



Various completely false statements made to our clients by ill-informed store staff include "Science Diet is full of corn and corn is just a filler;" "Science Diet was bought by another company and now it's not very good;" "Grains cause allergies;" "This food is just like that prescription diet;" or my favorite, "veterinarians don't have any nutritional training." Excuse me?

Dear Clients & Friends...

I recently had a discussion with my hairdresser that reminded me how important it is to keep discussing nutrition over and over again with my clients. Susanne is a knowledgeable pet owner who researches her pet care choices carefully. She asked me about choices for an over-the-counter diet for her dog with pancreatitis. Our discussion brought up several points that are common misconceptions about nutrition, pet food labeling, ingredients in pet foods and advertising and marketing of these products. (See our nutrition facts quiz on page 7.)

Pet owners are bombarded with information about pet care every day, especially in advertising. Sadly, pet food marketing isn't any more reliable than any other kind. If half of what we see in ads were true we'd all be beautiful, slim, popular and have perfect skin, hair and teeth because every product would provide miraculous benefits. Much of what you think you know about pet nutrition comes from false or misleading advertising by companies hoping you will buy their brand. They will say whatever it takes to get you to do that, even if it's untrue.

Some pet food propaganda comes from pet store employees who lie to customers.



Nutrition is a vital component of health care and an integral part of the treatment of many diseases. Of course we have training in nutrition – a lot of it, in fact. I can talk for hours about nutritional science and provide reams of evidence on what is actually true. The pet store employee is simply repeating what she has been told by others, with no real understanding of what's true and what's not.

Anyway, I decided to use a nutrition handout as our handout of the year for dogs in 2018 – again. I often find myself wimping out and not discussing pet food choices with my clients because I am afraid I will offend someone by criticizing his or her choices or I figure the expensive grain-free diet being fed isn't harmful so why go down that path. I need to do better if I want my patients to lead the best lives

Tidbits...

Roadrunner Pharmacy, a compounding pharmacy for veterinary patients, has recently been purchased by Vets First Choice, our on-line pharmacy (bestfriendsvet.vetsfirstchoice.com). This will give you more choices in compounded medications, such as quick-dissolve tablets called mini-melts, vanilla chewables, scored tablets for more flexible dosing, flavored dewormers and even a single-dose Giardia treatment for cats.

Archeologists discovered images engraved in a sandstone cliff in northwestern Saudi Arabia that depict hunters accompanied by dogs, many of which appear to be leashed. The engravings are likely 8,000 to 9,000 years old and could suggest that dogs were important hunting companions at the time in the region. The findings are reported in the *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*.

possible. What you feed your pets every day really does matter. So I am resolved to do a better job this year at explaining my recommendations and helping you to make wise choices about what to feed your pets.

Nan Boss, DVM

Choosing Safe Chews for Dogs

Pet owners may want to rethink rewarding their dogs with bones. The FDA is warning pet owners not to give their pets packaged, processed bones after receiving reports of choking, gastrointestinal obstruction and distress, oral cuts and 15 reports of death linked to the products. The reports involved about 90 dogs and were sent in by pet owners and veterinarians. Giving your dog a bone treat might lead to an unexpected trip to your veterinarian, a possible emergency surgery or even death for your pet.

Among the descriptions for the bone treats listed in the reports are "Ham Bones," "Pork Femur Bones," "Rib Bones," and "Smokey Knuckle Bones," according to the FDA. The bones may be dried through a smoking process or by baking and can contain other ingredients such as preservatives, seasonings and smoke flavorings. The FDA also received seven reports detailing other problems with the products, which included moldy-appearing bones or bone treats splintering when chewed by the pet.

The FDA also reminded pet owners that chicken and other bones from the kitchen table can cause injury when chewed by pets because they are so brittle. We see broken teeth quite commonly from bones and other hard chews.

BEST FRIENDS



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COMMON TOXINS THAT CAUSE ILLNESS IN PETS



Sooner or later, most dogs and a fair number of cats need treatment for some sort of toxicity

Our homes and yards are full of dangerous substances. The two most common poison categories reported to the poison control hotline are human medications. We cannot stress enough that **all medications, whether human or animal, should be kept out of reach in a drawer or cabinet.** Along the lines of "If you build it, they will come." "If you leave it out a pet will find it."

