

# ❖ PAWS FOR SOME NEWS ❖

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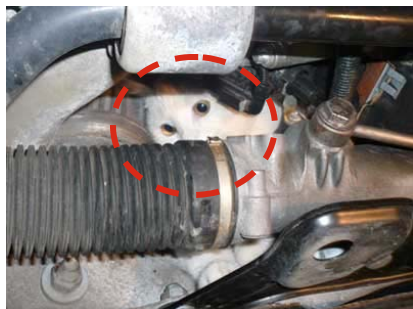
## Winter Health Tips

With the mercury falling during winter, Blum Animal Hospital advises pet owners to be aware of special precautions to keep their pets healthy, happy and warm. There are a variety of dangers associated with cold weather and pet owners can take a few simple steps to ensure that their pet braves the cold winter months. Blum

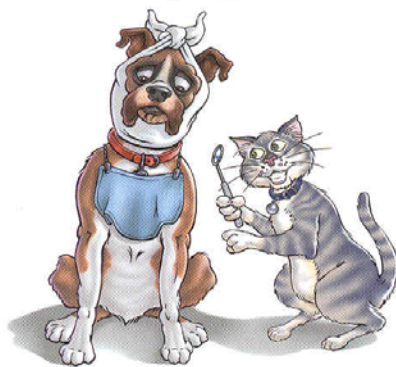


Animal Hospital recommends these cold weather precautions:

- Pet owners are encouraged to keep their pets inside whenever possible or to provide appropriate shelter, water, and bedding if the pet must be left outside for any length of time. Younger and older pets have compromised abilities to regulate body heat and should be kept indoors as well.
- Cats are attracted to the warmth of car engines. Check beneath the car, honk the horn or rap on the hood



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## Celebrate February Dental Health Month With Our Dental Special

Quality dental care is an essential part of your pet's good health. Not just because it will make breath sweeter, but because it contributes to overall wellness. Bacteria that results from diseased teeth and gums can enter your pet's bloodstream and travel to organs such as the lungs, heart, kidneys and liver, starting infections there. Although these infections are usually treatable, they can cause serious damage and, if not caught in time, may even cause death.

Periodontal disease is the overall term we give to infections in the tissue surrounding the teeth. Plaque and tartar form when food stays in the cracks and crevices of the teeth, especially along the gum line. Canned food is somewhat more likely to cause plaque than dry food because it tends to stick more easily to the surfaces of the teeth. But any food will cause

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[www.blumvet.com](http://www.blumvet.com)

## Help Your Senior Pet Live Longer

Ageing pets need special care and attention. Just like people, pets' bodies begin to go through changes as they reach those golden years. Beginning at around age 7, your pet enters his

*"Just like people, pets' bodies begin to go through changes as they reach those golden years."*

or her senior years. Blum Animal Hospital has developed a program to help keep your valued "senior citizen" with you for a longer time. The best way to treat any disease problem is to prevent it. Early detection can help in disease prevention and can minimize suffering. **Medical problems are often not physically visible** and may be uncovered by the comprehensive blood chemistries, electrocardiogram, or radiographs that are taken during this exam process. Such findings as cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, heart ailments, high blood pressure, and dietary deficiencies can be helped with our **Senior Longevity Program**. Together, we can help your pet. You know your pet better than



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# Protecting Our Pets—Holiday Safety

## A Special Holiday Supplement

The holiday season is once again upon us. At this time of the year a number of clients call us regarding ingestion of holiday "goodies" by their pets. Some are toxic and can be fatal, and others are just irritants causing vomiting and diarrhea. The following material has been gathered from many different sources including the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center.

**CHOCOLATE** contains a substance called theobromine which is not detoxified by the dogs liver. The most dangerous chocolate is dark chocolate or baker's chocolate with as little as 1 oz. causing death in a 10 pound dog. Milk chocolate contains about 45 milligrams of theobromine per ounce and bitter chocolate used for baking has 400 milligrams per ounce. Symptoms of chocolate poisoning are vomiting, diarrhea, urinary incontinence, hyperactivity, rapid breathing, rapid heartbeat, muscle tremors, coma and death.



**Artificial Sweeteners** such as found in certain sugar-free chewing gums, candies, baked goods, and other products can potentially cause serious and even life-threatening problems for pets. Dogs ingesting significant amounts of items sweetened with **xylitol** seem to have the biggest problem. It can be fatal!



**ALCOHOL** in the form of unfinished cocktails or beer scattered around the home following holiday parties contributes to a significant percentage of calls from our clients. Alcohol is dangerous to both children and pets and ingesting 3 ounces of hard liquor such as whiskey, vodka, or gin is potentially fatal to a child

weighing 25 pounds. The symptoms of an overdose may be mild such as stimulation, dizziness and nausea or may progress to more serious complications such as vomiting, drowsiness, breathing difficulty, coma and death.

### MACADAMIA NUTS

can cause weakness, tremors, and a transient paralysis in dogs.



