

the latest

news from maven veterinary care

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Winter Birds



Garden birds are extremely vulnerable during the winter months and providing food and fresh water is one of the most helpful things

you can do for them. During cold winter nights birds, can sometimes lose 10% of their body weight just keeping warm, which means they quickly need to find food during the day, just to replenish their reserves for the cold night ahead. Prolonged cold spells can lead to a very high mortality rate in birds.



In addition to traditional bird tables, hanging feeders suspended from trees (or a free standing pole) are a popular way of feeding birds. Seed feeders are tubular, transparent containers with holes, through which, the birds are able to access a high calorie seed mix, Nut feeders are made of steel mesh and are ideal for unsalted peanuts.

Bird tables can be stocked with seed mixes and a selection of household scraps such as cooked potato, cake crumbs and soft fruit. It is also important to ensure that birds have access to fresh and not frozen water since many birds die in severe weather due to dehydration. A suspended water dish is a good way of achieving this and, if it is very cold, use tepid water.

Further information on caring for garden birds can be found online at www.rspb.org.uk



Can you pinch an inch?!

With the onset of winter weather, it's very tempting for pets to snuggle up at home, go on less walks, and in the process gain some extra weight – which can lead to a variety of health issues.

How can I tell if my pet is gaining excess weight?

In dogs a simple test is to run your hands over their chest – you should be able to easily feel (but not see) their ribs without pressing

too hard. They should also have a “waist”, when viewed from both above and the side. By contrast, if you can pinch an inch or more, and if your pet's stomach sags down and bulges out, then a diet may be in order. It's also important to keep an eye on your cat's waistline as well!

So – why is it a problem? Unfortunately, excess weight places extra demands on many organs of the body. Carrying extra weight can lead to, or worsen, many conditions including: • arthritic joint problems, • heart disease (putting the heart under increased strain), • raised blood pressure, • diabetes (a particular risk factor in cats), • decreased stamina and heat intolerance – to name just a few!

How can you try to ensure your pet remains the right weight?

Losing weight can be challenging for all of us, and our pets are no exception; so the most important thing is to try to ensure your pet is on the most suitable diet in the first place. Additionally, your pet's dietary requirements change throughout their lives and our knowledgeable team are happy to advise you on the most appropriate diet for your pet.

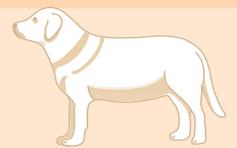
We are here to help! The good news is that if your pet has piled on some extra pounds, either during lockdown, or going into the winter months, please get in touch and we can advise you on their ideal weight. To achieve weight loss, pets need a combination of specially formulated calorie controlled diets and more exercise. There are many health benefits to keeping your pet a healthy weight, so if your pet has added a few pounds or seemed to have slowed down, please give us a call. We can help your pet slim down and tap into a huge range of health benefits associated with weight loss.

IDEAL WEIGHT



Outline of ribs can be easily felt through a slight fat cover

OVER WEIGHT



Ribs difficult to feel through a moderate to thick fat cover

Seasonal Opening Times



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all at Maven Vets!

We hope you won't need to visit us over the festive period with your poorly pets, but if you do, we are here. Contact us as normal on **0208 337 2214** and you will be able to speak to one our Maven Team, or, if we are closed, our out-of-hours emergency provider Vets Now.

Our opening times over the Christmas period are:

Thursday 24th December (Christmas Eve): Open 8am - 5pm

Friday 25th December (Christmas Day): Closed*

Saturday 26th December (Boxing Day): Closed*

Sunday 27th December: Open as normal 10am – 2pm

Monday 28th December (Bank Holiday): Open 10am – 2pm for emergencies and urgent appointments only

Thursday 31st December (New Years Eve): Open 8am – 6pm

Friday 1st January (New Years Day): Closed*

Saturday 2nd January: Normal opening hours resume at 9am

*An emergency service will be running with Vets Now.

Normal opening hours will resume from Saturday 2nd January 2021

Our opening hours

Monday – Friday 8am-8pm

Saturday 9am-4pm

Sunday 10am-2pm

In an Emergency day or night – call us on 0208 337 2214

www.mavenvets.co.uk

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609-613 London Road, North Cheam, Surrey, SM3 9DF



Winter worries!

