

Hello and welcome to this edition, with the warmth of summer sunshine restored after recent heavy rain, and flowering plants in great abundance in garden, meadows and hedgerows.

In such difficult economic times, this weather can only cheer! Although we have all been told, that, on paper at least, the “recession” has bottomed-out, in real life, I don’t quite think we are there yet, so I’ve put a few ideas together to help primarily safeguard your pet’s health and welfare and secondarily your pocket – forewarned is forearmed, and even a gram of prevention will be worth a kilo of cure!

In order to really enjoy a dog, one doesn't merely try to train him to be semi-human. The point of it is to open oneself to the possibility of becoming partly a dog.

Edward Hoagland

....and to see the world around like a dog would!!

Home risk assessments

Many common accidents that veterinary practices see involve very common materials, always found somewhere and overlooked as they’re always “there”.

Check your home for possible poisons, including plants that your pet can get access to. The commonest causes include antifreeze, rat or mouse bait, slug bait, human medications (especially the non-steroidal analgesics and birth control tablets), uncovered or non-armoured electrical cables and wires, paper shredders, and insecticides. It may be prudent to remove access to children’s toys, strings or small objects that can be chewed on or swallowed (hair bands, packaged meat-covering meshes...)

Collared? If your dog (or cat) wears a collar, check your pet's neck at least weekly to make sure the collar is not too loose or too tight ... and that it's still there! As part of our vet-check and nurse-clinic checks, all microchipped pets are routinely re-scanned, as well as new pets seen for the first time. It is also an opportunity to assess any weight loss that may have made the pet’s collar appear loose in the first place.

So, is Your Pet Identified? Pets can lose their collar and in many cases their "identification" along with it. Tags can fall off – or be removed. We strongly advise non-chipped pets have a microchip placed for permanent identification (June was Microchip Month, with special ‘chip offers). A microchip is very important if your dog or cat is injured or runs away and is found by caring passers-by and taken to the nearest veterinary practice, or similar centre, for care. It is the best and fastest way to get you in touch with your pet in the case of an emergency, but you must keep your details updated!

Keep Dogs Supervised. The safest approach for allowing your dog out is by taking him or her on a lead or long leash! This way you can not only monitor what they are getting into

but also watch their urine and bowel movements for abnormalities. The next safest thing for dogs is a fenced-in yard. Monitor the yard and fence frequently for problems such as loose boards, open dustbins and other dangers. Keep pets inside in extreme cold or hot temperatures. Even then, do not abandon them outside, since the risk of your family member being stolen would be one heart-ache too far.

Keep jaws and paws inside – any time of the year. Some dogs love to stick their heads out open windows but the speeding wind, insects, mud, stone chips and debris in the air can hit your pet at a great relative and damaging speed. If nothing else, the eyes can dry up in the fast stream of air, and the cornea become permanently damaged. Always keep the dog in the boot behind a dog-guard, or better still a made-to-measure cage, but if on the passenger seats, to use one of the easily-bought good-quality car harnesses. Cats should always be in baskets or in a strong harness, secured to the closest seatbelt. Now, about travelling in cars in hot weather – the next article perhaps....?

Above all, know what to do and who you can call. Keep the Practice telephone number available on your mobile or next to the phones at home; the Practice will always have an out-of-hours service available for advice or emergency consultation; you may just need to ring your own practice first to get the current number. Perhaps keep a map handy for someone driving you there who may not know the way. When poisoning could be involved, always try to take the container or box with you. Perhaps also keep an animal first aid kit in the car.

Dear Puppy – here's some advice:

Don't smell crotches, don't eat houseplants.

Don't steal my chocolate or those underpants.

Don't eat my socks, don't grab my hair (band) . . .

Don't rip the stuffing from that chair!

Don't eat those raisins (that I didn't mean to drop)! Don't touch that brush!

Don't chew my shoes ... What IS that mush?

Just eat your dog biscuits, just lap your water-drink.

Keep out of the toilet! Keep out of the sink!!

Oh – and best keep away from those cats!!

Adapted from a Post on October 28, 2008 by Rusty (chasingsquirrelswithrusty.com)

But, do enjoy the Summer!

Thanks for your company, & until next time,

RE

