

Paws and Claws Newsletter



Household Dangers

As loving and caring pet owners, the last thing we want to do is harm our furry children. Unfortunately, you may be unknowingly exposing your animal to danger around the house. Dogs and cats love to explore, and their favorite tools for exploration are their mouths! As they are unable to distinguish between safe and toxic objects to chew on, it is your responsibility to make sure their latest discovery is not harmful to them.

In this article, we are including information about several plants and foods that can potentially pose risks to your pets.

Plants are very popular for animals to chew on. Though many plants do not cause any harm to pets, there are a few you need to be aware of that can cause significant damage to your animal. Some of the more toxic plants are:

- rhododendrons and azaleas (can cause cardiovascular dysfunction)
- oleander, lily of the valley, and foxglove (contain cardiac glycosides which most commonly affect the stomach and cardiovascular system)
- lilies, including Easter, Tiger, Japanese, and various day lilies (can cause acute kidney failure and death in cats; non-toxic in dogs)

Though feeding table scraps to our pets is never ideal in the first place, certain foods should definitely be avoided due to their toxic effects on animals. These foods include:

- grapes and raisins (can cause kidney failure in dogs)
- onions and garlic (contain n-propyl disulfide, which can cause damage to red blood cells)
- chocolate, especially baking chocolate (if consumed in large enough quantities, can cause severe gastrointestinal, neurological, and cardiac symptoms)

For a complete list of toxic plants and foods, please visit www.asPCA.com.

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Oxygen Masks for Pets — A Worthy Cause

Janet Fincannon, a loyal client of our West Ashley location, is determined to save the lives of pets trapped in house fires. As the founder of Oxygen Masks for Pets, an organization that raises money to donate pet oxygen mask kits to fire departments, she is doing just that. The organization was created in October 2009 and has since then donated 69 mask kits to 16 different fire departments

as close as Charleston and as far away as New York and New Jersey.

Oxygen masks used to rescue humans from fires are too large for pets and do not create enough suction around an animal's muzzle. The mask kits donated to fire rescuers by Janet Fincannon's organization contain 3 different sizes of pet masks that can be used with

standard oxygen tanks. The cost of one mask kit is \$65.



To make a donation or to learn more about the organization, please visit:

www.oxygenmasks4pets.org



Janet Fincannon with "Andrew", courtesy of *Post and Courier*



The ABC's of Our Vaccines

Ever wonder exactly what your pet is being vaccinated for each year? Here is a breakdown of the vaccines your pet may receive at his or her annual check-up.

DOGS

DHLPPC (Distemper combo)

- **Distemper** : This often fatal disease is difficult to treat and is highly contagious. Distemper is spread through discharge from the eyes and nose. The virus that causes this disease attacks many organs, including the central nervous system, causing permanent damage even if an infected pet recovers.
- **Hepatitis** : This viral disease can be fatal and is transmitted through secretions such as saliva and infected urine or feces. Hepatitis causes liver failure, eye damage, and breathing problems.
- **Leptospirosis** : This bacterial disease produces symptoms such as high fevers, anorexia, vomiting, dehydration, shivering, and muscle tenderness. The bacteria can cause liver and/or kidney failure and is difficult to diagnose. Severely infected dogs may become depressed and die before kidney or liver failure has a chance to develop. The disease can be transmitted between animals and people through contact with infected urine, which can occur through exposure to contaminated water sources, food, or even bedding. Stagnant or slow-moving water provides a great habitat for this bacteria. Infected dogs can shed the bacteria in their urine for months or even years.
- **Parainfluenza** : This chronic and highly contagious viral disease is spread through coughing or sneezing. Marked by coughing and gagging, the disease can sometimes lead to pneumonia, which can be life-threatening.
- **Parvovirus** : This often fatal disease is very difficult and expensive to treat. It is highly contagious and is spread through infected feces. Common symptoms include vomiting and bloody diarrhea. Incredibly resistant, this virus can remain in the environment for many years.
- **Corona** : This viral disease is not normally associated with high mortality rates. The virus, which is spread through contact with infected feces, attacks the intestinal system and causes diarrhea.