17% of poisonings in pets involve human prescription medication. Another 17% are due to over-the-counter drugs. Pet owners often think their pets won't eat such things – until they do.

18% of poisonings in dogs occur in Labrador retrievers and 7% occur in golden retrievers. These are not only popular breeds but they are large enough to reach countertops and have been bred to want to carry things around in their mouths.

Amphetamines:

The most common prescription drugs to cause toxicity in pets are those used to treat ADD and ADHD. Children are not as careful to keep medications out of reach as adults so these pills often end up somewhere a pet can reach them, or a pill or two may end up on the floor and be quickly snapped up by a pet.

The illegal drugs methamphetamine, ecstasy (methamphetamine mixed with caffeine, which is also toxic to pets) and MDMA (street name Molly) cause similar symptoms. Amphetamines affect both the brain and the cardiovascular system.

Signs of ingestion include high fever, elevated heart rate and blood pressure, blood clotting abnormalities, agitation, tremors, disorientation and seizures.

All kinds of other drugs can be poisonous to pets. Opioid pain medications, heart and blood pressure medications, Parkinson's medications, antidepressants, topical hormones and skin products, tubes of ointment that get chewed up and anything else prescribed for a human can end up inside of a pet.

Pets can also overdose on their own medications, especially chewable formulations that taste good. If a dog gets ahold of the bottle of pills that they know contains treats they will often consume the entire thing – sometimes including the plastic container.

Over-the-counter pain medications:

The number one OTC drug poisoning pets in Wisconsin is ibuprofen, followed by acetaminophen. Even at low doses these drugs are very dangerous. Your dog or cat does not have to eat a lot of them. One tablet is more than sufficient to kill a small pet.

Acetaminophen can kill a cat within an hour or two. Ibuprofen causes kidney failure, severe gastric or duodenal ulcers, coma and death within a day or two. Naproxin is also toxic to pets. Aspirin causes stomach ulceration even at low doses in dogs and leads to kidney failure in cats.

Many times pets ingest these medications because the pet owner gives it to them thinking that they can treat an injury or lameness with the same medications they take themselves. **Never give over-the-counter drugs to a pet without consulting us!!**

Other common OTC poisons include cold and flu remedies (containing phenylephrine, alcohol, xylitol and other toxic ingredients), herbal remedies and ointments of all sorts.

Food and drink:

Chocolate accounts for about 8% of reported poisonings and another 10% or so involve other food products. Grapes/raisins, macadamia nuts and bread dough are common culprits. Alcohol can be fatal even in small amounts. Letting your dog drink beer is really not funny.

Xylitol exposure cases are increasing exponentially all across the country because xylitol, an artificial sugar-free sweetener, is being used in more and more products. Chewing gum is especially problematic.

Icebreakers gum can cause a severe blood sugar drop just 20 minutes after ingestion. Low blood potassium level and liver failure develop later on. Xylitol ingestion warrants

Signs of chocolate intoxication include: vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst, high heart rate, pancreatitis, tremors and seizures. Death can occur from irregular heart rhythm or respiratory failure.



immediate treatment! Read labels carefully, as xylitol is showing up in more and more products – including peanut butter, barbeque sauce, diapers and baby wipes!

Corrosive agents:

Strong acids, such as in pool sanitizers, toilet bowl cleaners, car battery fluid and anti-rust products, cause chemical burns. Luckily, the burn starts immediately so a pet generally doesn't take more than a lick or two. Strong alkalis, such as bleach, are much more dangerous because initial pain is minimal.

The third category of corrosive agents is cationic detergents found in disinfectants, sanitizers, algacides, liquid potpourri, fabric softeners and dishwashing detergent. Cats are especially sensitive to cationic detergents.

