

# Oathall Veterinary Group

## Winter Newsletter

### Christmas Dangers In The Home

**Chocolate:** Whether hung on, or wrapped under the Christmas tree chocolate is easily found by pets; but beware chocolate comes with a serious health warning. It contains Theobromine which affects the nervous system and hearts of your dogs and cats and can be lethal. The darker the chocolate, the higher the concentration of theobromine. Signs of ingestion include panting, shaking, vomiting, diarrhoea, seizure and can lead to death. Remember to keep chocolate out of harm's way.



**Raisins and sultanas:** These main ingredients of Christmas cake and Christmas pudding are toxic to pets, especially dogs. Ingestion can cause severe intestinal upset and even kidney failure.



**Christmas Decorations:** Sweep up fallen needles from real Christmas trees regularly as these can easily get stuck in your pet's paws or throat and trim the lower branches to avoid pets poking their eyes. Make sure your Christmas tree is stable and well anchored so that your pet can't pull it over. Cats in particular love trying to knock baubles from the Christmas tree so try to use unbreakable decorations. Avoid using glass baubles which can break easily, cutting paws and if ingested, can cause serious gastrointestinal complications. Tinsel and ribbon should be avoided, or confined to the higher branches of your tree, as these can be attractive to pets and are dangerous to the gastrointestinal tract if your pet swallows them.



**Festive Foliage:** The finishing touches to every home at Christmas often come in the form of plants and flowers; however, certain types of plants are highly toxic and can even cause death. Poinsettia, Holly, Mistletoe, Amaryllis, Lilies and Yew tree are poisonous to pets and must be kept away from these. Poinsettia can cause drooling, oral pain and vomiting. Mistletoe causes vomiting, laboured breathing, shock and even death from cardiovascular collapse if ingested.

Phone (01444) 440224

24 Hour emergency service  
provided on site  
7 days a week. Please always  
phone us first.



[www.oathall-vets.co.uk](http://www.oathall-vets.co.uk)

Normal Opening Hours:

Monday- 8am – 7pm

Tuesday- 8am – 7pm

Wednesday-8am – 7pm

Thursday- 8am -7pm

Friday- 8am – 7pm

Saturday- 9am -1pm

We also offer evening  
appointments

Mon-Weds and Fri

7pm - 8pm

Sat Afternoon 2-3pm

Christmas & New Year

Opening times

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> December**  
9am-1am by appointment

**Christmas Eve:**

Emergencies Only

**Christmas day:**

Emergencies only

**Boxing Day:**

Emergencies only

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> December:**  
8am-7pm by appointment

**New Years Eve:**

Emergencies Only

**New Year's Day:**

Emergencies only

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January**

8am-7pm by appointment



## The 12 days of Christmas



1. ORDER YOUR MEDICATION AND FOOD IN PLENTY OF TIME! THE LAST DAY TO ORDER IS THURSDAY 21ST DECEMBER
2. MAKE SURE YOUR PETS ARE UP TO DATE WITH THEIR FLEA AND WORM TREATMENTS OR YOU MAY HAVE SOME UNWANTED LITTLE GUESTS OVER CHRISTMAS
3. POISONING: CHOCOLATE, RAISINS, HOLLY, IVY, POINSETTIA, LILLIES AND ANTIFREEZE ARE ALL TOXIC TO ANIMALS.
4. OBESITY: TRY TO REFRAIN FROM FEEDING YOUR PET ALL THE LEFTOVERS
5. FOREIGN OBJECTS: BEWARE OF ANIMALS CHEWING BAUBLES, BATTERIES, PRESENTS, TOYS ETC
6. KEEP SMALL FURRIES WARM: PREVENT FROZEN WATER BOTTLES, PROVIDE EXTRA BEDDING, COVER THEM UP AT NIGHT
7. WILDLIFE AWARENESS: CHECK BONFIRES, UNDER CARS, SHEDS ETC
8. CHECK VET OPENING TIMES AND REMEMBER WE ARE A 24 HR EMERGENCY VET
9. CLEAN FEET AFTER WALKS, TO PREVENT LICKING OFF SALT AND GRIT FROM THE ROADS AND PAVEMENTS
10. MEAT BONES: DO NOT FEED YOUR PETS BONES WHICH CAN BECOME STUCK IN THE THROAT OR CAUSE DIGESTIVE PROBLEMS IF SWALLOWED
11. PANCREATITIS: IF YOU FEED YOUR PETS TREATS OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD THAT THEY ARE NOT USED TO BE AWARE THAT THIS CAN LEAD TO A FLARE UP OF PANCREATITIS.
12. FIREWORKS: THESE GO ON THROUGHOUT CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR SO BE PREPARED WITH A PLUG IN DIFFUSER OR TABLETS TO KEEP PETS CALM.



## Hibernation Time for Tortoises



Ideally your Tortoise should be in hibernation by the end of November, here are our top tips for a safe hibernation.



**\*DON'T** put your tortoise into hibernation if it has a full stomach. It can take up to a month at moderate temperatures for an average size adult tortoise to empty its system.

