s just one type of dog. To take another example, the bulging eyes of pugs are prone to developing a slew of horrible diseases, mostly leading to blindness—and yet they remain the official standard.

Health and welfare problems in pedigree dogs can arise as a result of the deliberate selection for exaggerated physical features or as a result of inherited disease. While some of the following problems can occur in any breed, cross breed or mixed breed dogs, purebred pedigree dogs are at greater risk and appear to be over-represented clinically. This is mainly due to traditional breeding practices.

- Difficulty breathing
- Difficulty giving birth
- Difficulty walking
- Serious eye problems
- Serious skin problems

Man's obsession with creating the "perfect" dog has led to an absurdly strong emphasis on appearance with more time being spent on refining the colour and quality of coats than on improving the health and welfare of the animal. As a result we have created dogs that have difficulty breathing, difficulty walking and running, dogs that can't give birth naturally and dogs with chronic back, ear, skin and eye problems.

Sources:

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<https://www.rspca.org.au/campaigns/pedigree-dogs/five-common-problems-pedigree-dogs>

HOW TO KEEP YOUR CAT OR DOG COOL IN THE HEAT AND HOW TO TELL IF THEY ARE STRUGGLING IN HOT WEATHER

The hot summer days are just beginning and it's important for cat and dog owners to know the signs if their pet is struggling in the hot weather – and how to keep them cool.

Heat can be intense and difficult to deal with for humans and we all have means of cooling ourselves down to make it more bearable. However, your four legged friend might need a helping hand.

These are the signs to look out for from your dog or cat – along with some helpful advice on taking the heat off so they can enjoy summer too.

DOGS

The signs:

If a dog is unhappy in the heat, they may exhibit the following signs:

- Heavy panting
- Their tongue and gums may be bright pink or red
- Their tongue may loll out of their mouth



- They may have a dry and tacky mouth with a mucus-like build up
- They may lie down more often than usual and breathe heavily
- They may vomit
- They may lift their feet awkwardly if the ground is too hot for them
- They may stumble and seem disorientated

Things to remember:

• Like humans, dogs will lose their appetite somewhat in the heat and may eat less. This is not automatically a cause for concern unless there is a significant drop in how much they eat or if they vomit after eating.

• Darker dogs will absorb more sunlight so be aware that if they have black or brown fur, they will feel the heat more

• Lighter dogs are more susceptible to sunburn

• Like humans, dogs may become more irritable in the heat – so don't annoy them or prod them.

• The types of dogs more likely to suffer in the heat include pugs, bulldogs, greyhounds and any with thick fur but this isn't exhaustive and any dog can feel the heat.

• Never lock a dog in the car, no matter what the weather and don't leave your dog in the conservatory either as this acts almost like a greenhouse and can get unbearably hot in the sunlight.

How you can help your dog:

- Ensure they have access to plenty of fresh water.
- Avoid taking them out around midday when it is likely to be hottest and avoid strenuous exercise between 1pm and 4pm.
- Bring water with you when you take your dog out and make sure it's their normal drinking water so it's familiar with them – dogs can be fussy with unfamiliar tasting water. Do not give too much at once as they may throw it up.
- If your dog is too warm, move them somewhere cold and shaded and sponge cool water on their abdomen, armpits and feet.



• Make sure there is always access to a shaded area when out and a cool area when inside.

• Avoid walking your dog on dark surfaces that absorb sunlight or pavements if possible – if too hot, they can blister your dog's paws, making it very painful for them to walk.

• Avoid feeding your dog within an hour either side of exercise to avoid bloating and gastrointestinal problems which are more common in hot weather.

• If your dog is lighter or has less hair, apply sun lotion to their ears or consider a sunsuit.

• You may consider clipping your dog's coat to make hot weather more bearable if they have a lot of hair.

• You could invest in a cooling coat which can be refrigerated and then worn by your dog to keep their temperature down.

