



River Heights
Veterinary Hospital



The Holiday
Issue



A PET-LOVING PUBLICATION FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT RIVER HEIGHTS VETERINARY HOSPITAL • HOLIDAY 2011

Happy Holidays

From all of us at River Heights
Veterinary Hospital

When the mercury goes down, companion animal casualties go up. These hot tips will help keep things warm this season.

1. Keep your cat inside. Outdoors, felines can freeze, contract infectious diseases, or become lost, stolen, injured or killed.
2. Antifreeze is lethal for dogs and cats. Be sure to clean up any spills from your vehicle, and use products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol.
3. More dogs are lost during the winter than any other season, so make sure yours always wears ID tags. If your pet will be exposed to snow or ice, especially during a snowstorm, he can lose his scent and become lost.
4. Wipe off your dog's legs and stomach when he comes in. He can ingest salt, antifreeze or other potentially dangerous chemicals while licking his paws, and his paw pads may bleed from snow or encrusted ice.
5. When you bathe your dog, dry him completely before taking him out.
6. Never leave your pet alone in a car. The vehicle can retain the cold, causing the animal to freeze to death.
7. Puppies do not tolerate the cold and may be difficult to housebreak. You may opt to paper-train him inside. If your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness or breed type, take him outdoors only to relieve himself.
8. If your dog spends a lot of time outdoors, increase his supply of food, particularly protein, to keep him – and his fur – in tip-top shape.
9. If you park outside, bang on the hood before starting the car. Outdoor cats sometimes sleep underneath for warmth and can be injured by the fan belt.
10. Make sure your pet has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts.

Cool winter fun with your pet



It's winter, and by now your pet is tired of looking at the same four walls. Try these fun activities to help you through the months ahead!

A spa day for two

Head to your pet store and pick up toothpaste, finger brush, nail tools, and a grooming brush unlike any you have. Buy your pet a new pampering shampoo. Stop by a bath store and find similarly scented products for yourself. Bathe your pet, clean his teeth, and comb out his fur. Sink yourself into a hot tub using your new smell-goods. Finish drying your pet with the new brush and a blow dryer. When the fur settles, slather on your new scented lotion!

Hide and go seek

Invite a friend over to help hold your pet while you go hide. Start small; hide behind a chair or around a

corner. Call your pet if he needs help. Once he finds you, praise him lavishly. You'll be able to move further away and hide in more difficult places over time. You can also move this game outside during good weather.

Tuna Treats

Imagine how your pet will feel when those sensitive noses smell these yummy tuna treats baking!

You'll need:

- 2 6-oz. cans tuna in water – undrained
- 2 eggs
- 1 to 1 ½ cups flour (rice flour works best, but any kind will do)
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- Parmesan cheese

Put tuna in blender and liquify (add extra water if needed). Pour into a bowl and add one cup flour and garlic powder. Mix until the consistency of cake mix; add more flour as needed. Grease a round pizza pan and spread mixture evenly. Sprinkle with lots of Parmesan cheese and bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. The texture will be like putty. Use a pizza cutter and cut into tiny squares. And they freeze well too.

Teach an old pet a new trick

Winter fun with your dog can include teaching him basic commands every canine companion should know. Our dogs are eager to please us, and spending time working on commands like sit, stay, lie down, heel, and come helps you bond with your dog.

Or search online for some new tricks. Anything that helps enforce your pet's obedience would be beneficial. Does your pet have a natural talent? Pick a trick that expands on their repertoire. Start small and simple and keep it fun for both of you! And use your new tuna treats as a reward.

Whatever you do, the time you spend together will strengthen your bond and your relationship.

CAN YOUR CHILD HANDLE A POCKET PET?

This is about kids and whether they make suitable owners for pocket pets – which is a different question entirely than whether pocket pets make good companions for kids.

Which animals classify as pocket pets? Small, low-maintenance rodents such as rabbits,



guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, mice and rats make the cut. So do chinchillas and hedgehogs. They all need a clean environment, exercise, fresh water and a proper diet. Low maintenance doesn't mean no maintenance.

So before buying one, the potential pocket pet owner should take "The Plant Test." Give your child a small potted plant to care for. After six months, if the plant still has any life left at all, the youngster can probably move up to a mammal.

Which chores can you expect them to assume? Children as young as two can take on some daily duties, preferably the ones with less mess. By the age of eight, they should be able to handle most of the work. Regardless of age, the two most important words are: parental supervision.

Don't buy on your child's whim (or whimper). Do your pocket pet fact-finding as a family. Get on the Internet, ask your vet, go to a pet store,

breeder or shelter. Some pocket pets might not make a good match. If the animal is nocturnal, it may spend the night in its cage loudly burrowing and running while your child lies in its bed tossing and turning.

