

THE HAIRBALL DIGEST

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM LIFETIME SMALL ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Issue 9

May / June 2010

It's Time to Get Heartworm Prevention. Let's See
Our Veterinarian Today to Get Our Annual Test!



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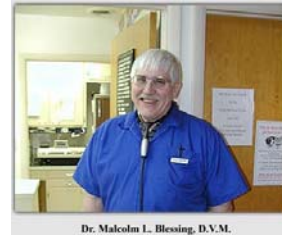


Ask the Dr.



Your dog ate WHAT?!!!

Over the years I have seen (and experienced first hand) dogs and cats eat just about everything imaginable:



steering wheels, rocks, pine cones, cattle ear tags (while still attached to the cow), billfolds, car keys, and of course; large and small bones, rubber balls, sticks, socks, pantyhose, hand towels, squeaker toys, diapers, and the list goes on and on...siding from the house, fence posts, light bulbs, needle and thread.



The majority of these items were not only consumed by our furry, four-legged friends, but had to be surgically removed from the mouth, esophagus, stomach, or intestine.

Not long ago I surgically removed about three inches of a Nylabone™ from the intestine of a dog. This points out the fact that even pet friendly “dog approved” chew toys can cause major, life-threatening problems.

If your dog gets carried away, or we, as pet owners do not properly supervise “chew time”, bad things can happen. I always tell pet owners to allow their dog or cat to chew on things (which means everything) if the owner is physically with their pet. If you see your cat playing with thread, string, yarn, or anything dangling that looks like thread immediately take it away. A 14-18” piece of string can completely plug up a cat.



All dog and cat owners need to make the environment **pet friendly** by removing anything that may create a health concern. This is a tall order considering many things found in the home are potential hazards. What about unprotected electric cords, open trash containers or garbage left unattended? Chocolate candy left on the coffee table often is consumed, wrapper and all.

As veterinarians we have become quite proficient at removing foreign, obstructing objects from our best friends’ digestive tract. We are also experts at making dogs vomit potential toxic items. How about five pounds of fresh hamburger consumed by a boxer left in the car for about 60 seconds after grocery shopping. “He ate the whole thing” is a common voice on the telephone.

One of the truly funny consumables from my vast experience is the “my dog ate my checkbook” syndrome when it came time to pay the bill!

Often it is difficult to know if you should leave the object in the stomach hoping it will pass, make your pet vomit to get rid of it, or give a medication to neutralize, tie up, or speed its exit. It is always best to consult your veterinarian prior to any home remedy. Our office number is **307-587-4324** – 24 hours or consult the ASPCA 24 hour Poison Control Center at **888-426-4435**. Do not make your dog vomit unless you have spoken with your veterinarian. Some “things” are best left alone. If an oil-based product has been consumed and vomiting happens foreign body pneumonia could likely result. I have seen a treble fishing hook (covered with stink bait) pass clear through the stomach and intestine. Glass pieces from Christmas lights may pass best if you feed soft white bread with no crust-it may tie up the glass enough to allow safe passage.

Ingesting poisons such as antifreeze or rat poison requires “emergency vomiting”. Call your veterinarian! Yellow mustard straight from the bottle, salt straight from the shaker, hydrogen peroxide straight from your medicine cabinet are all good home remedies to make your dog vomit. (Make sure you take them outside – mustard is hard to remove from carpet.) Cats are another story-ask us.

The one “thing” a lot of pets chew on but seldom consume is their human.



Cat Scratching Issues:

Q: I have a nine month old kitten. I enjoy his antics, except for one. He scratches the furniture. Besides declawing, is there anything that I can do about this? I don't want to declaw him because he also enjoys going outside.

A: Kittens are quite fun to watch except when they become a “destructo” unit on four legs with claws. First, scratching is normal behavior. In fact scratching is used not only as a means of keeping the feet, legs, and nails in good health but also for scent marking. Scratching keeps the nails sharp by removing the nail sheaths so that the new sharp nails underneath are exposed.

Since your kitten is just starting to scratch on inappropriate items, there is still time to retrain him. Scratching posts, boxes, bark-covered wood, etc., are good appropriate scratching items. The item used needs to be sturdy and large enough that your cat can really stretch and get his nails into the object. The texture is very important. Some cats prefer carpet; others will readily use posts that are covered with sisal, burlap, or other fabrics. Most cats enjoy scratching on cardboard and bark-covered wood. New posts should be thoroughly aired out, as cats are very sensitive to odors.