In general, cats are more prone to toxicity from corrosives because if they walk through something toxic they will lick it off their feet and thus get it into their mouths. To prevent exposure to these sorts of chemicals keep cleaning products in a closed cabinet and clean up any spills immediately. Do not use strong cleaning products or petroleum products to clean anything off your pet's fur – paint thinner causes severe burns, too.

Other indoor hazards:

Paint balls, glue, spare change, batteries, plastic or metal objects – many of these items are toxic, above and beyond their ability to cause intestinal obstruction.



Outdoor hazards:

Fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and fungicides can all cause toxicity – not just short term but some chemicals increase cancer risk with chronic or repeated exposure. Animal baits and poisons are very hazardous and should not be used in households with pets.

For many years, the toxic ingredient in rodent bait has been an anticoagulant such as brodifacoum or warfarin. They interfere with blood clotting, so affected animals bleed to death. These chemicals are slow to act, leaving us time to get a pet on

Vitamin K1 to counteract the poison. However, the EPA, in an attempt to reduce risk to children and pets, has restricted use of anticoagulant poisons.

Manufacturers are now using the active ingredient bromethalin instead. Bromethalin is extremely toxic and has no antidote – leaving us out of the frying pan and into the fire. It is a neurotoxin, so symptoms include seizures, whole body tremors, weakness, blindness, coma and death.

Symptoms develop fairly rapidly, usually 2-24 hours post-exposure, depending on how much was ingested. Chronic exposure at a lower dose – say a cat catching mice that have ingested the poison every day or two – can take days to start causing symptoms.

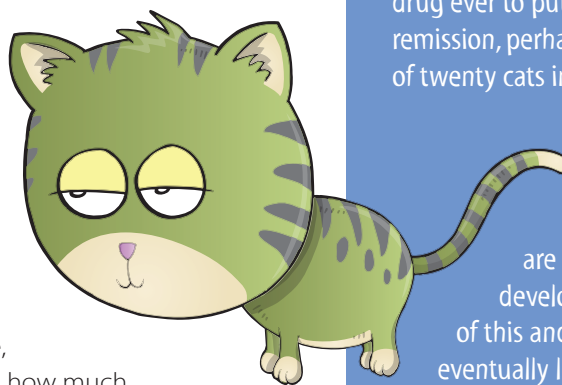
Diagnosis can be difficult because we don't have a readily available test for bromethalin. Seeing blue-green dye in vomit or feces is a helpful indicator – the FDA requires a dye be added to rodenticides.

There are many other causes of neurological symptoms, including infections of many kinds (including Rabies, Lyme disease and Blastomycosis), brain tumors and other toxins, that all have to



be explored if we don't know that the pet ate rat poison or a poisoned rodent. Usually an MRI is needed to figure out what is causing the symptoms (at a cost of about \$3000). Treatment is symptomatic supportive care, with a poor prognosis if symptoms are severe.

A very safe alternative rodent poison is available in Canada. It's not a poison but a form of cellulose that absorbs water in the digestive tract and dehydrates the mouse. Sadly, it's not available here in the U.S.



More Tidbits..

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) is one of the deadliest diseases we treat, with a mortality rate of 100% once symptoms arise. For the first time, we have some light at the end of the tunnel. An experimental antiviral drug in a class of drugs called protease inhibitors has recently proven to be the first drug ever to put FIP-infected cats into remission, perhaps permanently. Seven of twenty cats in the first, small study of the drug are still alive and healthy 5-11 months after treatment. We are hopeful that further development and testing of this and similar drugs will eventually lead to a cure.

Overdoses from extremely potent illegal opioids are on the rise across America -- but not just for humans. These drugs are now endangering working dogs who encounter them in the line of duty. As a result, veterinarians are increasingly asked to consult by phone for dogs suffering from overdoses in the field. To address this emerging health threat, the AVMA collaborated with the University of Illinois to develop a training video that helps veterinarians and law enforcement teams provide potentially life-saving treatment for dogs.

Working Dogs for Conservation screens shelter dogs for their olfactory abilities and rescues and trains the most promising pups to detect invasive plants. One team has helped conservationists nearly eradicate invasive dyer's woad in a region of Montana, says Pete Coppolillo, the group's executive director. Whoever would have thought to use dogs to reduce invasive plant species?



