

Christmas
Edition

THE FOUR LEGGED POST



The quarterly newsletter for Burvale Heights Veterinary Hospital



Inside our Summer issue:

- Check out our Summer special offers
- Christmas foods that are not recommended for your pets
- **WARNING:** Southern Paralysis tick found locally
- Rat bait toxicity
- Top tips for keeping cool this Summer
- Skin care, allergies and advice

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CHRISTMAS HOURS:

December 24th	8:00am to 4:00pm
December 25th to 28th	CLOSED
December 29th to 31st	8:00am to 4:00pm
January 1st to 3rd	CLOSED
January 4th	Return to regular hours

OPENING HOURS:

Monday to Friday	8:00am to 7:30pm
Saturday	8:00am to 1:00pm
Sunday	Closed

Hi everyone!

We've been through some trying times again this year. Nevertheless, we hope you and your fur family have been going well and are still looking forward to the end of year holidays.

With Christmas already fast approaching, it is often very tempting to share some of our tasty treats with our pets. We will let you know why this is not a good idea!

We also have advice on staying cool this summer, talk about the southern paralysis tick, rat bait ingestion and we are itching to discuss common skin conditions triggered at this time of the year.

Most importantly, we wish everyone a Merry Christmas and hope to see you back in the new year!

From the Caring Team at Burvale Heights Vet Hospital



From Ho Ho Ho to No No No!

It is a warm afternoon on Boxing day. You've just returned home from a crazy morning of shopping only to find that your pet has eaten all the left-over Christmas ham, half a pudding, all of the chocolate Santas (wrapping and all) and the old roast turkey bones (including a delicious onion and garlic filled stuffing) that you had thrown away the night before. Of course, this is an extreme case. However, it isn't uncommon for our pets to overindulge come the Christmas Holidays and end up at the vet!

The majority of us know that chocolate is toxic to pets but why is this the case?

Caffeine and a substance called 'theobromine' are the culprits. Dogs are not able to metabolise or process this therefore causing vomiting, diarrhoea, hyperactivity, tremors, seizures and an elevated heart rate (depending on the type and amount of chocolate consumed). The more theobromine the chocolate contains, the more severe the toxicity. Baking chocolate and dark chocolate contains more theobromine than milk chocolate, white chocolate contains the least. This is why it's always important to tell us (if possible), the chocolate type and how much was eaten.

Did you know that grapes, sultanas and raisins can also be toxic to dogs causing kidney failure? The reasons for this are still unknown. However, similar symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy can be noted after ingestion.

Whilst tasty to us, foods containing garlic and onion are not advised. These may lead to anaemia (low red blood cells) if ingested in high amounts.

The quicker we induce vomiting in your pet after ingestion of any of the above substances, the quicker we can rid these toxins before any harm can arise.

What about the Christmas ham? This is where fat content can be a concern. Pancreatitis is a painful condition where the pancreas becomes inflamed and it is generally caused by diet and feeding foods that are high in fat. Your pet may experience:

- A sore tummy
- Lethargy
- Have a hunched back
- Vomiting or diarrhea.

So, the ham is out too. Surely, the chicken is okay? The turkey? We all know most dogs absolutely love bones. However, cooked bones can quickly turn fatal to your canine. This is because they are not easily digested, are a possible choking hazard, can injure the mouth and teeth and can even cause a blockage in the gut.

We know it's always tempting to give some tasty treats to our pets. Whilst we will never be able to resist the guilt that comes along with refusing to give in to your pet's puppy dog eyes, there are some much safer alternatives.

Safe foods for your pet can include:

- Small amounts of freshly cooked, white turkey or chicken meat
- Shelled prawns
- Unseasoned cooked vegetables (pumpkin, potato, carrots and peas)

We hope everyone can enjoy a happy and hazard free holiday meal.



Rating them out- Rodent pesticides, how they work and how to treat accidental pet toxicity

Rat bait is effective in controlling our rodent outbreaks. Unfortunately, it may also unintentionally harm our pets and wildlife unless we take precautions. Rat bait works by preventing the blood from clotting (as it contains an anticoagulant). If blood is unable to clot, uncontrolled bleeding occurs and can be fatal.

What symptoms would I notice if rat bait ingestion has occurred?

Rat bait toxicity can go unnoticed as symptoms may not show for several days after ingestion. However, obvious signs can include:

- Pale gums (indicate blood loss)
- Red urine (indicating blood)
- Nose bleeding
- Wounds that continuously bleed
- Lethargy or weakness
- Breathing trouble
- Stomach swelling

How is rat bait ingestion treated?

An antidote fortunately exists! A course of Vitamin K is given to assist in blood coagulation (clotting). If ingestion is suspected, please contact us or your emergency veterinarian immediately in order induce vomiting and rid the toxin before damage can occur. A blood transfusion may also be required in extreme cases.

Best way to keep my pets safe? Prevention!

- Always supervise pets that like to explore
- Keep pets on lead, use a basket muzzle on dogs that are known to scavenge
- Only keep rat bait in areas that are impossible for your pet to access
- Use alternatives to rat bait such as traps

Book an appointment
at www.BurvaleHeightsVet.com.au

WARNING: Southern Paralysis tick found locally

Over the last 2 years we found the Southern Paralysis tick on some of our patients in the Heathmont area.

