

Anti-Freeze Poisoning

Antifreeze (Ethylene Glycol) is a hidden danger found in products like car screen wash, and water coolant. Even when small amounts are ingested this can be extremely toxic to pets, causing fatal damage to kidneys and the nervous system.

Unfortunately, cats are at higher risk of ingestion as they typically roam and drink from puddles etc. Sadly, the sweet taste, makes it seem like a sweet treat.

Fatalities occur every year from accidental ingestion of antifreeze spills and leaks. To keep your pets safe, check your car regularly to make sure it isn't leaking water coolant, and be careful with storing, using and disposing of antifreeze and water coolant.

Symptoms of ingestion: muscle spasms, lethargy, vomiting, unsteadiness, seizures, fast breathing and collapse.

If you think your pet may have ingested antifreeze, please contact the practice immediately!



Star Patient Award

Jaffa was brought to the practice after her owner noticed she appeared uncomfortable and was drooling excessively following her lunchtime walk. During walks, Jaffa had a fondness for chasing sticks, and her owner was concerned that she might have a stick lodged in her mouth or have sustained an injury caused by one.

During her consultation with the vet, Amy, a thorough examination of Jaffa's mouth was performed. She showed particular sensitivity on one side, which also appeared to be the source of the excessive drooling, indicating a possible issue in that area. No other wounds or abnormalities were found. After discussing options with Jaffa's owner, it was decided that she would be admitted for sedation to allow a more detailed examination of her oral cavity, specifically to check for any foreign material or penetration injuries caused by a stick.

Under sedation, an examination revealed a small laceration on the right side of Jaffa's tongue, accompanied by a deep pocket. She was then intubated to facilitate further exploration and to assess the depth of the wound. An endoscope was used to examine the area for debris, and radiographs were taken to rule out any damage to her teeth or jaw. The endoscopy revealed small pieces of bark and debris embedded in the wound, which were flushed out thoroughly with fluid. The material was consistent with fragments that might splinter off a stick. Given the nature of the injury, it was decided to leave the laceration open to heal by secondary intention, allowing it to drain and close naturally over time.

Jaffa's owners were informed of potential complications due to the injury and advised that a CT scan might be required in the future. However, Jaffa recovered remarkably well! Her owners were thrilled with her progress and have since learned an important lesson about the dangers of throwing sticks for dogs.



These days, Jaffa enjoys her walks accompanied by her new "fetch" partner—a piggy toy! Let this serve as a reminder to all pet owners: if you want to play fetch with your pet, always use appropriate toys instead of sticks or branches to avoid injuries like Jaffa's.

New Team Members

This season we welcome a new vet and vet nurse to our ever-evolving team at Northwich Vets.

Ion started his veterinary career in his home country of Romania, qualifying as a **Veterinary Surgeon** in 2006. After a successful career, he decided to move to pastures new and make his way to the UK in 2017. Since then, Ion, has advanced his skills, developing a keen interest in all surgery.

Chloe is the newest member to the team, qualifying as a **Veterinary Nurse** in early 2024. Chloe has a particular enthusiasm for the surgical side of veterinary nursing and enjoys spending time in the theatre, assisting with a variety of surgical cases.

Both have settled in well during his first few weeks at Northwich Vets and have enjoyed getting to know all our lovely clients and patients.

Winter Warmer Pet Care Tips

The cold winter months bring particular challenges for our pets, and as their owners, we need to be aware of the problems they can suffer at this time of year.



Winter walks: When you are out and about, it's important to make sure that your pets are prepared; they may need to wear waterproof and warm jackets, especially if they are older or are short-coated breeds such as whippets. Some salt mixtures on paths, and snow building up between the paws, can cause limping and pain. So, paws should be regularly checked, washed and cleaned after walks.

Arthritis: This is commonly first diagnosed in older patients during the winter months. This isn't because the disease first strikes during this period, but because the lower temperatures seize up the limbs and make the symptoms of pain and stiffness more obvious. Pets who begin to slow down on walks, show signs of stiffness in the mornings or start becoming reluctant to go on walks, may need some intervention. Most pets will really benefit from joint supplements, padded bedding, and many will enjoy resting by the radiator or on a pet-safe hot water bottle or heated blanket!

Festive alert: Caution should be taken around Christmas decorations, tinsel and lights, which may cause intestinal blockages if digested, requiring surgery for removal. Festive foods such as, chocolate, Christmas pudding, stuffing and mince pies should also be avoided due to being toxic to our pets.

Outdoor pets: Ensure that all small pets who live outdoors have well insulated hutches, and plenty of bedding to snuggle down in. Checking their water twice daily is essential to ensure that it hasn't frozen. Pet safe heat disks can also be added to your pet's house to help keep them extra warm during cold winter days/nights.



Winter Weight Gain

With the onset of winter weather, it's very tempting for pets to snuggle up at home, go on fewer walks, and in the process gain some extra weight – which can lead to a variety of health issues.

How can I tell if my pet is gaining excess weight?

A simple test is to run your hands over their chest – you should be able to easily feel (but not see) their ribs without

pressing too hard. They should also have a “waist”, when viewed from both above and the side. Regular weight checks on the weighing scales in practice is the most accurate way of keeping tabs on your pet's weight.

So – why is it a problem? Unfortunately, excess weight put extra demands on many organs of the body, which can lead to, or worsen, many conditions including:

- Arthritic joint problems
- Heart disease (putting the heart under increased strain)
- Raised blood pressure
- Diabetes (a particular risk factor in cats)



How can you try to ensure your pet remains the right weight?

Losing weight can be challenging for all of us, and our pets are no exception; so, the most important thing is to try to ensure your pet is on the most suitable diet in the first place.

Additionally, your pet's dietary requirements change throughout their lives and our knowledgeable team are happy to advise you on the most appropriate diet for your pet.

We are here to help! The good news is that if your pet has piled on some extra pounds, please get in touch and we can get them booked in for a weight clinic with one of the nurses. To achieve weight loss, pets need a combination of calorie-controlled diets and more exercise. We can help your pet slim down and tap into a huge range of health benefits associated with weight loss.

Wild Birds

Garden birds are extremely vulnerable during the winter months and providing food and fresh water is one of the most helpful things you can do for them. Prolonged cold spells can lead to a very high mortality rate in birds. In addition to traditional bird tables, hanging feeders suspended from trees (or a free-standing pole) are a popular way of feeding birds. Bird tables can be stocked with seed mixes and a selection of household scraps such as cooked potato, cake crumbs and soft fruit. It is also important to ensure that birds have access to fresh and not frozen water since many birds die in severe weather due to dehydration. A suspended water dish is a good way of achieving this and, if it is very cold, use tepid water. Further information on caring for garden birds can be found online at www.rspb.org.uk