DIAGNOSING SEPA



SEPARATION ANXIETY is a common behavioral problem, especially in dogs rehomed as adults. The most common reason to develop anxiety is being rehomed at a sensitive time in life. If you lost your home and never saw your parents again you would be traumatized, too! When this happens at the “teenage” stage, which is between 6 months and a year of age, depending on the breed and size of the dog, it seems to trigger separation anxiety much more often. If you just adopted your dog

from a shelter, especially if he was rehomed more than once, the risk for anxiety behavior is pretty high. Dogs who are rarely left alone as puppies or that were weaned too young are also at risk for panic when left by themselves.

The first step to treating separation anxiety is to make sure that’s what your dog actually has. If your dog is destroying things in the house, you need to know if he or she is terrified and panicky or just bored and needing something to do.

Signs of panic in a dog include distress vocalizing – whining, crying, barking or howling; urine or stool accidents; attempts at escape that usually result in destruction, especially through or around the door by which their owners have left; or destruction of other objects.

Dogs that feel panic at being left alone do so for three reasons:

- 1) They are anxious watching their owners leave. This is called departure anxiety.
- 2) They are anxious if they find themselves alone. This is the true meaning of the term separation anxiety.
- 3) They are alone and enclosed, which is crate or barrier anxiety.

Dogs can have any of these three alone or in any combination. Dogs with departure anxiety start to show symptoms when they observe their owners “pre-departure” signals, such as putting on coats or shoes, packing or picking up a briefcase or purse, picking up keys or heading for the door. These dogs have learned to associate these actions with being left behind.

Dogs with separation anxiety are those that panic as soon as they realize they are alone. Usually this is within a few minutes of the owner leaving the house. Some dogs will panic when the owner is still home but out of sight – in the yard, another room or even the shower.

Dogs with crate/barrier anxiety panic because they are confined. They often injure themselves trying, and often succeeding, to break themselves out. They may suffer broken teeth, torn toenails or injuries to the face.

We had to anesthetize one dog to remove hundreds of wood splinters stuck in the mouth and tongue.

A dog with crate/barrier anxiety only is the easiest to confirm and treat. To do so, simply leave the dog out of the crate. Once the barrier is removed these dogs are no longer anxious when left alone.

To confirm the other two types you will need to either video your dog after you leave or sneak back to a window to see what happens. If you see your dog pacing, panting, urinating, defecating, etc. just minutes after you leave, that’s panic. If your dog lays down to nap and 3 hours later urinates by the door because he has to go potty and no one is home, that’s a different issue. Similarly, if the dog is seen on the video scouting for goodies left on the counter or in the garbage can, that’s not anxiety-related.

If the dog is fine some days but destroys things on other days it’s likely a specific event is triggering the dog’s destructive behavior. If Tuesday is garbage pick-up day and every Tuesday there is stool on the floor when you get home your dog may be afraid of the garbage truck or the sound of the cans being wheeled around. Other scary things to a dog, especially one who is confined and can’t get away, include the sound of a dishwasher or washing machine; a storm that went through during the day; a UPS or Fed-Ex delivery; road construction; or something happening at the neighbor’s house next door. Often it is not until we start looking for a pattern that we find one.

We have one client whose neighbors were complaining that her dog was barking while she was gone during the day. She set up a video system and discovered that her dog was sometimes knocking her Kong toy through the kitchen baby gate and down the steps to the back door. The dog would then bark and bark at her Kong toy because she couldn’t reach it. All the client had to do to stop the problem was to not give the dog her Kong toy before leaving in the morning.

Age is a big factor in diagnosing separation anxiety. In an adolescent dog, chewing objects out of boredom or because of teething discomfort is common but is not usually a problem with anxiety. Providing more exercise and stimulation, plus confinement and puppy-proofing the house, will usually solve the problem. A new behavior in an older dog is more likely to be due to a medical condition than separation anxiety.