The post needs to be considered a very lovely place to be. It needs to be placed in a comfortable part of the house. The scratching post should not be hidden in a dank, dark corner either. Placing the scratching post next to the area where the cat is currently scratching will definitely make training much easier. The scratching post can be made more attractive by the use of catnip,

Feliway™, toys, and special treats. Encourage the cat to rub the post and to mark it. It needs to be his very special place. Sometimes gently placing his paws on the post helps. Do not do this if your kitten objects to having his feet touched. Anytime the kitten is on, at, or by the scratching post praise him softly. If you see him using it, praise him and give him a special treat if he has one. Everything that is good should happen around the scratching post, especially when the kitten is using it.

To make the furniture and other scratched areas less desirable, the areas must be cleaned of the cat's scent. Using an enzymatic cleaner or diluted white vinegar works quite well. Make sure that the fabric is colorfast by testing the solution in a hidden area. Aluminum foil, clear contact paper with the sticky side out, or plastic film will make areas very unattractive for cats to scratch on. There are some repellent sprays that are very effective. Spray bottles with water can be used if the kitten is caught in the act. Keep in mind that there are some cats that may transfer their scratching habits to other furniture or to other areas of the same piece of furniture. So be extra vigilant.

The use of nail trimming and nail caps can reduce the damage done by scratching. Sometimes these things can act as a deterrent because the kitten cannot have the satisfaction really getting his claws into the fabric during the act of scratching. These work well in as part of the training process plus the amount of damage is lessened.

If you decide to consider declawing to prevent more damage, it is best to do so when the cat is under two years old. Although we use laser and give good pain management, declawing can be hard in older cats. This is because the cat is usually heavier and the joints of the claws have further calcified making claw removal more difficult.

Good luck in your training. Cats can be trained to scratch in appropriate places. Patience and consistency are the keys to good success. Having a young trainable kitten helps too.

Carol Barks:

Ahh, the good old summertime. Time for all kinds of outdoor activities for humans and canines alike. The warmer weather can also present different challenges than the cold winter months.

First, it is **NEVER** acceptable to leave a dog inside a parked car-even for a few minutes. On a mild 73 degree day, the temperature inside a car can reach 120 degrees in 30 minutes. Heatstroke can come on quickly and result in brain damage or death.



If you take your dog hiking or camping please make sure your dog is up to date on its rattlesnake vaccination. It is a good idea to pack a first aid kit. We carry three sizes to choose from, or you can make your own. A few items to be sure to take along are a digital thermometer, instant cold pack, scissors, pen light, needle and thread(to suture wounds), a bullet for the dog to bite on while suturing and some whiskey to disinfect 😊.

Do you ever take your dog out on the boat when you go wakeboarding or waterskiing? Here are some tips that will make your day on the water safe and enjoyable for the pet participants.

People are not the only ones who should wear a Personal Floatation Device (life jacket) while boating. You wouldn't want anything to happen to your furry dog companion, would you? Don't assume that all dogs can swim, because they can't. And those that can swim may not be great swimmers. If your dog falls overboard, will he/she be able to avoid exhaustion or hypothermia before they can be retrieved?

Believe it or not, PFD's are made just for dogs and may be purchased at all the major marine vendors. Make sure that the PFD fits securely and allow your dog to practice swimming while wearing it. If your dog has never worn a PFD they may be resistant to it at first. Give them time to get acquainted with it before actually getting on the boat.



Always have enough fresh drinking water available for your dog. Canines lose fair amounts of body fluid when they pant, so be sure to keep them hydrated.

While moving and bouncing boats may not be the most practical place for a dog bowl, an alternative is to allow your dog to drink out of a sports bottle, which are less messy and you can squirt water right into their mouth. Don't be afraid to force your dog to drink water. Think how much better fluids make you feel on a hot day out on the water.



Lifetime Small Animal Hospital welcomes you to our website!

www.LTSAHosp.com Check out our Web Store!!

We have numerous products that, because of space constraints, we just cannot carry in our hospital, including many of the medications your pet might currently be taking. From long-term medications, shampoos, grooming tools, crates and even food, we have quite a selection available.