**\*DO** check inside your tortoise's mouth before hibernation, for grasses and remaining food debris. Rotting vegetation is a major cause of mouth infection during hibernation

**\*DO** offer your tortoise baths before hibernation. It needs to be well hydrated before going down and this could mean the difference between life and death.

**\*DON'T** hibernate a tortoise that has had a serious illness during the season. Its immune system will not be very efficient whilst it is hibernating, and infections conquered during the summer could recur.

**\*DO** use an accurate thermometer to check the temperatures near the hibernating box during the winter.

**\*DON'T** use an outbuilding that may be inhabited by rats.

**\*DO** be ready to move the tortoise's box to a different location should the temperature fall too low or rise too high.

**\*DON'T** feed your tortoise and return it to hibernation should it awake during the winter, once it's awake it should stay awake.

For more information visit [tortoisewelfare.co.uk](http://tortoisewelfare.co.uk) or [www.tortoiseclub.org](http://www.tortoiseclub.org)



## 40 YEARS AT OATHALL



Graham DeBaerdemaecker our senior partner celebrated 40 years at Oathall this summer. We held a party in our wonderful garden with family staff and some old faces.

Also celebrating was Vet Louise Toomey who has been here for 10 years.

As the temperature drops and the snow starts to fall this winter, spare a thought for your cat.

Low temperatures, icy conditions and heavy snowfall present a number of risks for pet cats, particularly those that like to wander outside.

The following tips can help to keep your cats safe and well this winter

- When your cat comes in from the snow, wipe off any road grit and any other substances that may stick to his paws or fur.
- Keep the doors of sheds and outbuildings shut so that cats do not become trapped.
- Cats may also climb into vehicle engines for warmth whilst out roaming. Always check under the bonnet of your car before starting the engine.
- Take special care of your cat if he has arthritis as the cold can severely affect inflamed joints. Provide warm and soft places for your cat.
- If your cat uses an outdoor water source to drink, make sure it doesn't freeze. Do not put Antifreeze in water features if your cat drinks from it. Always have clean, fresh water available indoors
- Consider allowing your cat outside when temperatures are highest and traffic levels are lowest. Also check your cat flap to ensure it has not frozen shut or become blocked by snow.
- Keep your cat indoors at night to reduce the risk of road traffic accidents.



### POOR PAWS

Please remember to keep a check on your pet's claws in colder weather. Soft ground and fewer walks can mean that they are not worn down as quickly, making it uncomfortable for them to walk.

Don't forget the dew claws too – if your pet needs a pedicure then please speak to us! Also check the fur in between the toes and under pads as this can trap dirt/grit (especially road salt) and get matted so it is like stones in shoes for dogs to walk on. If possible trim the fur and rinse feet after every walk.



We sell special wet wipes which can be taken out and about or used in your home, please pop in and ask at reception for these.



Animals such as hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, chinchillas, mice, rabbits and rats are popular Christmas presents. If you decide buy one of these animals as a pet you should think carefully before going ahead. A pet needs lots of love and care, including regular veterinary treatment such as vaccinations and dental care.



Some pets enjoy human contact more than others, so you will need to choose your pet carefully. Don't forget that your pet will need somewhere warm to sleep, a constant supply of water, feeding daily, toys to play with and regular exercise. It can cost up to £25 a month to care for a small pet, including food, veterinary care and pet insurance; there will be other costs, including buying housing and toys; you will also need to consider who will look after your pet when you go on holiday.



Chinchillas can live up to 15 years old and older, rabbits up to 10-12 years old, guinea pigs up to 8 years old, and other small pets can live up to 2 or 3 years old. Over this time your pet will expect lots of care, companionship, time for play and grooming. Being able to provide all of this will ensure you and your pet make the most of your time together.

## When did we start keeping animals as pets?

### Dogs - Around 12,000BC

Wolves started coming into camps for scraps during the ice age. It's thought that humans fell in love with the puppies and kept them as pets which they then used for hunting. Over time these wolves evolved into the dogs we adopt today.

### Cats - Around 3,000BC

It's no surprise that the Egyptians were the first to keep cats as pets, predominantly to keep rats and snakes away from food supplies. They were so highly regarded they were treated like gods and the penalty for killing a cat was death.

Q. What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

A. Tinselitis!

Q. What do you get if you cross a duck and Santa?

A. A Christmas Quacker.



### REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS AND ORDERS



We usually require 24 hours' notice for dispensing prescriptions and 48 hours for providing written prescriptions. If you ring us by 10.30 am we will try to have the items ready for collection the same day.

If possible, give longer notice to allow for items which may be out of stock.

**OUR LAST FOOD AND MEDICATION ORDER BEFORE CHRISTMAS WILL BE THURSDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER FOR DELIVERY ON FRIDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER. PLEASE ORDER EARLY TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT.**

or use our online store to order food toys and much more!!

[www.oathall.myvetstore.co.uk](http://www.oathall.myvetstore.co.uk)



wishing you  
a very merry  
**christmas**