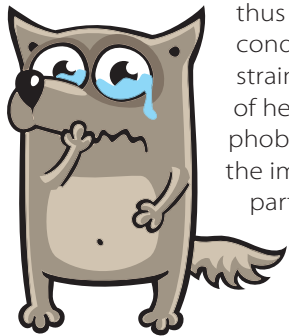
A recent study suggests that dogs suffering from separation anxiety are the pessimists of the canine world who always expect the worst in any situation. In the case of separation anxiety, their worst fear is presumably that their owners have gone, never to return. Pessimists or not, these dogs tend to be more sensitive and anxious than their psychologically stable counterparts.



SEPARATION ANXIETY

Further evidence of these dogs' anxious nature is provided by their clinginess, neediness and lack of independence. Also, they frequently exhibit other behaviors in the fear spectrum, such as noise phobia or storm phobia. Opinions vary on how dogs acquire this problem, but nature and nurture must be involved. Of these two factors, nurture probably has the most profound impact.

Certain breeds, even certain breed groups, seem more inclined to develop excessive fearfulness, though, so at least part of the tendency is genetic – affected puppies were born with the susceptibility to separation anxiety and thus are likely to develop the problem if conditions are right. A genetically nervous strain of pointers and the predisposition of herding breeds to thunderstorm phobia attest to this influence. However, the importance of environmental factors, particularly in early life, almost certainly plays a key role.



Affected dogs will:

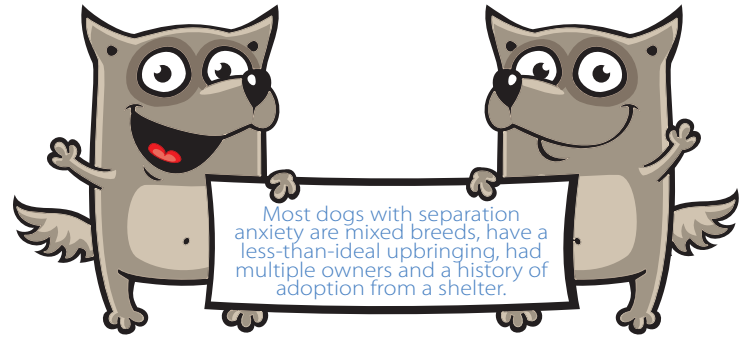
- Always attempt to avoid separation from attachment figures.
- Panic, try to escape or display displacement behaviors—all signs of anxiety—when left alone.

An affected dog will “shadow” its owner, become anxious as the owner prepares to leave, and pace, vocalize or destroy property when he finds himself alone.

About 30 percent of dogs with separation anxiety become so anxious and panicky that they eliminate urine or feces in sheer terror. Many pace mindlessly while others displace into self-licking or chewing cushions, furniture or other items in the home. Others salivate or vomit. Salivation results from stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system, with consequent production of thick, viscid saliva. This sign is a particularly ominous prognostic indicator – in other words, it indicates a severe form of the disease with a worse prognosis.

In addition, dogs with true separation anxiety often exhibit psychogenic anorexia—they're too nervous to eat—and display exuberant greeting behavior when their owners finally return home. Not all classic signs of separation anxiety are present in all dogs, but hyper attachment, prolonged vocalization, destructive behavior and exuberant greeting manifest in most affected dogs.

A week or so of separation from an attachment figure, whether the pup's mom or a new owner, can precipitate this syndrome. In that respect, separation anxiety bears some similarities to post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), in which one or more extremely stressful experiences will cause a lifetime of avoidance of that experience plus ongoing



Most dogs with separation anxiety are mixed breeds, have a less-than-ideal upbringing, had multiple owners and a history of adoption from a shelter.

feelings of hyper arousal, a low startle threshold, and appearing tense or on edge.

Although some believe that separation anxiety treatment is a slam dunk, it's not. Studies, including a recent one, purport to show that dogs with separation anxiety can be easily cured using a planned departure desensitization program.

Unfortunately, such studies are flawed in terms of their method of assessment of treatment success. Dogs with separation anxiety are temperamentally scarred, and their underlying sensitive natures and susceptibility to separation angst does not change over time. As with other fear-based behavior problems, the best response we can hope to achieve using all the resources available to us is to improve the situation to a livable degree.