Temperament and manageability also come into play. Due to their

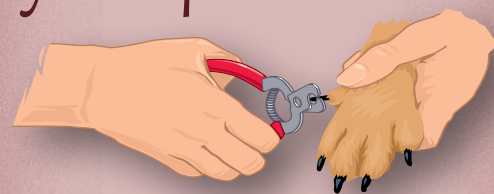
larger size, rats are easier to handle than mice. And contrary to reputation, rats enjoy human contact, rarely bite and can even be taught simple tricks.

Another consideration is how many to buy. Most pocket pets can get along by themselves. Gerbils are also happy in pairs, but make it a same-sex pair to prevent their prolific breeding. A female hamster may actually kill a newly-purchased male hamster if she doesn't like him. So much for blind dates.

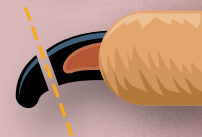
With an average life span of 2-3 years, your pocket pet should be examined by your veterinarian right after you purchase it, and twice yearly thereafter to catch small problems before they become big ones.

These generally agreeable critters can be fun, affectionate and great companions for young people ready to handle the responsibility of having a life in their hands—or pockets. 🐾

How to trim your pet's nails



1 Trim nail at angle shown



2

DO NOT cut the quick (dark area on bottom of nail)



3 If you do cut the quick:

- Wet cotton swab with water
- Dip swab in styptic powder and apply to bleeding area



Felines

...AND THE PURSUIT OF CLEANLINESS

Cats are ... well, pretty cool cats. And they're clean, too – notoriously so. In fact, they spend something like 20 percent of their time engaged in life, liberty and the pursuit of cleanliness.

She's a clean machine

But one thing that does get under their fur is how you care for their food/water bowls and litter box. Keeping their powder room spotless, their food fresh, and filling their water bowl with the clear cool beverage of pure H₂O will keep Sassy happy, Roxy foxy, and the kittens smitten – with you.

Put the bowls on a large plastic tray or mat. Make sure the bowls themselves are ceramic or metal, because plastic collects bacteria from the food.

Change water and clean the bowls daily – use hot water and dishwashing liquid, rinse and dry.

Gotta lotta litter

Probably their biggest pet peeve: the little felines can't stand a messy litter box. The box should be in a well-ventilated area. Invest in high-quality cat litter; scoop the litter once or twice a day; clean and disinfect the box regularly.

Groomingtails

Finally, brush your cat often, as they, too, can use a helping hand in grooming. They'll not only look good, but it will help control excessive shedding. Do all this and you'll have a cool cat who'll warm right up to you. 🐾

Pet CPR

It's nice to know that just as your pet can give you love, you can literally give your pet life.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation—CPR—is an accepted lifesaving procedure for pets as well as humans, with the prime difference being that breathing is restored mouth-to-snout rather than mouth-to-mouth. This is because the animal's muzzle is usually too long, and precious air will escape through the sides.

The first step is to call your veterinarian. Remember, there is no real substitute for emergency lifesaving drugs being administered intravenously, so do everything possible to transport your pet to a veterinary hospital immediately.

Next, check whether your pet is breathing by placing your hand in front of (but not covering) his nose and mouth. CAUTION: an animal in distress can still bite reflexively; take care not to get hurt during the process. Don't try to check for a pulse unless you know exactly where to find it (animals do not have palpable carotid pulses). Instead, search for a heartbeat by listening where your pet's left elbow touches the chest. Now you're ready to perform CPR using the same ABCs as with humans:

A - Airway

To obtain a clear airway, tilt the head back slightly. Be careful not to hyperextend this area if there is a possible injury to the neck or back.

Pull the tongue between the front teeth and then check for and remove any foreign material.

Do not do a "finger sweep" of the throat; this could have the reverse effect of lodging something further back. Also, be mindful that an animal's Adam's apple is a bone at the base of the tongue which could be mistaken for an obstruction. Pulling on this bone could cause great damage.

