

Simply
Pets
News
Winter
Newsletter
2016



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Welcome to the ninth issue of
Simply Pets Vets newsletter,
Simply Pets News, full of helpful
information about pet care for dogs,
cats and small animals and the latest
news from Simply Pets Vets.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Coping with cold weather

Keeping pets fit and healthy
over winter

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Snuggle up and keep warm!

Simply Pets is a group of three veterinary clinics, located in Stroud, Gloucester and Cheltenham, offering excellent veterinary care at an affordable price. We specialise in the most common treatments, such as microchipping, worming treatments, claw clipping, vaccines and boosters, blood tests, ultrasounds and pregnancy scans and general dentistry. For any more complex procedures, we can refer you to our partners at Clockhouse Veterinary Hospital.

For the little things, there's Simply Pets.

How you can help your pets get through winter



If the cold weather starts to bite, here's how to help your pets cope.

In freezing temperatures, hypothermia can occur after just a few minutes and it can kill. Our pets are more at risk than we are as they are smaller and prevention is always better than cure, so don't leave pets outside in freezing temperatures without access to shelter and warmth. Cars act like fridges in cold weather, so don't leave pets in them unattended. If your dog has a short coat, use a warm dog coat in colder weather - or even better on dark mornings and evenings, a warm, high visibility coat.

Prevent snowballs from forming by trimming the hair between your dog's toes and wipe their paws after walks to remove any salt or chemicals and prevent chapping - unless your dog wears snow boots.

Beware of antifreeze! It smells and tastes good to animals, but is extremely poisonous, so make sure it is stored well out of reach (of children as well as animals) and spills are cleaned up quickly.

If your pet can be tempted outside to exercise and the temperature will allow, that's great - bundle up and take your dog for a brisk walk. Start out quickly and only allow pausing and sniffing on the return route, but ensure dogs don't run onto frozen waterways. They could fall into icy water if the ice is too thin.

If the cold weather keeps you inside, here are some fun ways to keep your pet exercised and entertained:

- Fetch is a great game for dogs and cats.

- Hide and seek: low-calorie treats hidden around the house provides cats with physical and mental stimulation.
- Food puzzle toys to make dogs or cats work to get their food.
- Laser pointer: a great chase game for dogs and cats.
- String: a cheap and easy cat toy and a great way to get them up and moving, as long as they don't try to eat it.

Your pet might see snow as a novelty, but don't let them eat it - dangerous objects or chemicals may be hidden in it and it can cause stomach upset and even hypothermia if ingested.

Provide a warm, cosy place for your cat or dog to sleep. Pets with arthritis will feel more discomfort when it's cold so try to keep those older pets as warm as you can. Cats will curl up next to anything hot to keep warm - take care when starting your car as that can include climbing under the bonnet!

Provide outdoor pets, such as guinea pigs and rabbits with extra bedding and be prepared to move them into a shed or unused garage for extra shelter while it is cold, but don't house animals, or birds, in greenhouses or conservatories due to the temperature changes.

Regular pet health checks help to keep your pet in good health all year round and are a great time to get pet care advice and share any concerns you may have.

Call us for more information or advice.

Treats that pets should never eat

Over the Christmas and New Year period especially, many of us buy in 'festive' food and drink. It may be richer fare than usual or just different to what you normally have in the house, but some foods could ruin your year if eaten by your pet:

Chocolate - even small amounts can cause convulsions and heart problems. The darker the chocolate, the more toxic it is. White chocolate does not contain enough theobromine to be toxic, but can be fatty and pose a potential risk of pancreatitis.

Dried vine fruits (grapes, sultanas, raisins) - even a small quantity can cause severe kidney failure, so keep food that contains dried fruits (e.g. Christmas pudding, mince pies) out of reach. Chocolate-coated raisins run the additional risk of chocolate toxicity.

Onions, garlic, leeks, shallots and chives are toxic to pets, whether uncooked or cooked, causing vomiting, diarrhoea and damage to red blood cells resulting in anaemia, which may take several days to become apparent.

Alcohol - keep unattended alcohol out of pets' reach. In severe cases of alcohol ingestion there is a risk of low body temperature, low blood sugar and coma.

Macadamia nuts can cause lethargy, high body temperature, tremor, lameness and stiffness in dogs.