CATS

The signs:

If a cat is unhappy in the heat, they may exhibit the following signs:

- Heavy panting
- Their tongue and gums may be bright pink or red
- They may start drooling
- They may lie down more often than usual and breathe heavily
- They may vomit
- They may be restless and constantly be trying to find somewhere cooler
- They may have sweaty paws
- They may excessively groom to try and cool off
- They may stumble and seem disorientated

Things to remember:

• Like humans, cats may lose their appetite somewhat in the heat and may eat less. This is not automatically a cause for concern unless there is a significant drop in how much they eat or if they vomit after eating.

• Cats are more adapted to hot weather than dogs and humans so will cope slightly better – and it isn't unusual to see them sitting in their litter tray as, originally being desert-dwelling animals, they know that sand can help to cool them.

• Never lock a cat in the car, no matter what the weather.

How you can help your cat:

- Ensure they have access to plenty of fresh water
- Brush them regularly – they will mat more in the heat to lessen their coat so brushing will help get rid of that extra hair that might be heating them up.
- Put on a fan or air conditioning unit to keep areas cool.
- If cat is too warm, move them somewhere cold (such as kitchen tiles) and use a wet cloth to pad them and cool them down.
- Make sure there is always access to a cool and sheltered area inside.
- You may want to restrict your cat from going out in the hottest hours (usually between 1pm and 4pm)
- Feed your cat little and often as wet food left out in the heat can attract flies and extra bacteria that may upset their stomach.



- Cats can be sunburnt so you can apply sun lotion to their ears, particularly if they don't have much hair cover.
- You may consider clipping your cat's coat to make hot weather more bearable if they have a lot of hair.

Source: <http://metro.co.uk/2016/07/19/how-to-keep-your-cat-or-dog-cool-in-the-heat-and-how-to-tell-if-they-are-struggling-in-hot-weather-6015511/>



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KEEP YOUR PETS SAFE DURING FIREWORKS SEASON

Fireworks are the perfect ending to any summer celebration, but while you are oohing and aahing as the night sky lights up, your dog or cat may be covering in fear. Luckily, there are a few things you can do to keep your furry friend safe, calm and happy during a fireworks show.

Why Are Fireworks So Scary?

Imagine how startled you would be if you suddenly heard loud booms and saw bright lights but had no idea what caused them. Although your family may eagerly anticipate fireworks every year, your pet has no idea that your usually peaceful home will soon be disrupted by loud, frightening noises.

Avoiding Firework Dangers

Because your pet has no idea what causes those terrifying sounds, he or she may try to escape from your house in an effort to get away from the noise. Unfortunately, your pet can become injured by jumping through a window and may even run out into the street and be hit by a car. You can keep your pet safe by following these tips when it's time for the local fireworks display. Do not take your pet to the show unless you are absolutely sure that he or she is not afraid of fireworks. Your pet may actually run toward the fireworks in an attempt to flee the noise or might knock over other guests.

If you live in ear shot of a fireworks show, do not leave your pet outside – even in a secured and fenced yard. Scared pets have been known to escape from even the most pet-proofed yard when fireworks are involved. The best place for pets is inside.

Find the quietest room in your house, and put your pet's food, water, bed or crate in the room, along with a few toys. Turn on the TV or play some music to help mask the sounds of the fireworks. Be sure the door latches firmly when you leave the room. If a family member does not plan to attend the fireworks show, your dog or cat will enjoy a little company in the safe space.

Put a collar and tags on your dog or cat. The tags will help ensure that your pet returns home if there is an escape. Make sure that the information on tags is current. For maximum peace of mind, microchip your pet too. Since microchips are placed under your pet's skin, they can never be lost, unlike collars and tags.

Take a recent photograph of your pet just in case there is an escape and you need to make a flyer or post information on the Internet.

Do not leave your pet in the car if you are attending a fireworks show. The temperature inside your car can rise to dangerous levels in as little as 10 minutes. Your pet may also damage your car in an attempt to escape.

Make sure that fences and screens are in good repair to prevent your pet from escaping from your home during the fireworks.

Take a road trip. If your pet is terrified of fireworks and nothing you do makes the situation more tolerable, consider leaving your pet with a friend outside the firework zone or check into a pet-friendly hotel or motel.



If your pet is afraid of fireworks or suffers from any other type of anxiety, we can help. Call us to schedule an appointment to discuss your furry friend's fears.