Antianxiety medication is usually helpful, making it easier to manage the problem. Sometimes, but not always, the treatment result can be good to the point of a perceived “fix,” but even good responders remain susceptible to back sliding. Supposedly successful desensitization programs are also notoriously difficult for owners to implement, requiring more time, understanding and commitment than is reasonable to expect.

In short, having a dog with separation anxiety can be pretty anxiety-inducing for the owner, too. It's a huge commitment to own an affected dog, with no guarantee of a cure. Like PTSD in humans, the condition is frustratingly difficult to treat. Early recognition and treatment are important. The longer it goes on without being addressed properly, the more difficult it will be to retrain the brain.

As a side note, it would be really great if dogs could be on anti-anxiety medication before, during and after a super-stressful time. Moving, rehoming or divorce would be so much easier on the pets if we did a better job at heading stress off at the pass. Once the brain is in a negative, anxious state it's much harder to deal with the resultant behavior problems.

Veterinary Dentistry – Too Little, Too Late

DENTAL CARE FACTS QUIZ

- 1) Foul mouth odor is most commonly caused by
 - a. Periodontal disease
 - b. An abscessed tooth
 - c. A hole or cavity in the tooth
 - d. A tumor in the mouth
- 2) What percent of dogs and cats have some degree of dental disease by age 3?
 - a. 20%
 - b. 40%
 - c. 60%
 - d. 80%
- 3) Which month is National Pet Dental Health Month?
 - a. February
 - b. April
 - c. June
 - d. September
- 4) How much longer do pets live if they receive regular and timely dental care?
 - a. 5-10%
 - b. 10-20%
 - c. 20-30%
 - d. Dental care doesn't increase life expectancy
- 5) Dental x-rays do not reveal
 - a. Abscessed teeth
 - b. Gingivitis
 - c. Tooth resorption
 - d. Bone damage from periodontal disease

Answers: 1) a 2) d 3) a 4) b 5) b

done every 6 months and those with periodontal disease may visit the dentist four times a year to maintain healthy teeth and gums.

In contrast, most clients are taken aback or even appalled when we recommend dental cleanings be done annually or every six months. Expense and fear of anesthesia are big factors, but dentistry in veterinary medicine also tends to be less proactive and more reactive. We simply wait too long between cleanings. As a consequence, few dogs, especially small dogs, make it to old age with all their teeth still present. The vast majority of cats never receive dental care at all. Cats need fewer extractions for periodontal disease but are much more likely to suffer from painful tooth resorption.

I just read a dentistry article in one of my journals titled "L" is for "Looks like we're too late." It was accompanied by a picture of a severely decayed canine molar. The title made me laugh but the truth is, we have a long way to go in veterinary medicine before we will even approach true preventive dental care.

Dental care for animals is far more accepted now than it was thirty years ago but most pet owners still wait until symptoms of dental disease are already present (bad breath, red, sore gums, moderate to severe tartar build-up) before they think about scheduling a "prophylactic" cleaning. The word prophylactic suggests prevention but by then we are treating disease that's already present. We extract a lot of teeth that can't be saved anymore by the time we clean the teeth. Dental care comes too late for these teeth.

In human dentistry, most cleanings are done at a very early stage, when the gums are still healthy and tartar build-up is mild. The average person needs to have a "prophy"

Periodontal disease and tooth resorption are painful problems but ones that pet owners often don't appreciate. Who wants their pet to have a shorter life expectancy with more pain? Yet we allow it to happen all too often.

As for anesthetic risk, the delivery of safe anesthesia has come a long way over the past years. Thanks to routine pre-anesthetic testing, we now know more about our patients, we can tailor the use of specific medications for each patient, and we monitor vital parameters throughout and after each procedure. As a consequence, adverse anesthetic events are rare.

A recent scientific study of 98,000 8-year-old dogs anesthetized for at least one hour showed that the death rate under anesthesia is 0.15%. This means that 99.85% of patients survive anesthesia.

Let's face it, most people don't really want to put their fingers in their pets' mouths. Brushing the teeth is one of the best things you can do for your pets but there are lots of alternatives.

