



ORCHARD

VETERINARY CENTRE

news

Winter 2023/24

BEWARE Lungworm!

Most pet owners know how important it is to regularly treat their pet for parasitic worms. All types of worms are a health risk to your pet, and in some cases humans too, so please do ensure that your pet is covered.

Lungworm (*Angiostrongylus Vasorum*) is a particularly nasty parasite that can make your dog seriously ill, and very sadly in some cases if left untreated, can be fatal. If infected, lungworm lives in the heart and blood vessels that supply the lungs. Take a look to the right to see how this parasite could infect your pets. Perhaps they are snail eaters or sniff around in grass? Even feeding bowls and toys that are in the garden can have infected snail trails.

Common symptoms of lungworm infections are:

- coughing ● rapid/difficulty breathing ● weight loss ● lethargy ● pale gums
- loss of appetite ● seizures ● vomiting and/or diarrhoea ● bleeding problems

If you notice any of the above, bring your pet in for a check up without delay.

Reduce the spread of lungworm

- Maintain regular worming treatments.
- Clean up and correctly dispose of your dog's poo from the garden and on walks.
- Minimise pets contact with snails and slugs.
- **Before use**, thoroughly wash toys, water and food bowls that have been in the garden.



If you are unsure of what preventative treatments to use and how often, please ask for advice from our friendly team.

*****PLEASE REMEMBER*****

Slug pellets placed in your garden are highly toxic, and can be fatal to dogs and other pets if eaten.

Free Dental Checks

For a limited time, we are offering free dental checks with our nurses. *If a veterinary consultation is required following a dental check, this will incur charges.* You may not think too much about your pet's pearly whites, but dental health and oral hygiene is a huge part of keeping your pet healthy no matter what size or species.

Cleaning your pet's teeth is the most effective way to prevent oral health problems, and regular brushing may help save money in the long run. A clean and healthy mouth reduces your pet's risk of developing dental diseases such as gingivitis but also, much like with humans, can combat stubborn plaque and bad breath.

The idea of cleaning your pet's teeth may be daunting, but we've put together some handy tips to help. Make sure you do these gradually to give you both a chance to get used to your new dental care routine.



Step 1 With cats and dogs; start by using your finger to brush the side of their face next to their mouth.

Step 2 Once they get used to this you can progress to rubbing their teeth, and then introducing a small amount of animal toothpaste.

Step 3 Eventually you may be able to introduce a toothbrush to their teeth-cleaning routine.

The gold standard of dental care means cleaning your pet's teeth every day, though 2-4 times a week will help to maintain healthy teeth and gums. Remember to seek veterinary advice before brushing your pet's teeth, as they will require a special toothpaste and brush!

Signs of a problem with your pet's mouth or teeth may include

- smelly breath
- difficulty eating or loss of appetite
- redness or bleeding around the gums
- excess drooling
- pawing or rubbing at the mouth

If you notice a problem with your pet's mouth, call your local branch to book a consultation with one of our vets.

HOURS

410 Birchfield Lane
OLDBURY
B69 1AD

0121 544 0404

Mon to Fri 8:30am - 6:30pm
Sat 8:30am - 12:30pm

Home Farm
Northfield Road
HARBORNE
B17 0TD

0121 428 1777

Mon to Fri 8:30am - 6:30pm

210 Holyhead Road
WEDNESBURY
WS10 7DH

0121 556 6890

Mon to Fri 8:30am - 6:30pm

MAKE sure your dog is on a lead when walking close to frozen ponds and rivers.



EXERCISE pets regularly over the festive season, it's part of their routine healthcare.

ROCKETS and fireworks can cause some pets much distress, but we have plenty of help and advice.

RECHARGEABLE and regular batteries are extremely dangerous if chewed or swallowed by your pet.



YOUR fairy lights are very pretty, but watch out for pets chewing at wires and plugs.

CHOCOLATE contains theobromine, which is poisonous to dogs and cats. Store it out of their reach.

HELP our feathered friends in winter. Keep the wild bird table topped up.



REMIND visiting guests who are on medication to store it carefully. While you eat your turkey dinner, your pet could be munching Aunt Ethel's pills!

IF your pet falls ill when the surgery is closed, call our emergency service.

SUPERVISE all pets near open fires and log burners.

TURKEY carcass bones are sharp when broken and can get lodged in the throat and stomach. Please do not feed them to your pet!

MINCE PIES contain raisins, which can be toxic to dogs if ingestedgrapes too.



ANTIFREEZE for cars tastes sweet to pets, but is potentially fatal if swallowed. Please clear away any spills and don't let your pet drink from puddles.

SMALL PETS living outside require extra warm dry bedding, regular checks and unfrozen drinking water. Ensure hutches are rain and draught proof.



Gagging Cats!

When reports started coming through on my mobile of gagging cats, I immediately rushed off to investigate the latest incident! On arrival, I found the victim hunched in a corner who managed in between gagging to tell me of his problem. "Well you know how fussy we cats are about our appearance always groomingyou know licking and nibbling at our fur..... well you never think it's going to happen to you but then bang...you're a victim! At this point he paused and launched into a series of coughing and retching. "It's no use" he whispered "I just can't shift it, I need help please".

Fortunately I can report that his owner on seeing the trouble her cat was in, whisked him off to the vets. Following in haste, I waited outside for her to emerge and as she did, asked if her cat was okay? "Well thank goodness" she said, "I'm very happy to tell you that Tiddles is much better now and recovering

from his ordeal. It seems that he had formed a hairball from the fur that he swallows while grooming. The vet told me that this usually passes through the digestive system and is pooped out, but in Tiddles' case this did not happen and the hairball was stuck! With some treatment it has now been removed. Tiddles is much happier and I can take him home soon"

So cat owners, if you see your cat gagging and retching, please call us immediately for advice. Also watch out for loss of appetite, constipation and in the more serious cases, a swollen abdomen. This is Carrie Cat signing off for Orchard Vets News.

Carrie Cat



A Kiss Under the Mistletoe

Ancient Druids and Norse Mythology tell mystical stories of this seasonal plant, but unfortunately the truth for your pet....it is poisonous!

Mistletoe & berries, fresh or dried, contain substances that are toxic. **If ingested, this can cause severe intestinal upset, a sudden drop in blood pressure and breathing difficulties.** Sadly this can sometimes be fatal.

Holly/berries are also toxic, so either avoid having holly and mistletoe in your home, or keep these plants well out of reach of cats and dogs! **If you notice any of the following signs** or suspect ingestion of either plant, please contact your vet immediately.

Excessive Drooling - Vomiting - Diarrhoea - Stomach Pain - Seizures

Poinsettias can also cause problems, but the level of toxicity is milder. The white sap in Poinsettias irritates the skin, mouth and throat, causing redness, itching and swelling. Puppies, kittens, and smaller breeds are more at risk, as their size and the amount of plant ingested will determine the seriousness of poisoning.

If ingested it may cause: vomiting, diarrhoea, drooling and lip licking.