### GRAPES AND RAISINS

have been associated with acute kidney failure. Although the reasons are not understood, it is best to not allow your pet to ingest grapes or raisins (in large quantities).



### CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

*Angel Hair* consists of spun glass which upon contact can be very irritating. It is best to avoid using this substance altogether.

*Artificial Trees* are usually manufactured from aluminum or plastic materials. Our only concern is in regard to intestinal blockage or irritation to the mouth. In addition, care should be taken to secure the tree so that *Fido* or *Puff* do not playfully knock it over.

*Candles* are considered non-poisonous. Neither coloring nor scent is present in an amount large enough to be significant.

*Christmas Tree Light Bubbling Fluid* usually contains methylene chloride which is not toxic in small quantities.

*Christmas Tree Ornaments* can be made of thin metal, plastic, foam or glass. Their components are virtually non-absorbable and concern is only for their potential to irritate the gastro-intestinal system. Dried paint or coloring on these objects has no reputation for causing poisoning.



*Evergreens*, such as Balsams, Cedar, Fir, Juniper, and Pine are often part of a festive decoration. Although these plants possess toxic oil, ingestion seldom causes anything but an upset stomach and possibly diarrhea. Pine cones are generally considered non-toxic but will cause irritation of the gastro-intestinal tract and if swallowed whole, could cause obstruction.



*Fireplace powders* and logs which burn different colors contain heavy metals such as lead, copper, and selenium. Large amounts would need to be consumed to be a problem.



*Tinsel* is a problem par-

ticularly for cats. If hung too low, cats will jump up to catch it in their mouth, thus pulling over the tree. It also can cause intestinal obstruction in cats that consume it. Tinsel is mostly plastic.

*Christmas Tree Preservatives* can be toxic. Many are just simple sugars and won't cause any problem other than diarrhea. Read the labels carefully before using them. It is important to keep the pan covered or otherwise out of the pets' reach.



*Sprays and Snow Flock* are relatively inert chemicals with low toxicity. Signs of contact include mild eye irritation, vomiting and central nervous system depression.

*Pottery* during Christmas season is highly decorative ceramic ware. Many of the imported ceramics have not been fired properly and the leaded glaze can cause lead poisoning. As a general rule, don't use home-made or imported ceramics as food or water bowls for your pet.

*Snow globes* are glass or plastic cones which when shaken look like a snow scene. The water can be bacteria laden and thus can cause vomiting and diarrhea. The snow is a chalk like substance that is non-toxic.



*Wrapping paper and ribbons* are not toxic, but the ribbons are often ingested by cats while playing. Since ribbons and



string can cause obstruction in both dogs and cats, it is best to throw these substances into a pet proof garbage can after using.

**SILICA PACKS** or "desiccants" that are often packaged with leather and electronic products may pose a choking hazard if swallowed. Some desiccants contain iron, which, in large doses, can cause gastrointestinal, liver, or other organ problems.

### **PLANTS**

The following plants are judged non-toxic for humans and thus will probably be non-toxic for your pet.

Bayberry  
Christmas Begonia  
Christmas Cactus  
Christmas Cheers  
Christmas Dagger Fern  
Christmas Kalanchoe

Mistletoe Cactus - not to be confused with regular mistletoe.

Poinsettia - There are a lot of rumors about this plant, but there is no evidence to support that it is toxic. We have been unable to document cases of actual poisoning due to the poinsettia plant. Cats have consumed the plant and have developed vomiting and electrolyte disturbances but not death.



### **STILL MAY CAUSE VOMITING AND/OR DIARRHEA.**

The following plants have been judged as TOXIC.

Amaryllis - The bulb is the most dangerous part of the plant

Boxberry - The leaves and stems are toxic.

Christmas Berry - The leaves are toxic.

Christmas Cherry - Leaves and fruit are toxic, unripened berry has the highest concentration of toxin.

Christmas Pepper - Leaves and fruit are toxic.

Christmas Rose - All parts are toxic.

Chrysanthemum - All parts are toxic and can be an irritant.

Holly - The leaves and especially the berries are toxic.



Mistletoe - All parts are toxic, especially the berries.

This is the most deadly of all the holiday plants for both humans and pets. The plant can cause interference with heart contractions and dangerous drop in blood pressure.



Rhododendron - All parts are toxic.

Winter Broom - The leaves are toxic.

We hope this article will help you enjoy your holidays with a peace of mind you may not have had. If you know of any additional information we should have, please let us know.

(Continued from page 1) *Cold Weather*

before starting the engine because the animal can be seriously, if not fatally, injured if the car is started.

- Foot pads collect rock salt and ice. Prevent irritation by wiping pads with a warm wash cloth after every trip outside.
- Pets should be prevented from drinking out of puddles in the streets or alleys. This puts animals at risk of poisoning from antifreeze, a sweet tasting chemical that will cause kidney failure and death.
- Short furred dogs should wear a coat in extreme low temperatures.
- Pets can suffer from frostbite and hypothermia during the winter months. Ear tips and tail tips are the most susceptible. When in doubt about the weather conditions, it's best to leave pets indoors. ☺



(Continued from page 1) *Dental Health*

problems if the teeth are not cleaned. In the early stages of periodontal disease, plaque is still soft, and brushing or chewing hard food and toys can dislodge it. If left to harden, plaque can lead to an inflammation of the gums called gingivitis.