1) Feed a tartar control diet. Every pet not eating a special diet for some other health issue should be eating a prescription tartar control diet. We would rather you spend your money on pet food than on extracting infected teeth!

2) Use dental chews, wipes, biscuits, toothpastes and water additives approved by the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC). VOHC-accepted products have been proven to reduce plaque and tartar by at least 15%, with an average of 20%. Any product that claims to help pets' teeth but does not have VOHC approval is probably not very effective. Non-efficacious, unproven products are a waste of your time and money. There are currently 36 dog and 12 cat products accepted. You can find this list of products in the dental services section of our website.

3) Have your pets' teeth cleaned before tartar is severe and the gums are infected. The timing on this will vary with the pet. We offer payment plans to help spread out the cost.



February is National Pet Dental Health Month!

February is a special month, with the designation of Pet Dental Health month helping to build awareness about the importance of dental health to pets. In honor of this nationally

designated time of the year, and also because February is a slow month for us, we are offering, as we do every year, coupons for savings

on dental cleaning and dental x-rays for your cat or dog.



\$25 off coupon...

for a DENTAL CLEANING done in the month of February. Call now, dates fill up fast! 262-375-0130



\$25 off coupon...

FULL-MOUTH DENTAL X-RAYS at the time of your February dental cleaning. Call now, dates fill up fast! 262-375-0130

NUTRITION knowledge QUIZ

- 1) Corn is an undesirable ingredient in pet foods because
 - a. It's a filler
 - b. It causes allergies
 - c. It's not very digestible
 - d. None of the above, there's nothing wrong with corn
- 2) Soy is an undesirable ingredient in pet food because
 - a. It causes allergies
 - b. It is low-quality protein
 - c. It's unnatural for a cat or dog to eat it
 - d. None of the above, there is nothing wrong with soy
- 3) Which of the following is true?
 - a. Dogs and cats are both carnivores
 - b. Dog nutritional requirements are similar to those of wolves
 - c. Cats are carnivores and dogs are omnivores
 - d. Dogs and cats can't digest carbohydrates well
- 4) By-products
 - a. Mostly consist of indigestible body parts such as beaks, feathers and feet
 - b. Mostly consist of internal organs such as the liver, heart and spleen
 - c. Are cheap substitutions for real meat
 - d. Don't provide any important nutrients
- 5) The best way to choose a pet food is to
 - a. Choose a manufacturer that batch tests both the ingredients and the food itself, performs feeding trials on every new formulation, manufactures its diets in its own plant and has a board-certified veterinary nutritionist or PhD in animal nutrition formulating the food
 - b. Carefully read ingredient lists to find foods that don't contain any bad ingredients, such as grains or corn
 - c. Look at the percentages of protein, fat, carbohydrates, salt and minerals and choose a diet that fits your pet's needs
 - d. Choose a more expensive food because cheap foods are lower in quality
- 6) Therapeutic and prescription diets
 - a. Can contain nutrients in higher or lower levels than are allowable in over-the-counter diets
 - b. Are regulated by the FDA
 - c. Must be proven in clinical trials and scientific studies to be effective for the condition they are designed to treat
 - d. All of the above
- 7) Which of the following is true?
 - a. If it says "meat" on the ingredient list that's better than if it says "meat meal"
 - b. A good diet always has a meat listed first on the ingredient list
 - c. Beef fat contains a specific sugar that promotes cancer in dogs (but not in humans)
 - d. Flax is a good source of Omega-3 fatty acids for dogs and cats
- 8) Federal guidelines require pet foods labeled "lite," "light," "low calorie" or "less calorie" to adhere to a maximum kilocalorie-per-kilogram restriction. What percentage of these diets actually exceed these federal guidelines?
 - a. 10%
 - b. 20%
 - c. 30%
 - d. More than 50%
- 9) Which is the false statement?
 - a. Food allergy is usually to the major protein ingredients in your pet's regular food, such as beef or chicken
 - b. Grain-free is the same as low-carb
 - c. Cooking increases the digestibility of carbohydrates
 - d. Corn is about as digestible as any other grain
- 10) Which is true?
 - a. A good way to determine how much food to feed your pet is to look at the range on the package and begin at the low end.
 - b. If you have to feed less than the low end of the range on the package in order to reach or maintain a healthy weight your pet will likely develop nutritional deficiencies
 - c. You should base the amount of food you feed on the weight your pet should be, not its current weight
 - d. All of the above

