



*"Caring for your pets as we do our own"*

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Season's greetings! Here we bring you all the latest goings on from the practice and look at how to keep your pet safe from common hazards at this time of year. So take five minutes out of the hustle of Christmas shopping and enjoy the read. We would like to thank you for your custom in 2010 and wish you a very merry festive period.

*Shepton Vets Small Animal Team xx*

### Dusty springs back to health

For many of us, the idea of shedding a few pounds might seem quite attractive at this time of year. However, 9 year old Springer Spaniel Dusty ended up losing a huge amount of weight literally overnight, in a way that none of us would wish for.

Dusty's owners initially brought her to see us because she just seemed a bit under the weather, but examination only revealed a mild temperature and a little discomfort in her abdomen. Such vague findings are not uncommon in pets - of course we cannot ask them how they feel and we can only rely on owners' close observations and our examination.



*Dusty feeling better after her surgery*

We decided to start her on antibiotics and anti-inflammatories as a precaution and we took a blood sample.

Forty-eight hours later the blood results did confirm that there was some inflammation within the body but nothing more specific. However, Dusty had made a great improvement on the treatment.

Dusty continued to be very well for several weeks, although she did have a brief relapse requiring some further treatment. However, when her symptoms returned again it was clear that they required more investigation and Dusty was admitted to the surgery. An xray showed why she had not been herself, as she had a large mass within her abdomen, situated just under her rib cage and most likely in the spleen. It was decided that the best thing for Dusty was to have the mass removed so she was placed on an intravenous drip and taken straight to theatre.

During the operation the mass was indeed found to be within the spleen and thankfully it was possible to remove the whole growth. On examination of the mass itself after its removal, we were astonished to find that it weighed a whopping 2kg. This represented over 15% of Dusty's bodyweight! No wonder she had felt a bit off-colour.

Since her dramatic operation Dusty has done extremely well. Her appetite has returned and her body condition has improved. Analysis of the mass has unfortunately shown that it was cancerous but there is a good chance that it was removed before it had spread elsewhere in the body. Although she will have to be monitored carefully in future for any symptoms of recurrence the signs so far are excellent and we all wish her well for her recovery.

#### LOOK OUT FOR OUR

**\*\* FREE \*\***

#### SENIOR HEALTH CHECKS

**THROUGHOUT JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2011**



Sadly we cannot stop our pets getting older, but with early detection, advances in preventative care and affordable diets we can help them achieve an improved quality of life, ensuring comfortable and pain free senior years.

Call us: 01749 343955

Email: [vet@sheptonvet.com](mailto:vet@sheptonvet.com)

Surf: [www.sheptonvet.com](http://www.sheptonvet.com)

Or simply pop in: SVG,  
Allyn Saxon Drive, Shepton  
Mallet BA4 5QH

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## AVOID A CHRISTMAS CRISIS -

### *Everything you need to know to help keep your pets safe this festive season*

We look forward to Christmas as a time to relax and have fun, so the last thing you need is an emergency visit to the vets. But unfortunately we see many dogs and cats with serious illnesses at this time of year and all too often the cause turns out to be a surprising household hazard. So let's take a look at some of the common festive items which can present a threat to your pets.

#### Chocolate

We all love a bit of chocolate at Christmas, and your dog might too. What he doesn't know though is that it contains theobromine which is poisonous to dogs. For a small dog, eating as little as 100g of dark chocolate can result in life-threatening seizures. We suggest keeping any chocolate well-wrapped and out of the reach of dogs and avoid giving chocolate as a treat.

#### Raisins and Sultanas

Unfortunately it is not widely known that grapes, raisins and sultanas are toxic to dogs, causing acute renal failure if ingested in large quantities. A few grapes would not cause serious problems but Christmas cake or pudding is rich in dried fruit and is very tasty for some dogs so it is best to store these safely out of reach.

#### Holly and Mistletoe

Both contain toxins which can cause vomiting and diarrhoea. Although leaves aren't generally eaten, fallen berries can easily be consumed so they should be removed straight away.



#### Tinsel and Lametta

These decorations can be strangely attractive to cats. They can form a particularly nasty foreign body in the digestive tract, stretching the length of the gut and requiring extensive surgery. If your cat likes to chew things it shouldn't it is a good idea to confine these decorations to the higher branches of the tree.

#### Electrocution

Extra cables for Christmas lights present a risk for all pets, particularly younger animals which may decide to chew them. Electric shock can cause burns as well as fluid accumulation on the lungs. It is best to ensure that cables are well maintained and secured safely away from pets' access.

#### Poinsettia

This red and green plant is commonly associated with Christmas but contains low concentrations of toxic substances which can cause a nasty stomach upset if eaten. It is advisable to site it where it cannot be eaten by inquisitive pets.

#### Overindulgence

If there is an excuse to eat too much of everything, then Christmas is the classic. And many owners want to treat their pets in the same way at this special time. But unlike us, dogs and cats are simply not designed for a varied diet and this can lead to nasty stomach upsets which can be messy and miserable at best, and require hospitalisation at worst. So try to keep your pet to its normal diet as much as possible this Christmas and treat them with lots of extra attention instead. And of course make sure you defrost the turkey somewhere safe!

**We all want a fun Christmas and New Year, but we hope these tips will help ensure it is safe and stress-free too for both you and your pets.**

#### PEAK ACHIEVEMENT

Thanks to all our clients who supported vet Martin Law on his attempt at the Three Peaks Challenge this August. Martin and his friends successfully completed the challenge and managed to raise over £400 for Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research. Congratulations to Mrs Madden who won our raffle and receives a free bag of food for her dog Greta, courtesy of Royal Canin.



*For further information or advice on any of the subjects covered in this newsletter please contact the practice*