



In this edition!

Page 1 - Lungworm and rabbit companions | **Page 2** - Festive hazards and weight management

Lungworm in dogs

Lungworm is a parasite that can cause coughing and life-threatening clotting problems in dogs, so it's important to ensure that your dog is protected from it.

Dogs can catch lungworm from eating infected slugs and snails, or by coming into contact with their slime.

Lungworm can infect dogs of all ages and breeds, but younger dogs may be more susceptible.

If your dog is displaying any of these symptoms, contact us immediately:

- Breathing problems, including coughing and tiring easily
- Excessive bleeding from minor cuts, wounds or nose bleeds
- Unusual bruising
- Weight loss
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Depression or lethargy
- Seizures
- Changes in sight

Some dogs don't initially show signs of a lungworm infection, so it is important that you contact us if you have reason to believe that your dog has eaten slugs or snails or may be infected.

Lungworm prevention can be easily incorporated into your dog's usual preventative treatment plan, and you can discuss their individual level of risk with our team.

Get in touch for advice on how often to worm your dog and the best products for them.



The importance of companionship for rabbits

Rabbits are sociable animals who live in groups in the wild, so it's important that they have opportunities to socialise, especially in the colder months.

Rabbits shouldn't be kept with other species, as they are prey animals and may feel stressed or threatened around larger animals. They should also be kept away from smaller animals like guinea pigs, as they may bully them or pass on harmful bacteria.

However, it is beneficial to keep more than one rabbit together – neutered and bonded male and female rabbits make ideal pairs!

The process of getting two rabbits to form an attachment is known as bonding, mixing or pairing. If you are introducing rabbits to each other for the first time, you should introduce them slowly and follow the advice of your vet or a rescue centre.

Ensure their accommodation is clean, warm and dry, and if moving them to a new environment, move them during the daytime so they can adjust properly. Don't put one rabbit in another's housing area, and use temporary housing whilst getting one area ready if needed. You can also move your rabbits inside if it is very cold outdoors.

Ensure their space is large enough for them to seek isolation if they want to, and monitor any changes in behaviour or signs of aggression or discomfort. For two standard sized rabbits,

the Rabbit Welfare Association and Fund recommend a minimum living area of 3m x 2m by 1m high on a single level, including their sleeping area. Within this, their sleeping area (for example, a hutch or cage) should be a minimum of 1.8m x 0.6m by 0.6m high.

Speak to one of our team or your local rehoming centre for further advice about keeping your rabbits happy during winter.





Keeping your pet safe during the festive season

It's the most wonderful time of the year, but over Christmas many homes are full of things that can be very dangerous for pets.

Here are some top tips to protect your pet during the holidays:

Chocolate is poisonous to dogs

Chocolate contains theobromine, which can cause serious harm to dogs. The level of danger will depend on the type of chocolate, the amount eaten and the size and health of your furry friend. Regardless, it's safest to contact us immediately for advice if you think there's any chance your dog has been in the chocolate tin.

Provide a safe space

If your house is full of guests, ensure that your pets have a quiet area where they won't be disturbed. Options include allowing cats to hide under a bed or creating a den for dogs by placing a blanket over their crate. Having pets microchipped also brings peace of mind, as they can be traced back to you if they are accidentally let out or escape.

Be sensible if sharing Christmas food

Turkey bones can cause blockages and damage to your pet's digestive tract, and high fat content foods like pigs in blankets, onions, sugar free sweets and mints are also dangerous to cats and dogs. Opt for safe treats instead! Alcohol is also toxic to pets, so spills and left-over drinks should be cleaned away and disposed of.

Supervise pets around decorations

Stringy decorations like tinsel and string can cause digestive blockages if eaten, and glass baubles may cut paws if smashed. Cats may think Christmas trees are an exciting climbing frame, so consider tethering your tree to stop it from toppling over!

Beware antifreeze poisoning

Antifreeze contains ethylene glycol, which is poisonous to cats and dogs and can be fatal if left untreated. Signs of antifreeze poisoning are vomiting, drooling, seeming drunk, having seizures and drinking and weeing more. Contact us immediately if you think your pet has ingested antifreeze.

Make sure Christmas plants aren't eaten

Keep poinsettia, ivy, holly and mistletoe out of reach to avoid stomach upsets, and discourage pets from chewing on the Christmas tree. Contact us if your pet eats something they shouldn't, or develops vomiting or diarrhoea.

Check paws after walks

Beware of gritted paths, as grit can irritate dog paws and cause discomfort. Avoid heavily gritted areas where possible and thoroughly wipe your dog's paws after walks or give their feet a quick rinse if needed. Contact us if your dog is distressed or seems in pain after a walk.

Keep grapes, currents, sultanas and raisins out of reach

Grapes and the dried fruit in mince pies, Christmas pudding and stollen are toxic to dogs, so keep these treats out of reach! If your dog does accidentally eat something containing these foods, call us as soon as possible.

Be cautious of gifts with small parts and batteries

Batteries or toys with small removable parts should be kept out of reach as they can cause serious damage if eaten. Supervise pets, move gifts off the floor and contact us if items are accidentally ingested.

Weight management for cats and dogs

Our team is always happy to answer any questions you may have about your pet's weight, diet and nutritional needs, and we can discuss weight management options at one of our weight clinics or over the phone.

It's important to feed your cat or dog a diet suitable for their stage of life, development or clinical diagnosis. That's why we keep a range of life stage and clinical diets in stock, and can order a wide range of other products for you if you need a specific product or quantity.

Get in touch to see how the team can help you keep your pet fit and healthy!