When plaque mixes with saliva, it hardens and becomes tartar and calculus. Bacteria, plaque, tartar and calculus irritate the gums, making them tender, red and swollen. This stage of dental disease is called gingivitis. At this point, professional cleaning is needed. If the plaque and tartar buildup continues unchecked the tooth may become infected. In the final

(Continued from page 1) *Senior Health*

anyone else and can alert us to any changes before they become serious. The **Senior Longevity Program** includes a full physical examination, complete blood chemistry, complete blood count, blood pressure, thyroid panel, urinalysis, electrolyte panel, electrocardiogram, glaucoma check, radiographs of the chest and abdomen, and consultation with one of our veterinarians. What makes it even more exciting is that the whole package is at a **fraction of the cost** if each test were done separately. Give us a call and set up an appointment. Ask about our **Wellness Program** as well which can be done at your routine appointment.. After all, **it is the least you can do for a friend.** ☺

stages of periodontal disease, the tissues surrounding the tooth are killed, the bony socket holding the tooth erodes, and the tooth falls out. Periodontal disease can be prevented and treated. **The keys to your pet's oral health are professional veterinary dental care and good care at home.** Too few pets receive both, and most don't receive either. Take the first step toward better pet health today by visiting with us. In addition to performing a physical examination and taking a medical history, the doctor will examine your pet's teeth and gums. Recommendations may be made for cleaning, polishing and other dental care in the hospital, or your veterinarian may suggest a program of home dental care. **Join us for our incentive priced dental cleaning in February.** ☺



## Don't Stuff Pets on Holidays

Stuffing goes great with turkey, but it may not sit well with pets. Greasy foods like stuffing, sauce, and gravy can cause a pet to have stomach problems and diarrhea. In addition, turkey bones can cause problems for pets, becoming lodged in the animal's stomach or intestinal tract and cause internal damage. Clients should be advised to give dogs or cats specially made pet treats before beginning the holiday meal. Then pets should be moved to a secluded area away from the tempting signs and smells. ☺

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of pet care in  
Chicago

## Pets As Holiday Gifts?

What a great idea! "Let's get Danny a puppy for Christmas. After all he is five now and he can take care of it all by himself." Sound familiar? Our humane shelters are over-loaded with homeless pets just because of this foolish deed.



If you are thinking of purchasing a pet as a gift for a friend or relative, think twice! **Before you consider purchasing a pet as a gift,** talk to the prospective owner about it and better yet, let them decide on the type of pet they want, or even if they want a pet. Consider purchasing gift certificates from one of the shelters such as Chicago's Anti-Cruelty Society, which will then enable the recipient to pick the type of pet that will best fit into their home environment. Although having a pet is a wonderful way to teach children respect and love for other forms of life, they cannot be expected to be responsible for its well-being. ☺

# Blum Animal Hospital



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American Humane Association



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HAPPY NEW YEAR  
2010

## In This Issue...

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### LATEST PET STATISTICS

According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers<sup>1</sup> there are approximately 74.8 million owned dogs in the United States and 88.3 million owned cats. Thirty-nine percent of U.S. households own at least one dog and 34 percent of U.S. households own at least one cat. Putting that together, easily **60% of households in the United States have at least one pet.** On average, dog owners spent \$219 on veterinary visits (vaccine, well visits) annually and cat owners spent an average of \$175 on routine veterinary visits. Ten percent of owned dogs were adopted from an animal shelter and 18% of owned cats were adopted. **The impressive statistics are that 75% of owned dogs are spayed or neutered and 87% of owned cats are**

**spayed or neutered.** Thanks to a wonderful job done by our shelter low-cost to no-cost spay/neuter programs, Chicago has one of the lowest euthanasia rates in the country. Unfortunately, not all pets are adoptable. Some are dangerous and aggressive, too sick, or have other serious behavior issues. But for every one



of those, there are many who would make wonderful pets. If you are thinking of adding a pet to your life, consider giving a home to one of Chicago's homeless animals. There are

many wonderful shelters in Chicago and there is also the website: [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com). Whatever your choice, open your heart to a new furry friend ... you will never regret it. ☺

### Technology Leads Us To Paperless Records

Watch our newest change as we slowly move to a paperless record environment. Paperless records are evolving throughout the profession and Blum Animal Hospital is proud to make this advancement as well. Besides easier data retrieval, the standardization of information will enable us to alert you to new advancements in veterinary medicine that may impact your pet's health. And, of course, it goes without saying that reading records will be much easier. I entered veterinary college with great writing and left with a scribble. So please be patient with us as we make the changes and save many trees. ☺

