

Hillsiders Christmas 2011



We and the staff would like to wish all a Merry Christmas. The Practice will shut on the Bank Holidays but will provide its own emergency cover as usual.

Sat 24th Open 9am – Midday

Sunday 25th Closed

Monday 26th Closed

Tuesday 27th Closed

Wednesday to Friday as normal

Saturday 30th Open 9am – Midday

Sunday 31st Closed

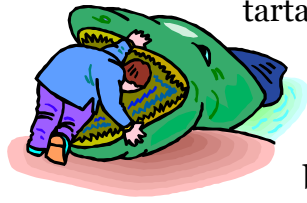
Monday 1st Closed

It is a time for merriment, but also for vigilance. Please ensure that electric wires are out of reach of your pets. Be wary of unknown gifts lurking under the tree – they may contain chocolate. Our newest poisoning is Xylitol, an artificial sweetener. Often found in shop cakes, sweets and chewing gum, it is recognised as a sugar by the dog's body, but can't be utilised, thus resulting in over production of insulin and hypoglycaemia. Raisins, grapes, onions, garlic and some nuts are also poisonous. So no Christmas pudding and no stuffing, please. Ivy is very toxic to rabbits, and mistletoe is toxic to everyone! A recent report described intestinal damage with magnets. One on its own is harmless, two however can join together entrapping the bowel, squeezing the tissues. Batteries are dangerous if the casing has been damaged – chewed and some have discharged in the acid environment of the stomach.



The Practice has recently invested in a digital processor for radiographs. Not only does this further improve the quality of the x/ray images; it allows us to examine them in several ways and it reduces our waste production significantly.

A recent article in a newspaper was highlighting the increase risk of heart disease and stroke between people that don't have a yearly teeth scale and those that do. The link implied is that gingivitis allows bacteria into the bloodstream. Direct comparisons can't be made with our pets, but it has long been known that a build up of



tartar causing gingivitis (inflammation of the gums) does allow bacteria through to the blood. In dogs and cats

these bacteria can stick to the heart valves causing endocarditis, valvular incompetence and heart failure. At each pump of the heart 20% of the blood flows through the small vessels in the kidneys. Blood-borne bacteria will clump here as well. Low grade renal disease slowly reduces kidney function and causes kidney failure. So it is a good idea to brush their teeth as regularly as you can. Be careful with dental sticks as most have high energy content. They are great for getting the weight on, but I am uncertain if they get the plaque off.

Brushing your dog's teeth

1. Get your dog use to the taste of the toothpaste. Let him lick it off your finger.
2. Use your finger to smear toothpaste over the outer surface of the teeth. Start with the canine and work towards the upper molars. Only do as much as your dog is happy with.
3. Introducing a soft toothbrush is the next stage. Hold the mouth around the muzzle to stop him chewing it after initially letting him lick toothpaste from it.
4. Some dogs never get to this stage but you can also use a finger shroud brush or heavy linen gauze. As an alternative.
5. Angle the brush towards the gum and brush towards the point. Continue in a circular motion.

Going through the check-out the other day, I was looking at my purchases thinking what an odd mix. There was an easy explanation. I was shopping for our pets. A few large bags of carrots as the horses (They don't eat enough to go through a sack) was fair enough. But the white loaf and jars of apple sauce- Ted likes his medicine in Apple sauce sandwiches. Bananas for Dillon, he is a pig not an ape; he has them with his Weetabix or porridge. Nellie Bean, the Siamese cat, is on an exclusion diet – Bernard Mathews' turkey-ham slices. Then there are the cooked cocktail-sausages – for dog training. So if anyone looks I'm not on a weird diet – but the bottle of red wine just fell in,

We are seeing a lot of itchy dogs late in the year. Two things are happening- both blamed on the weather. Dogs are having a late moult. When they moult, the skin stops producing oils, becoming dry and itchy. Adding a little polyunsaturated oil such as sunflower oil to the food and regular grooming can alleviate this. The other is that plants and fungi are still active. There has been a lot of late fungal bodies erupting, so the spore count in the air is high. This can set allergies off.



Now the weather is getting colder it is time to rug up guinea pigs and rabbit hutches. If you move them into the garage, watch out for carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide poisoning, and keep antifreeze out of reach. They still require daylight for Vitamin D production. Days out when the weather permits will allow them to exercise.

A final word – please check you have enough medication for this festive break.

Merry Christmas