

SWVH December Newsletter

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM SWVH! THE SNOW FLURRIES ARE FLYING THIS WEEK AND FAMILY GATHERINGS ARE RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER. PLEASE LOOK FOR SOME HELPFUL TIPS TO KEEP YOUR PETS SAFE AND SOUND THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.



SWVH is proud to now be an accredited member of the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) after undergoing an all-day inspection in November. Choosing an AAHA-accredited veterinary hospital for your pet's medical care ensures that SWVH has the facilities, equipment, staff and medical protocols that AAHA and SWVH believes are important for the



delivery of high-quality care. SWVH is committed to being continually evaluated against the most rigorous standards in veterinary medicine. Only 15 % of the small animal veterinary practices in the US are accredited.

Learn more at www.healthypet.com or www.aahanet.org

Holiday Hazards

Tinsel or yarn can be a fun toy, but a few minutes of fun can result in severe consequences for your cat or dog. Many times, you may not know what your pet ate until you see it coming out of its back end. And, if you do see it, *never* pull it out. You don't know how large or how long the foreign body is, and if you pull on it, it can tangle or tear the colon or intestines.

Always contact SWVH if you suspect that your pet has ingested a foreign body. Many times, Dr. Sargent or Dr. Rasmusson will take a radiograph (xray) to determine if, and what, your pet has consumed. Some of the signs a pet will show if they have ingested a foreign object include: vomiting, lethargy, and lack of appetite. An emergency abdominal exploratory surgery to remove the foreign objects from the stomach or intestines is sometimes the only way to relieve the intestinal obstruction.

Other things that are dangers at holiday time

- Mistletoe
- Lilies
- Chocolate
- Raisins/grapes (also fruitcake)
- Turkey bones
- Poinsettia

Be aware of what you're putting under the tree. That package from Aunt Betty may contain something that your pet just can't resist. When you think that a dog's ability to smell is about 100 times better than ours, you'll realize that your dog probably smells that box of candy from the backyard. Many holiday treats, foods, and plants can be toxic or even lethal to pets. It's always a good idea to keep SWVH's phone number close to the phone (or programmed in your cell phone) just in case you need to make that call.



Button Up Your Overcoat

As the winter weather picks up and temperatures drop, many pet owners may consider zipping up their pooches in something warm and cozy. While outerwear isn't a necessity, it does help make some dogs more comfortable.



The breed and the type of coat are good indicators of whether or not a dog needs outerwear. For short-haired dogs, like boxers, greyhounds, and vizslas, a coat will keep them more comfortable for longer periods of time when outdoors. They will conserve body heat and can utilize energy for walking and running, as opposed to expending energy staying warm.

And don't forget the boots. They are a good idea if you're going out for a long walk and will protect your dog's pads from sharp ice. Not all dogs tolerate boots – it is best to introduce them slowly, before going out for a long walk with them on for the first time.

Here are more tips:

- Clothing should fit snugly without restricting movement.
 - Look for easy-on, easy-off clothing. However, Velcro often traps fur and becomes ineffective in wet, snowy conditions.
 - Avoid clothing with small embellishments that can be eaten off.
 - If the coat has a sewn-in D-ring, make sure that it's secure enough to hold dogs that are strong pullers. If you're not sure it will hold, go with a coat that has a harness opening instead.
- Questions? Ask SWVH or your friendly locally-owned *Scraps Dog Company* (2 Stores: S. Virginia and Mae Anne)

Older Pets May Be a Better Fit

Older pets have a huge advantage over puppies and kittens, simply because of their maturity level -- let alone the number of older pets that need a good home. Today's busy lifestyles are also more conducive to older pets. An older pet is less high-maintenance than a puppy or kitten and can be left alone for longer periods of time. Also personalities are already formed -- puppies and kittens are still forming their personalities.

To help those who want to adopt an older pet make an informed decision, the ASPCA developed the Meet Your Match Program, which helps match an animal's behavior and interests with potential pet owners. Dogs are tested on their friendliness, playfulness, energy level, motivation, and drive and are placed in one of nine color-coded "canine-alties." Depending on their color code, some dogs are classified as laid-back couch potatoes, while others are more curious busy bees. Cats are similarly categorized. Green cats (which are relatively new on the scene) are savvy and adventurous, while orange cats make amiable companions.

Adopting an older pet can also have drawbacks, and owners need to be aware of those potential complications. Many older pets have health problems and often need special diets or medications. Older pets also may need modifications to get around, such as stepladders to get into cars or wider dog and cat doors.

To get a better idea of why older pets would make good housemates and some tips on what to look for in an older pet, here are some helpful links:

- <http://www.asPCA.org/adoption/meet-your-match>
- <http://www.asPCA.org/adoption/adoption-tips/adopting-the-perfect-family-pet.html>
- <http://peninsulasPCA.blogspot.com/2009/05/why-adopt-senior-pet.html>

Sincerely and Happy Holidays!, The doctors and support staff of SWVH

As always, email (contact@swvhreno.com), call (775)825-7984 or stop by with your questions or concerns!