The cold winter months bring particular challenges for our pets, and as their owners, we need to be aware of the problems they can suffer at this time of year. Here we look at some of the commonest winter hazards:

Winter walks: When you are out and about, it's important to make sure that your pets are adequately prepared; they may need to wear waterproof and warm jackets, especially if they are older or are short coated breeds such as whippets. Some salt mixtures on paths, and also snow building up between the paws, can cause limping and pain. So, do check your pet's feet regularly and make sure they are washed and clean on return from a walk. Also, whilst out and about, make the most of the shorter days by playing games while you are out to give your pet mental as well as physical stimulation.

Arthritis is very commonly first diagnosed in older patients during the winter months. This isn't because the disease first strikes during this period, but because the lower temperatures seize up the limbs and make the symptoms of pain and stiffness more obvious. Look out for pets hanging back on walks, stiffness in the mornings or them being reluctant to go out. Most pets will really benefit from anti-inflammatory medications, but you can also help by giving them joint supplements, lovely soft beds, and many will enjoy resting by the radiator or on a pet-safe hot water bottle!

Winter weight worries: With many pets spending more time indoors during the winter months – they are getting less exercise and need correspondingly less food. We have an article on the front page of this newsletter giving you more information on keeping your pet in-shape and how carrying excess weight is an issue for pets.

Festive alert: Pieces of string, tinsel and bones from turkeys should be kept well out of reach to avoid an intestinal blockage and the possible need for life saving surgery. Baubles and lights, if broken and eaten, will cause serious damage to your pet. Similarly we see lots of problems at this time of year from pets eating things like chocolate, Christmas cake and mince pies. See our facing article on toxic hazards to pets.

Outdoor pets: Also don't forget about smaller pets who live outdoors. Make sure rabbits and guinea pigs have well insulated hutches, plenty of bedding to snuggle down in and check their water twice daily to ensure it hasn't frozen. See our facing article on guinea pigs.

For further information on any of the topics mentioned in this article, please speak to a member of our team.



Understanding dental health for pets



Just like their owners, pets need to maintain a good dental hygiene. They rely on us to take care of their teeth for

them. Dental disease is extremely common in pets, due to a combination of dietary and genetic factors.

By the age of five, the majority of pets are already in need of some form of dental work. Some unlucky ones may need treatment from as young as one year of age. Infection associated with dental disease can gradually cause damage to other vital organs in the body through bacteraemia (bacteria getting into the bloodstream). If you have noticed any worsening in your pet's breath, this is very likely to be happening already.

We would never suggest dental work for cosmetic reasons. It will either be a preventative procedure to try and stop future loss of teeth, or it will be to resolve painful conditions already present.

COMMON DENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

There are various forms of oral health problems in pets. This includes:

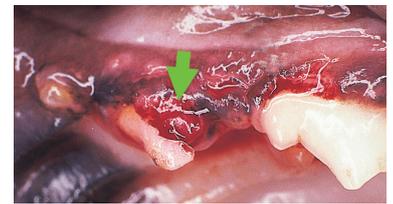
- **Calculus** 'Tartar' – yellow/brown staining, hardened deposits of dental plaque
- **Gingivitis** (*below*) Inflammation of the gums (gums should be 'salmon pink' – red gums are inflamed)



- **Periodontitis** (*below*) Inflammation/infection of the tissues that support the tooth in its socket



- **Resorptive lesions** – Painful erosive lesions peculiar to cats that destroy the tooth and cause pain. Also known as neck lesions and feline odontoclastic lesions (FORLs)



- Fractured Teeth
- Infection/Abscess

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Our team can offer various services to help you understand more about your pet's oral health and guide you through the best practices.

PREVENTION

Dental hygiene is all about prevention and home care. There are different ways you can help reduce the likelihood of future dentals being required and help maintain your pet's oral health. Dental health prevention in cats and dogs is focused around preventing plaque building up to become hard deposits of tartar which can go on to cause further dental disease.



OUR TOP TIPS

★ Regular brushing is the most effective way to control tartar build up. Special pet toothbrushes and toothpaste should be used. Ask us for more details

★ If brushing is not an option, there are various other products which can be applied directly to the mouth or given in food which can help to reduce tartar build up.

★ Dental treats are not as effective as tooth brushing but can have a modest effect on tartar build up. These treats tend to be high in calories though so do make sure you are taking this in to account when giving them.