Bordetella

Also known as the "kennel cough" vaccine, this is a bacterial infection of the upper respiratory system. This infection is not normally fatal, but if left untreated can develop into pneumonia. This vaccine is optional at our clinic since the disease is spread primarily through close contact with other dogs at boarding or grooming facilities.

Lyme

Lyme disease is a tick-borne disease that is not prevalent in this area. Clinical illness usually occurs 2-5 months after a bite from an infected tick. Dogs show several different forms of the disease, but by far the most common symptoms are fever, lameness, swelling in the joints, swollen lymph nodes, lethargy, and loss of appetite. Although not common, some dogs have developed severe progressive kidney disease, which can result in death. This vaccine is also optional at our clinic, but if you travel with your pet or live close to a wooded area it may be a good idea to have your dog vaccinated.

CATS

FVRCP (Distemper combo)

- **Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis** : This virus is transmitted through discharge from an infected cat's eyes, nose, and/or mouth. Sneezing and coughing can spread this virus up to 4 feet! This disease affects the respiratory system.
- **Calicivirus** : This highly contagious viral disease usually occurs in conjunction with another upper respiratory infection, such as feline herpes, rhinotracheitis, or chlamydiosis. This disease is spread through direct contact with saliva and eye and/or nasal discharge. Resistant to most cleaners, the virus can remain in the environment for 8-10 days. Many cats remain contagious for years, often showing no signs.
- **Panleukopenia** : This viral disease is usually fatal in young kittens and cats. Spread through direct contact with infected feces or urine as well as in-utero, this virus invades and destroys cells in the digestive system, bone marrow, lymph tissue, and/or nervous system.

Feline Leukemia

This virus is highly contagious and is the leading infectious killer of cats. 80% of infected cats will die within just 3 years of being diagnosed. The disease is spread through bodily secretions such as urine and saliva, as well as in-utero. Since this disease is only spread through contact with other unvaccinated cats, the vaccine is only given to patients who spend time outdoors and therefore may come into contact with unknown cats.

Rabies vaccines are routinely given to both dogs and cats. The rabies virus attacks the central nervous system and is spread through infected saliva. It can be transmitted to both humans and pets through bite wounds or any break in the skin that involves saliva. It is fatal 100% of the time.

It is required by federal law to keep your pets current on their rabies vaccine.

The Aches and Pains of Arthritis

Have you noticed that your older animal has difficulty getting up and down or seems stiff sometimes? Is your cat reluctant to jump? Maybe your geriatric pet is even acting temperamental or withdrawn. Although many dog and cat owners interpret these symptoms as part of the normal aging process, they could be subtle signs of osteoarthritis, the most common cause of arthritis seen in veterinary medicine.

Joints are places in the body where two bones meet. In the moveable joints of the body, the bone ends of the joint are covered in smooth, shock-absorbing hyaline cartilage. The joint itself is enclosed by a thick membrane called the joint capsule. The space of a joint is filled with synovial fluid, which helps nourish the cells within the joint. Osteoarthritis, or degenerative joint disease (DJD), occurs when there is damage to the joint capsule and/or the hyaline cartilage. Tissue-damaging enzymes are released that cause further damage and disintegration of the cartilage as well as the synovial fluid, which leads to a vicious cycle of worsening joint destruction. Over time, in severe cases, this destruction can result in bone rubbing directly on bone.

Damage to the joint may occur in the following ways:

Trauma Any fracture or luxation involving a joint may lead to permanent damage.

Developmental joint diseases These include

conditions such as hip dysplasia or osteochondrosis.

Age DJD can be caused by normal wear and tear on a joint over time.

Obesity Excessive weight places abnormal pressure on joints.

DJD is not a curable disease, but it can be managed. If there is an underlying cause such as trauma or developmental bone disease, surgery can be used as treatment, but DJD that already exists will continue to cause intermittent inflammation.