This nasty parasite, *Ixodes Cornuatus*, latches onto any warm bodied creature passing them by (usually in bush environments). Most commonly we see dogs affected, but cats and even humans are susceptible! Our last case was a cat!

After attachment to a pet, the tick begins to inject a paralysing toxin, with the first signs of paralysis occurring in about 5-6 days. Initially, the pet is weak or wobbly in its back legs, and may exhibit a change in voice (bark). The pet may be off its food and start to vomit. After this the paralysis spreads forwards, affecting the respiratory muscles, causing labored breathing and, without treatment, death.

The best possible advice regarding ticks is avoidance! Ticks prefer bushy native terrain and long grass, and warm, moist weather.

Check your pet every day for ticks. Ticks can be found anywhere on your pet's body, with most ticks being found around the head and neck, including in the ears! Ticks can grow up to 1 cm long and are usually a beige or grey colour. The best way to remove a tick is with a purpose-made tick removal tool, otherwise the head may be left behind in the skin. If you remove a tick on your pet and it is not showing any symptoms, you should keep your pet quiet and closely watch them for the next 24-36 hours as signs may still develop.

The good news is that we have excellent products available now to protect our dogs and cats from tick. Bravecto is particularly useful as it combines protection from ticks and cutting edge flea control (lasting 6 months on dogs and 3 months on cats). Combined with daily tick searches, these products help you to feel at ease that your pet is safe from the deadly paralysis tick. Come in and talk to our staff to find out more.

WHERE TO CHECK YOUR PET FOR TICKS



FREE Flea and Tick check

We will examine your pet for signs of fleas or ticks and provide information on preventatives that are available

Please call on 9877 3999 to book a time

Conditions Apply

Available until February 2022

FREE Urine test with Vaccination

A simple urine test (USG) can give us information on the health of your pet.

Please call 9877 3999 to book an appointment.

Conditions Apply

Available until March 2022

Free Puppy and Kitten Consultation

Our vet will give your new family member a thorough examination and plenty of information to keep them healthy. Call 9877 3999 to book an appointment.

Conditions Apply

Available until March 2022



Don't make any Rash decisions- Common skin conditions, allergies and how they are treated

There is a medical term to describe extreme itching and scratching. This is known as "pruritus". Pruritus, redness, hair loss can be an issue for both pets and their humans. These signs are usually triggered by an exposure to an 'allergen' and severity can differ in each pet. This condition known as 'allergic dermatitis', 'atopic dermatitis' or 'atopy' and can be seen in our pets from as early as 6 months of age.

How can we help our pets?

If you have noticed any of the symptoms above, it is important to have a consultation with our vets in order to determine a cause. The vet may want to rule out other causes of itching such those caused by bacterial infection or parasites (fleas, mites or ringworm) A skin scrape test (taking sample of the skin cells by gently scraping at any infected area) or other tests may help investigate this cause. If parasites and infection are cleared from being the culprits, then either a food or environmental allergen is the next suspect.

Food vs environmental

Our vets may suggest trialling a recommended prescription diet in order to rule out a food allergy. Food trials are often suggested for 8 weeks minimum. Close monitoring is essential to ensure that your pet does not eat anything other than their allocated diet throughout the trial. If little or no change is seen in your pet after weeks of strict feeding, your pet may have an adverse reaction to something in the environment.

Environmental allergies may include things such as pollen, flea saliva and dust mites. Symptoms may be seasonal (depend on the time of year) and severity may depend on exposure time. As it isn't always possible to eliminate the allergen, treatment in this case, usually requires medication. These medications can help reduce the inflammatory response and help 'block' the itch response itself. Other measures can include bathing in medicated or oatmeal based pet shampoos and feeding diets or supplements that help support skin function.



Hot tips- keeping our pets cool this summer!

Did you know that dogs have much fewer sweat glands than people do? This is why many of our canine companions may struggle when temperatures start to rise. Symptoms such as extreme panting, lethargy, drooling, reddened gums, vomiting, and diarrhoea can all be signs of heat distress.

Thankfully, there are a few things you can try in order to keep our pets comfortable and content this summer:

- Always have plenty of cool drinking water available throughout the day.
- For our canine friends, avoid walks in the afternoons or when temperatures are at a maximum (around 3:00pm). Hot concrete may cause burns to your dog's paw pads. You can test the temperature of the ground by placing the palm of your hand on it for a few seconds. If it's too hot for you, it is certainly too hot for any walks.
- Provide frozen treats! Pet treats (or Kongs) can be kept in the freezer over night to be given the next day.
- Keep pets indoors or ensure enough shade or shelter is given.
- Create a small pool with cool water. A shell or clam pool can work great for your dog to take a dip
- Groom! Depending on breed and coat, your dog may do with a clip or brush to help combat the heat. (For double coated dogs such as the Siberian husky, shaving is not advised)

Following these few tips can ensure your pets can be safe this summer!



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always
**KEEP IT
COOL**



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