

# Recognise and Take Action!

# ORCHARD

VETERINARY CENTRE

# news

Winter 2024/25

Over the festive season eating too much can cause many of us to feel very bloated. For a vet the word bloat rings major alarm bells!

**BLOAT** or Gastric Dilatation Volvulus (GDV) is when a dog's stomach literally does bloat. This can lead to serious complications and life-threatening circumstances. Any dog is at risk from this condition but the **higher risk breeds are the larger or deep chested dogs** such as Great Dane, Doberman, St Bernard, Irish Wolfhound, Weimaraner, Irish Setter, German Shepherd and Greyhound.

### Take one dog...

Her stomach, high in the abdomen, holds fluids, some gas, and is busy receiving and digesting food. In general this goes like clockwork, but suddenly it can all change. Her stomach begins to inflate and our dog is now experiencing intense pain. The stomach continues to increase in size and begins to twist cutting off the blood supply to the stomach, and also the exit route for gas to escape. This is known as **Gastric Torsion**.

The dog may have shown signs such as:

- A bloated hard abdomen
- Repeated and failed attempts to burp or vomit
- Pain ● Anxiousness
- Panting/breathing difficulties
- Excessive salivation/drooling
- Pale gums
- Cold body temperature

**From the start of the above signs we have an emergency situation!**

## Early recognition and prompt action

If you notice any of these signs in your own dog **contact a vet immediately** as Bloat/GDV requires urgent life-saving treatment.

It is difficult to pinpoint why Bloat happens, but there are particular factors involved.....

- Bolting food or gulping air during one large daily meal.
- Over eating – drinking lots of water.
- Highly active after eating.
- Stressed or excited temperament.

### Aim to Prevent

Feed smaller and more frequent meals instead of one large meal.

Avoid heavy and excitable exercise and limit intake of water before and after food.

Please speak to us about quantity, types of diet or any other concerns you may have regarding your pet.

## Senior Health Checks

Older pets are much more at risk from **age-related health problems**, which can reduce the quality of life and shorten lifespan. Many of these problems can be successfully dealt with if recognised at an earlier stage.

No one can prevent your pet from growing older but at the Orchard Veterinary Centre, we have brought together a series of checks aimed at our senior patients.

**Please contact any of our surgeries and ask for details about our Senior Health Checks.**

## HOURS

410 Birchfield Lane  
**OLDBURY**

B69 1AD

**0121 544 0404**

Mon to Fri 8:30am - 6:30pm

Sat 8:30am - 12:30pm

Home Farm  
Northfield Road  
**HARBORNE**

B17 0TD

**0121 428 1777**

Mon to Fri 8:30am - 6:30pm

210 Holyhead Road  
**WEDNESBURY**

WS10 7DH

**0121 556 6890**

Mon to Fri 8:30am - 6:30pm



Lily

## It's Official

We are delighted to announce that, after five years of commitment and hard work, **Lily** and **Imogen** are officially **Registered Veterinary Nurses!**

The girls haven't had an easy ride with gaining their qualifications, starting just before COVID hit and having to move college part way through their course, but they've stuck it out and **we couldn't be prouder of them.**

**Congratulations!**



Imogen

# Carrie Cat



Reporter  
Extraordinaire

## Not So Sweet

Reports are coming in to watch out for **wood sugar** or **birch sugar**, also known as the sweetener **xylitol**..... in foods. It is toxic to dogs and can be fatal!

## Long in the Tooth

A rabbit who would rather stay anonymous for privacy reasons, stated from his spacious North London outdoor run that **'overgrown teeth can cause mega problems for rabbits**, so owners must be aware of how vital a correct diet is to keep our continuously growing teeth at the perfect length'. He added 'please owners, call your surgeries to get advice from your friendly vets and nurses'.

**Who is the brightest cat on the tree?** Cats just love Christmas with all its baubles, dangly finsel, Christmas trees to climb, twinkly fairy lights and wires to chew on, but the latter could result in rather a **nasty shock** for us feline folk! Hey people, make sure you put your festive lights higher than usual to avoid lighting up your cat this Christmas!

## Love Hate Relationship

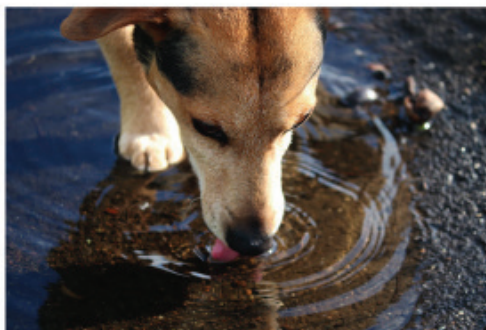
Dogs....where would we be without them? As much as they do annoy us cats, I have to remind you that with so much **chocolate** around during the festive season your dog will want some and basically in a nutshell..... they can't! Stick it up high with those fairy lights..... it will make your dog very sick and sadly too much might even cause a fatality..... and you don't want either over Christmas or ever!

## Fire Fire Fire!

Oh my.... those log fires are so cosy on chilly winter evenings and us cats and dogs like to get so close! Make sure you have a guard around your fire to stop us getting **too close** and singeing our whiskers!

## Winter Motor Preps

Ah yes....drivers are reaching for the **antifreeze** with the onset of winter, but my fellow felines and canine cuties this is very bad stuff! I know it's hard to resist that sweet flavour it has, but this is pure danger! **Never** drink from puddles and make sure your humans clear away any spills.



## Last but not least

Accidents and illness can happen when you are least expecting them. Should your pet have a problem when the surgery is closed, we provide an **emergency service**. Be prepared and check our website in advance for details.

*This is Carrie Cat Reporter Extraordinaire signing off for Orchard Vets*

# Time for a Little Look Inside



When you need to give your cat medication or if we have to examine your pet's mouth, he or she can be a little uncooperative as felines do not like being messed around with! They will accept all the fussing, pampering and scrumptious food we give them, but when it comes to taking pills or having dental checks, those jaws can stay firmly locked! When cooperation is not forthcoming, major problems can be overlooked, and it is only when signs of discomfort show or your pet is reluctant to eat that you realise trouble is brewing or has already arrived!

Some felines are more prone to suffering from **inflammatory mouth diseases**, which if not treated can cause serious complications, and are a painful experience for your cat. **Signs to watch out for are:**

- excessive drooling
- bleeding/sore/inflamed gums
- bad breath
- difficulty/reluctance to eat
- irritable/depressed
- trouble grooming

If you notice any of the above or suspect something is not quite right, please bring your cat in for a check-up. If we should find a problem, we can discuss the different forms of treatment available here at our surgery. You can always come along with your cat for a regular dental check to help prevent oral disease. We provide advice on oral care and also guidance on how to confidently examine your pet's mouth.

# Bake Off



If your kitchen is a hive of activity with all the advance preparation of baking Christmas cakes and puddings, **please be aware that some of the ingredients particularly raisins and sultanas are harmful to your pets**. If ingested by your pet, this could lead to **kidney failure**. Please put all packages or any food containing raisins, sultanas and also fresh grapes well out of your pet's reach.

If you suspect he or she has snacked on these fruits or notice signs of **restlessness, vomiting, diarrhoea, lethargy, stomach pain, or a reluctance to eat**, do not delay in contacting a vet for advice.