Symptoms such as difficulty getting up and down, general stiffness, reluctance to jump, and behavioral changes are often interpreted by pet owners as part of the normal aging process, when they could be subtle signs of osteoarthritis.

There are three major aspects of treating osteoarthritis:

1. Medication The mainstay of pain management is the use of NSAIDs, or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Other commonly used medications include additional pain medications, steroids, and injectable medications used to increase the production of joint fluid. Dietary supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin provide building blocks for healthier joint fluid and cartilage repair. The addition of Omega-3 fatty acids can interfere with the inflammatory process within the joint. Some prescription diets such as

Hill's Prescription j/d, which is sold at our clinics, contain high levels of glucosamine and fatty acids.

2. Weight control It cannot be emphasized enough that in overweight animals, a weight control program is absolutely essential to minimizing arthritic pain. Obesity is not only a direct cause of DJD, it will rapidly worsen a clinical course. The basic foundation for weight control includes small, frequent feedings, calorie control, and exercise.

3. Exercise and rehabilitation Exercise is important for an arthritic animal for many reasons. It maintains bone strength and muscle mass, strengthens the legs, improves joint health by stimulating joint fluid production, and helps fight obesity. The key to exercise in an arthritic pet is

control. These animals are often sore and may not be used to moving, so it is extremely important to start slowly. Always check with your veterinarian before starting any exercise program with your pet.

Osteoarthritis is a painful, debilitating, and progressive disease that can affect all animals regardless of size. With attentive and dedicated care, an arthritic animal can remain a happy and healthy member of the family for a long time to come.

HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST!!!

Do you have a great costume idea for your pet this year? Take a picture and send it to us — you could win a **free office visit** to our clinic!

Pictures must be sent via email to:

kates@northwoodsvet.com

by Nov 15th in order to qualify. Our staff will vote on the best picture and the winner will be notified by Nov 26th and be featured in our next newsletter! Entries are restricted to established patients of our clinic only. The winner will be awarded with a free office visit for their entered pet, to be redeemed any time before 12/31/11.



In your email entry, please include your name, your pet's name, and your phone number.

Good luck and may the best pet win!

MEET SOME OF OUR PERFECT PATIENTS!

Is there a subject you'd be interested in reading about? Do you have pet questions you'd like answered? Email Kate at Kates@northwoodsvet.com!



"Flipper" with Nick



"Josie" Giglio



"Cletus" Free



"Sergio" Gratton



"Dee Dee" Ray



"Forest" Colson



"Myrtle" Jones



"Sawyer" Bennett



"Moses" Griffin



"Farrah" Seabrook



"Zooko" Kavanaugh



"Junebug" Elliott

Caption Contest



"Wait a second—where do you think you're sticking that thermometer?!"

Submitted by Lauren Sternberg



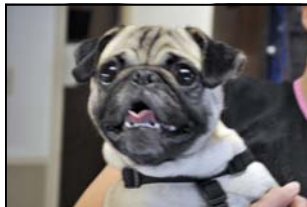
"Grayce" Royer



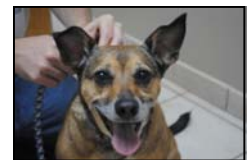
"Sadie" Gosch



"Laci" Danner



"Sadie" Verrier



"Hightop" O'Quinn

STAFF NEWS

- ◆ Please join us in congratulating Suzanna, our Northwoods head receptionist, on getting married on July 17th.
- ◆ Our West Ashley location is pleased to introduce Jenna, our newest veterinary technician.
- ◆ Roxanna, who was introduced to our readers in a previous issue as Northwoods' newest technician, graduated from Trident Technical College and will soon be taking her national board examination to become a certified veterinary technician.
- ◆ Dr. Van Liew recently got married—please join us in congratulating her!
- ◆ Please welcome Suzanne to our Northwoods receptionist team. Yes, we now have a Suzanne and a Suzanna on our front staff. (We apologize in advance for the inevitable confusion!)
- ◆ Dr. Tierney welcomed Henry, her second baby boy, to her family on August 23rd.