Leftovers should be disposed of carefully, out of reach of pets, as they could include dangerous or toxic ingredients.

Mould in leftovers (inc. yoghurt, bread and cheese) can produce toxins that cause rapid onset convulsions in dogs.

The artificial sweetener 'xylitol' can induce the release of insulin in dogs, resulting in low blood sugar and possible liver damage. Signs of poisoning can be rapid or delayed, and include vomiting, lethargy, convulsions and comas. The prognosis is good if the low blood sugar is treated quickly.

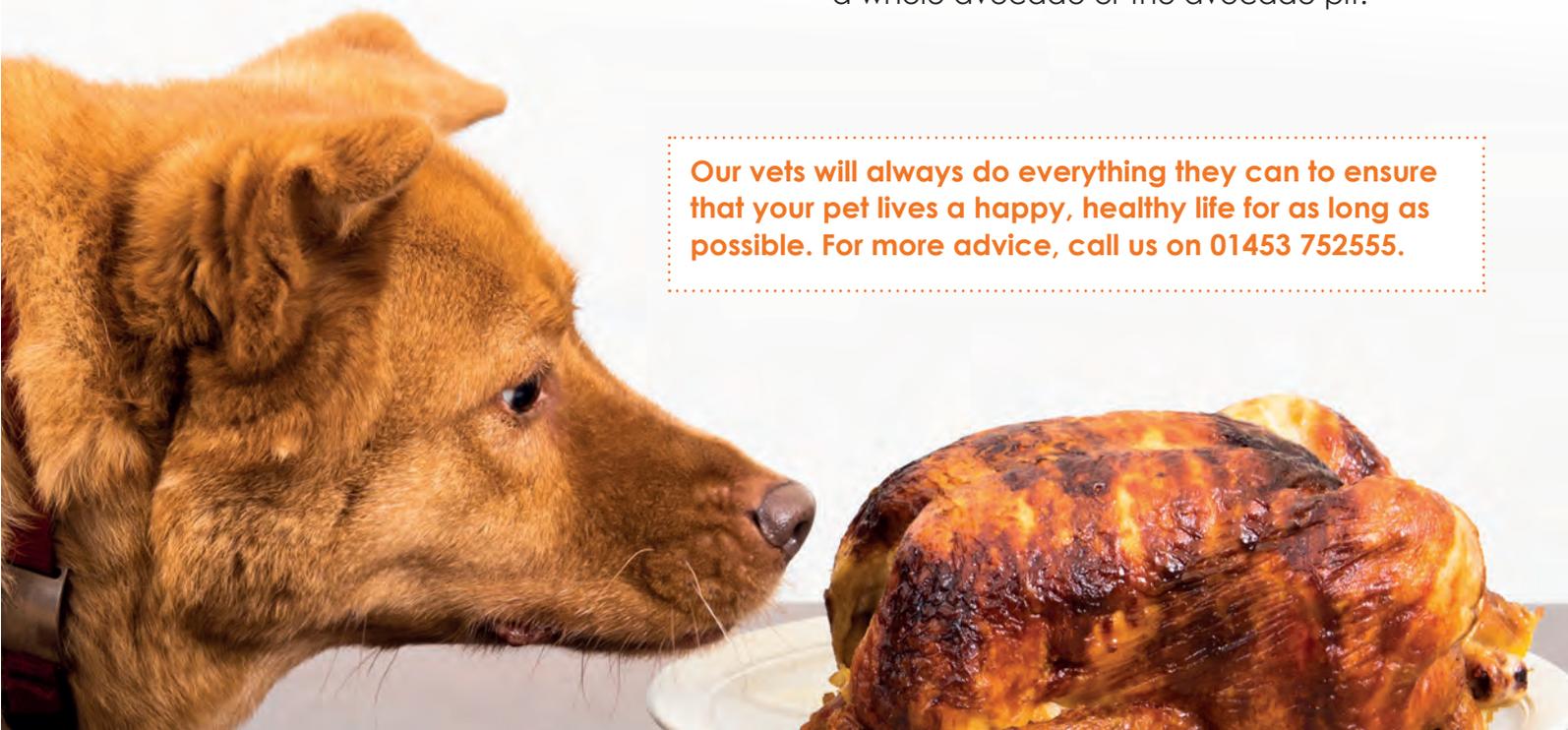
Nicotine is toxic to dogs and cigarette butts are especially dangerous, so it's important not to leave them in ashtrays, or on the ground, in reach of dogs.