We carry Iverhart Max in the hospital for heartworm prevention in dogs. This product will prevent heartworms, as well as killing roundworms, hookworms and tapeworms. Please check our web store for other heartworm prevention products, such as Interceptor, Revolution, and Heartguard.



ASPCA Guide to Pet-Safe Gardening

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) experts field tens of thousands of calls each year involving animal companions who've had potentially hazardous contact with insecticides, weed killers and pet-toxic plants.

Our experts recommend you watch out for the following:

Poisonous Plants

When designing and planting your green space, it's a good idea to keep in mind that many popular outdoor plants—including sago palm, rhododendron and azalea—are toxic to cats and dogs. [Sago palm](#) and other members of the Cycad family as well as mushrooms can cause liver failure, while rhododendron, azalea, lily of the valley, oleander, rosebay, foxglove and kalanchoe all affect the heart. Please [visit our full list](#)—and pics!—of toxic and non-toxic plants for your garden.



Fertilizer

Just like you, plants need food. But pet parents, take care—the [fertilizer](#) that keeps our plants healthy and green can wreak havoc on the digestive tracts of our furry friends. Ingesting large amounts of fertilizer can give your pet a good case of stomach upset and may result in life-threatening gastrointestinal obstruction. Be sure to follow instructions carefully and observe the appropriate waiting period before letting your pet run wild outside.

Cocoa Mulch

Many gardeners use cocoa bean shells—a by-product of chocolate production—in landscaping. Popular for its attractive odor and color, [cocoa mulch](#) also attracts dogs with its sweet smell, and like chocolate, it can pose problems for our canine companions. Depending on the amount involved, ingestion of cocoa mulch can cause a range of clinical signs, from vomiting, diarrhea and muscle tremors to elevated heart rate, hyperactivity and even seizures. Consider using a [less-toxic alternative](#), such as shredded pine, cedar or hemlock bark, but always supervise curious canines in yards where mulch is spread.

Insecticides

Like fertilizer, herbicides, insecticide baits, sprays and granules are often necessary to keep our gardens healthy, but their ingredients aren't meant for four-legged consumption. The most dangerous forms of pesticides include snail bait with metaldehyde, fly bait with methomyl, systemic insecticides with the ingredients disyston or disulfoton, mole or gopher bait with zinc phosphide and most forms of rat poisons. Always store pesticides in inaccessible areas—and read the manufacturer's label carefully for proper usage and storage.

Compost

You're doing the right thing for your garden and Mother Earth—you're composting! Food and garden waste make excellent additions to garden soil, but depending on what you're tossing in the compost bin, they can also pose problems for our pets. Coffee, moldy food and certain types of fruit and vegetables are toxic to dogs and cats, so read up on [people foods to avoid feeding your pet](#).



Garden Tools

Unattended garden tools may seem like no big deal, but rakes, tillers, hoes and trowels can be hazardous to pets and cause trauma to paws, noses or other parts of a curious pet's body. Rusty, sharp tools caked in dirt may also pose a risk for tetanus if they puncture skin. While cats don't appear to be as susceptible as dogs to tetanus, care should be taken by storing all unused tools in a safe area, not haphazardly strewn on the ground.

Allergy-Causing Flora

Ah-choo! Like their sneezy human counterparts, pets have allergies to foods, dust and even plants. Allergic reactions in [dogs](#) and [cats](#) can even cause life-threatening anaphylactic shock if the reaction is severe. **If you do suspect your pet has an allergy, please don't give him any medication that isn't prescribed by a veterinarian.** It's also smart to [keep your pet out of other people's yards](#), especially if you're unsure of what kinds of plants or flowers lurk there. Keeping your pet off the lawn of others will make for healthy pets and happy neighbors.

BOARDING BITS

Many of you may not be aware that we offer boarding for dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, ferrets, reptiles, and the occasional pet rat.

First let's introduce you to our kennel staff:

Mary has been here seven months and is our morning kennel assistant. She recently moved here from Iowa.

Krista has been here three years and is one of our afternoon kennel assistants. She is in high school and started out as a volunteer.

Rose has been here ten months and is also one of our afternoon kennel assistants.

Jay is our newest addition, taking over our Doggie Day Care program and filling in on kennels whenever needed.

We have kennels for all sizes of dogs. They include indoor and outdoor runs with heated floors. We also offer twice daily turnout into our play yard for no additional charge and also a Doggie Play Package for an additional charge. We also have condos and cages for boarding cats. Pets picked up by noon will have no additional charge for that day.

