



Pet Poison Prevention Awareness Month

March is national pet poison prevention month. Every year pets are treated for exposure to a variety of toxic substances and foods. Mentioned below are some of the most common poisonings that we encounter.

Rat Bait

Rat bait is potentially deadly if consumed by dogs and cats. The bait is often flavoured to make it more appealing to rodents and this can therefore encourage other animals to eat it. Your dog or cat could become unwell after eating the bait directly or by eating tissue from an animal that has consumed the rat bait.

Signs of rat bait poisoning may include:

- Obvious external signs of haemorrhage (dependent on where the bleeding is; for example bruising, bloody faeces or urine, nose bleeds, vomiting blood).
- Lethargy
- Weakness
- Wobbliness
- Loss of appetite
- Distended abdomen from bleeding into the abdomen
- Coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing from bleeding into the chest
- Pale gums from anaemia
- Bulging of eyes from bleeding behind the eyes
- Sudden death with no obvious clinical signs can also occur.



The signs of poisoning can vary significantly depending on the size of your cat or dog and how much of the bait they have consumed. If you suspect your pet has eaten rat bait it is critical that you contact us immediately on 01566 772211.

Chocolate

Chocolate contains a chemical compound called theobromine which is toxic for cats and dogs. With Easter fast approaching it is important to bear this in mind and make sure you keep any chocolaty treats away from your furry friends.



If you suspect your dog or cat may have eaten chocolate, **do not** wait for symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhoea and increased thirst to appear before calling us. You will need to tell us the type of chocolate, how much they ingested, the size of your pet, and when it happened. As a first step, for dogs, you could also check out the dog chocolate toxicity calculator below.

<https://www.vets-now.com/app/chocolate-calculator>

Lilies

Lilies are beautiful flowers but unfortunately, they are highly toxic to cats. All parts of the lily plant are dangerous. Cats can be at risk of poisoning simply by brushing against a lily plant, causing the pollen to fall onto their fur. The pollen could then be licked off by the cat and ingested.

Signs of lily poisoning may include:

- Vomiting
- Not eating
- Drooling
- Drinking/urinating more
- Twitching
- Seizures
- Sudden/unexplained death



Swift action is key with any suspected poisoning. Always contact us if you think your pet has come in contact with a dangerous substance/food and remember, **do not** wait for symptoms to occur!

Pet Insurance

Pet Insurance – What you need to know....

The standard of veterinary care for pets and the treatments available have increased hugely, but the cost of this treatment can be high and may be ongoing for the life of your pet. We recommend that you consider Pet Insurance and whether it's right for you so you have peace of mind that unpredictable costs can be covered. It also allows you to make decisions for your pet's care based on what's best for your pet without worrying about the cost.



We cannot recommend a specific insurance company, but policies vary greatly, so read the small print! Here are some important things to know when thinking about which policy to take out:

1. Lifetime Policies
 - Cover is provided up to a set amount per condition and is refreshed each year.
 - This is the best type of policy to provide cover for ongoing conditions such as arthritis and allergic skin disease.
2. 12 Month Policies
 - Cover is provided up to a set amount per condition.
 - There is a 12 month limit and so conditions will only be covered for 12 months and then will be excluded from the policy.

- This is adequate for short term conditions such as following an accident but any ongoing conditions will not be covered after a year.
3. Maximum Benefit Policies
 - Cover is provided up to a maximum amount per condition.
 - Once the maximum is reached, the condition will be excluded from the policy.
 4. Accident Only Policies
 - Illness or disease is not covered at all.
 - Usually a 12 month limit so cover is not ongoing.
 - Very limited value.
 5. Consider the maximum amount the policy pays out per condition. If referral to a specialist is required, it is common for costs to reach £5000+.
 6. Policies will vary in what they will include and pay out for. For example, almost all policies will not pay out for anything related to breeding, including caesareans. Consider also checking if cover is included for dental treatments, behavioural problems, prescription diets, congenital conditions such as hip dysplasia and complimentary therapies such as acupuncture.
 7. It is important to take note that the clinical history of your pet must be provided to the Insurance Company when they request it. If any condition was present before the policy was taken out, it will be excluded and won't be covered.
 8. It is really important to note that changing your pet's insurance policy will mean that conditions that had been covered will now be considered Pre-existing and so will not be covered. This often catches people out and is something to be wary of if you are shopping around at renewal time for a better deal.
 9. The usual procedure for processing an Insurance Claim is that you settle your invoice with us first and then we submit a claim to get the money back from the Insurance Company. A Direct Claim (where the Insurance Company pay us directly) may be permissible in some circumstances. The total cost must be over £350, and ideally the Policy would be with one of the following Insurance Companies which have efficient online portals, however other Direct Claims will be considered at our discretion:
 - Petplan
 - Tesco
 - Animal Friends
 - Direct Line

We are very fortunate to have RVN Sue Mann at Castle Vets, who does a brilliant job processing Insurance Claims and sorting out issues relating to them. If you have any queries relating to insurance that our Receptionists aren't able to sort out, Sue is the person to talk to. Please note that there is a £26.50 admin fee per condition for processing Insurance Claims charged once a year.

Dogs in Yellow Day



March the 20th is national dogs in yellow day. The Yellow Dog Project <https://www.yellowdoguk.co.uk/> was set up in 2012 to bring awareness to dogs who need space while training, recovering from surgery, are being rehabilitated or have a nervous disposition. A yellow dog is a dog who needs extra space. Since dogs are often considered sociable animals, this is a prevalent problem that is generally overlooked.

For some of these dogs a visit to the vets can be a very stressful experience. If you are the owner of one of these dogs, you may well find their visits stressful as well. No-one wants to see their pet upset. Fortunately, it is possible to help these dogs relax.

Here at Castle Vets we run anxious dog clinics. We will spend time with you and your dog working on reducing their fear of the vets and gradually showing them that the practice is a great place to come filled with lovely people, toys and yummy treats.

This is a gradual process and will require you to commit to regular sessions which we will provide as a service to our clients. If you feel that your dog would benefit from attending these clinics, please contact reception for further information.

British Veterinary Receptionists Association

We are pleased to congratulate our small animal receptionist Ellis and our nurse Sue, on completing their Gold British Veterinary Receptionist Award.



Love Your Pet Day

In last month's newsletter we asked you to send in pictures of your pets to help celebrate National Love Your Pet Day. It was too hard to pick just one favourite as they were all so fantastic, so here are a selection of the some of the photos we received.





New Face



Abbie Clegg – Small Animal Receptionist

Abbie joined the practice in February. She has worked as a veterinary receptionist for over a year.

She has one soppy cat called Bravo who is a rescue and one crazy Staffy called Bonnie. In her spare time, she enjoys walking the dog down the beach and socialising with friends.

Welcome to the team Abbie!