Uncooked bread dough can be very dangerous to cats and dogs, so if you're a keen baker, leave your dough to rise out of reach of pets and don't give them dough as a treat.

While starting the day with a cup of 'real' coffee may work for you, caffeine can kill cats and dogs, so dispose of coffee grinds carefully.

Avocados contain Persin, which is toxic to birds, large animals (such as horses and cattle), goats, rabbits and guinea pigs. Avocado fruit has not been found to be toxic for dogs and cats. The primary danger of avocados to dogs and cats is the possibility of them swallowing the large pit, which could cause a blockage or obstruction in the animal's oesophagus, stomach or intestinal tract, so be sure not to let your dog or cat eat a whole avocado or the avocado pit.

Our vets will always do everything they can to ensure that your pet lives a happy, healthy life for as long as possible. For more advice, call us on 01453 752555.



Is it time to throw sticks in the bin?



Throwing a stick for your dog while out walking can be as much fun for most dog owners as it is for their dogs and most of the time it is just good fun and a bit more exercise for the dog.

It's when things go wrong that your view of sticks can change.

Vets see some serious, life threatening or even fatal injuries to dogs caused by fetching sticks, either because they've landed in the ground like a javelin or because they've split in the dog's mouth.

Terms like 'penetrative wound' or 'impaled' can make your blood run cold, but if a stick becomes lodged in the ground and your dog can't stop in time, there's a strong chance they might run onto the stick.

For some dogs chewing on sticks can cause a problem as splinters can get lodged in the teeth, soft tissue or tongue, causing pain, abscesses or dental problems.

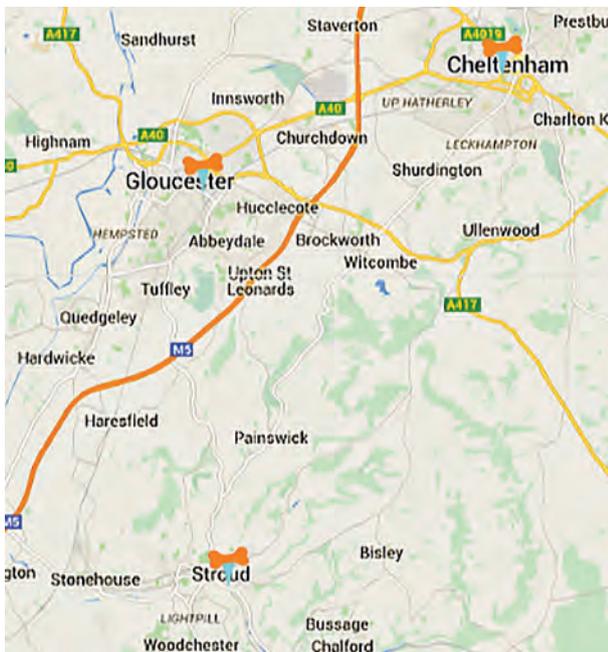
While exercise and play is hugely beneficial to dogs and their owners, both from a health and a bonding perspective, rubber toys or frisbees may prove the better option.

It's worth resisting throwing sticks for puppies - they're not born with the instinct to play with sticks and will happily chase, fetch and chew something else instead.

For dogs that are already drawn to sticks, getting them interested in a new toy may provide a good distraction, or there are a number of ways to train them away from chasing sticks, the easiest being the 'off' command (training a dog to recognise when you want it to stop doing something by giving or withholding treats).

Whether you throw sticks for your dog or not, it's well worth having pet insurance in place in case of any kind of accident or injury, so your pet can have whatever treatment they need, when they need it.

FIND A BRANCH



01453 752555 – out of hours for all branches

Cheltenham

Alleyn Lodge, Knapp Road, Cheltenham, GL50 3QH
01242 578082

Opening hours

Monday to Friday, 9am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm

Stroud

Lansdown Road, Stroud, GL5 1BG
01453 755003

Opening hours

Monday to Friday, 9am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm

Gloucester

61 Horton Road, Gloucester, GL1 3PX
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