You are welcome to bring any personal items with your pets. We offer our own bowls and bedding so that you have less to bring with you! Keep in mind that the kennels have limited space compared to your house as some pet beds take up a lot of area. Your pet may get nervous here and soil their bedding. They may also shred their bedding. We try to keep your pets bedding clean and intact, but dogs can be quick!

If your pet is on a special diet we recommend you provide their food, otherwise we feed Ivet dog and cat food at no additional charge. Please bring the appropriate amount of food to last your pet's stay with us-keeping in mind that our space is limited. Please remember to bring any medications (and current instructions) that your pet is on so we can continue them during their stay.

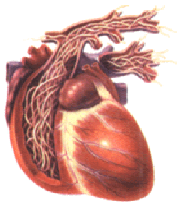


Feel free to stop by and check out our facilities! While your pet is boarding feel free to call us and see how they are doing.

Spring Special

April, May, June

20% Discount on Heartworm Testing and Prevention



Mosquito Season Is Approaching:

Check out the [Heartworm Society](#) website for more information on heartworm disease.



Your dog not truly digging the taste of Iverhart? Try wrapping them in Pill Pockets™, or wrapping them in bread, cheese or hot dogs.

🐾 Cat-ly Advice 🐾



[Cat Wisdom from our resident felines]

Skanky is thankful that it's Spring and she is NOT in Heat!!

Ever wonder why spring brings long nights of caterwauling and fighting under your window? The increased number of daylight hours sends us female cats into heat. Unlike dogs who have two heat cycles a year that last three weeks each, we cats will come into heat as soon as the days start getting longer, and we will continue to be in and out of heat until the days start getting shorter or we get pregnant.

When I first came to live here, I was spayed. That ended the hours of yowling, rolling on the floor, sticking my butt up in the air, trying to get outside, looking for a boy cat. During a heat cycle, for the first couple of days, the boys wanted me, but I didn't want anything to do with them. For the next 3 to 14 days, I wanted that boy. This is when I was the most annoying to all my people, and when I'd most likely try to sneak outside – either through the door or even out an open window. If you managed to keep me inside and away from the boys, I'd stop acting like a fool for maybe 2 to 3 weeks, and then it started all over again.

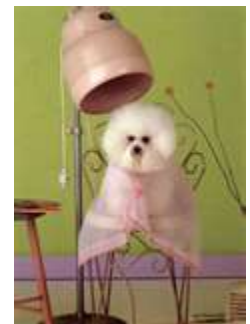
I have had several litters of kittens. In my situation, those babies were not very healthy. The last time, I was spayed at the beginning of a pregnancy and I was not very healthy myself

Editor's note: Female cats usually come into heat between 6 and 12 months of age, however some may come into heat as early as four months. A cat can get pregnant if bred on the first heat cycle, but it is not healthy for the cat, as she herself is not fully grown. A cat is an induced ovulator, meaning that they will release an egg only if they are bred. A cat can mate several times and a litter of kittens may have several fathers. If a cat does not breed, it will return to an active heat cycle in a few weeks. Spaying your cat before its first heat cycle is the best alternative. Neutering your male cat will reduce some unwanted behaviors, such as urine marking and fighting. It will also keep down the number of unwanted kittens, as it takes two to tango. Lifetime Small Animal Hospital does spay and neuter trapped stray cats. Ask about our program to help reduce the feral cat population. 🐾

Groomer's Corner - The Cost of Pet Grooming.

I have often been asked why it costs so much to groom a little dog when its owner can get their hair cut for around \$15.00. Well I found a little funny to share with you that should explain this. Here are the top ten reasons why it costs more to have your pet groomed than your own hair cut!

10. Your hairdresser doesn't wash and clean your rear end.
9. You don't go eight weeks without washing or brushing your hair.
8. Your hairdresser doesn't give you a sanitary trim.
7. Your hairdresser doesn't clean your ears.
6. Your hairdresser doesn't remove boogies from your eyes.
5. You sit still for your hairdresser.
4. Your haircut doesn't include manicure or pedicure.
3. Your hairdresser only washes and cuts the hair on your head.
2. You don't bite or scratch your hairdresser.
1. The likelihood of you going to the bathroom on your hairdresser is pretty slim!



Our groomer is often booked 8 + weeks in advance?
Make YOUR 2010 appointments today!