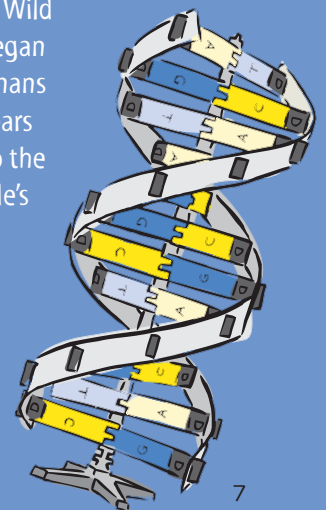
Answers: 1) d 2) d 3) c 4) b 5) a 6) d 7) c 8) d 9) b 10) d
Explanations for this quiz are covered in our
2018 annual pet care handouts!

Even More Tidbits...

The University of California Davis School of Veterinary Medicine treated dozens of animals that were injured or displaced during California's wildfires this past fall. The catastrophic wildfires ravaged hundreds of thousands of acres in Santa Rosa and California's wine country, destroying more than 6,000 homes and other structures. The school sent faculty veterinarians and students to perform search and rescue missions throughout Sonoma County and the Napa area. Its Veterinary Emergency Response Team was on the front lines offering care to all kinds of animals. UC Davis also set up a Veterinary Catastrophic Need Fund to help treat animals affected by the wildfires.

More DNA research: Dogs with intervertebral disc disease (IVDD) are 50 times as likely as dogs without IVDD to have the FGF4 retrogene, researchers reported in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. "Being able to identify the cause of this painful condition is the first step to alleviating pain and suffering for dogs at greatest risk," said veterinary geneticist Danika Bannasch, the paper's senior author.

Researchers analyzed the DNA of 209 ancient cats from Europe, Africa and Asia, as well as 28 modern feral cats from Bulgaria and East Africa, and found evidence that people took cats with them as they dispersed from the Middle East. Wild cats probably began adapting to humans about 10,000 years ago, attracted to the rodents in people's trash and stored grain, and were tame by about 3,500 years ago in Egypt, researchers say.



Toxicology Myths & Misperceptions

The internet is both a blessing and a curse. Internet rumors are the modern version of folklore and they spread a whole lot faster. In 2002 a competitor put out a false internet story that Febreze™ was killing cats and dogs. It's been circulating for years, now accompanied by similar false rumors about Swiffer™ Wet Jets. Febreze can cause respiratory issues in birds but is otherwise non-toxic.



You may find information on-line about the toxicity of almonds, walnuts and raspberries. There is a grain of truth to all of these. Bitter almonds used to make almond oil can be toxic but those aren't the kind we buy and eat. Moldy walnuts are toxic but it's the mold that's the problem, not the nuts. Raspberries contain trace amounts of xylitol but a dog would have to eat 25% of their body weight in berries to ingest enough xylitol to get sick. Thus a 40 lb. dog would have to eat 10 lb. of raspberries. This is not particularly likely to happen.

Also, in case you were worried about it, tennis balls do not explode, nor do rodenticides make rodents explode.

There is also a lot of false information out there about home remedies and antidotes. Call us if your pet eats something it shouldn't, don't

go on-line and attempt to treat it at home! Despite what you might read, there is no universal antidote that detoxifies every type of poison, nor is burnt toast a good alternative to activated charcoal. Many toxins have no antidote at all. Your pet's best chance for survival is early and appropriate treatment.

On CSI, a small sample of blood or urine can be used to detect any type of poison in some miraculous, giant "tox screen." There are some drugs that can be detected in a urine test kit available through human hospital pharmacies but for the most part we need a container label or a medication label to determine what was ingested so we can treat it appropriately.

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