

Autumn 2024 Small Animal Newsletter

As the leaves change and the air cools, it's the perfect time to enjoy outdoor activities with your furry companions. However, autumn brings a unique set of challenges for pet health. Here's what you need to watch out for this season:

- **Halloween Hazards:** Sweet treats, especially chocolate and sugar-free treats containing xylitol, can be toxic to pets. Wrappers and decorations may also be choking hazards or cause intestinal blockages.
- **Acorns & Conkers (Horse Chestnuts):** Dogs are often tempted to chew on fallen acorns or conkers, which can lead to vomiting, diarrhoea, and, in severe cases, kidney or liver damage. Keep an eye out during walks and discourage scavenging behaviour.
- **Fleas & Ticks Haven't Disappeared:** Cooler weather doesn't mean parasites are gone. Ticks are active until the first hard frost, and fleas can survive indoors year-round. Continue preventive treatments and check your pet's coat regularly.
- **Cold Weather Joint Pain:** Pets with arthritis often feel stiffer as temperatures drop. If your pet is limping or reluctant to move, ask us about joint supplements, comfortable bedding, or medication to ease discomfort. Make an appointment at one of our senior pet clinics and discuss any concerns with a nurse or a vet.
- **Indoor Dangers:** As heating devices come out of storage, ensure your pets can't access open flames or heating pads that might cause burns. Keep electric cords out of reach to avoid chewing incidents.
- Make sure all rooms that your pets have access to have the curtains/blinds shut.
- Ensure your pets are brought inside before dark.

Fireworks & bonfire night

Bonfire night can be a fun time for us humans – most of us love to watch the fireworks and gather around the bonfires but this can be a really scary time for our furry friends, so we have put together a little help guide to ease the stress.

How do I know if my pet is scared?

If your pet is acting in any way different then that could be an indicator that they are scared, however these are the main things to watch out for on bonfire night:

- Involuntary behaviours such as trembling or panting.
- Pacing around or hiding behind the furniture (or on top of for cats!).
- "Inappropriate" behaviours - toileting in the house, chewing, barking, running away.
- Refusing to eat.

Be prepared:

- Ensure your pet's microchip details are up to date in case they run away from home.
- Check the dates of nearby fireworks displays.
- Make sure all rooms that your pets have access to have the curtains/blinds shut.
- Ensure your pets are brought inside before dark.

How can I keep my pet calm during a fireworks display?

- Play some background music or leave the television on.
- Stick to usual routines and behave as normal, following your pet's lead (e.g. if they ask for comfort, give it).
- Distract them with a fun activity such as a puzzle feeder or a game.
- Make a safe space for them to hide if required.
- Wait for a break in the fireworks to take dogs out to the toilet and always keep the lead on, even in your own garden.
- Leave clean litter trays out for cats, even if they normally go outside to the toilet.
- Use calming pheromones and supplements - speak to any of our vets or nurses for recommendations.

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- Watch your pets around other pets/children, they may be less tolerant than normal due to fear and anxiety.
- Contact us if you usually get prescription medication or think you may need some.
- Most importantly - never ever punish your pet for being fearful.
- Don't forget to make sure there are no hedgehogs around the bonfires too.
- If you have any concerns please contact the surgery and speak to one of our nurses.



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