B - Breathing

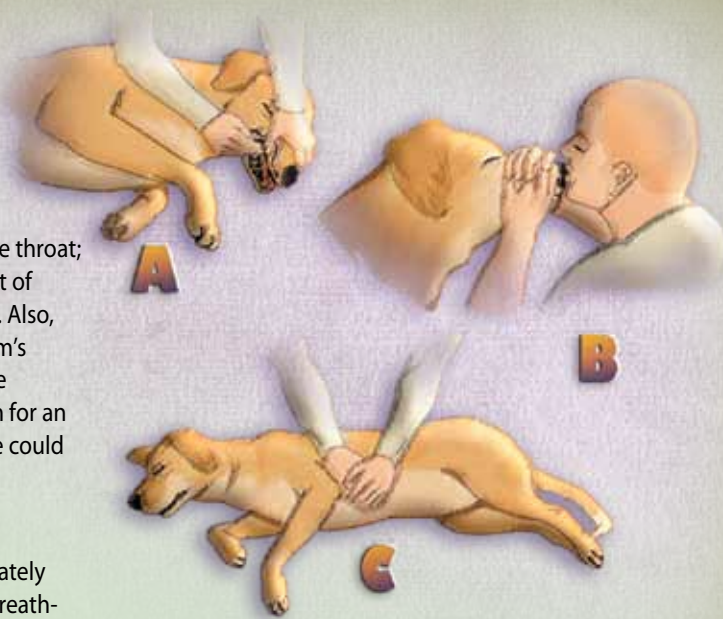
Once the airway is clear, immediately determine if the animal is now breathing on its own. Do this by looking to see if the chest is rising and falling ... listening for breath sounds ... and feeling the chest.

If necessary, begin rescue breathing by holding the animal's mouth closed with your hands, placing your mouth over his nose and exhaling gently but firmly into the nose to inflate—but not over-inflate—his lungs. Large dogs should be treated like humans, while a parakeet or gerbil will obviously require barely a puff of air to make the chest rise. After each breath, break contact to allow the lungs to deflate. Repeat 20-30 ventilations per minute for 20 minutes.

C - Circulation

Before beginning chest compressions, it is vital to determine whether there is a heartbeat. Take your time and be sure; in his current condition, and depending on the animal's size, the heartbeat might be faint or hard to find.

With the animal on its right side, cup your



hands over each other and compress the chest so it moves one to three inches for medium to large dogs, one-half to one inch for small dogs and cats. Don't compress too hard; your goal is to massage the heart, not move it. Proceed now to alternate rescue breathing and chest compressions at a rate determined by the animal's size. Five compressions to one breath is appropriate for cats, small dogs, pocket pets, reptiles and birds. Large dogs may require a 10:1 ratio. After each cycle, feel for a heartbeat.

As soon as your pet responds, stop CPR; further breathing/chest compressions could hurt, not heal. Take your pet to a veterinarian immediately.

You and your pet will hopefully never find yourselves in such a dire situation. And sadly, even the best efforts by the best experts may not be enough. But it's nice to know that just as your pet can give you love, you can literally give your pet life. 🌈

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) in Dogs



Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) causes faulty circulation and can put an enormous pressure on the heart muscle. The end result could be a buildup of fluid in the lungs and muscle fatigue caused by insufficient blood flow to the muscles and shortness of breath. This also can have an effect on other organs in the body, since they don't receive sufficient nutrients and oxygen via

the bloodstream.

A healthy heart means a healthy dog who is full of vitality and who has more resistance to disease. Good heart health also means your dog can expect a long life.

Early signs that all may not be well with your dog's heart are a lack of energy, getting tired easily, and sometimes coughing in the evenings. If your dog is losing weight or has lost interest in his food, that may also indicate a heart problem.

Helping prevent heart disease

Diet is one way we can prevent heart disease in dogs. Make sure your dog eats a healthy diet that's low in salt. Also consider adding Omega 3 fish oil to his diet.

It is very important to brush your dog's

teeth; between brushings, give him dental sticks that help keep the teeth clean. This will prevent periodontal disease which is a potential cause of heart disease in dogs. This is due to bacteria from an unclean mouth travelling through the bloodstream and affecting the heart and other organs.

Exercise is also very beneficial for your dog, but make sure he doesn't overexert himself. Walking is excellent for most dogs ... and their human counterparts as well. Avoid exercising in very hot, humid weather.

If your dog has been diagnosed with heart disease, don't lose hope. With early diagnosis and appropriate treatment and management, you increase your dog's opportunity to live a more normal life. 🌈



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Annual Holiday Open
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Pictures with Santa
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12 to 3:00PM**

Proceeds from pictures benefit
our local shelters and Rescues



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The Holiday Issue



Ask Your Paw

Dear Paw,
**Can you give me some pointers on the dangers
of antifreeze?**

– Mr. Freeze

Dear Mr. Freeze,

Antifreeze is a Sweet but Deadly Poison for Pets.

Ethylene glycol, the main ingredient in most antifreeze brands, has an inviting aroma and a sweet flavor, which can tempt animals and children to drink the highly poisonous substance. It only takes a few tablespoons of antifreeze to seriously jeopardize an animal's life.

Poison prevention

To lower this risk, you can switch to a brand of antifreeze containing **propylene glycol**, which is less toxic than ethylene glycol. Propylene glycol has a bitter taste that makes it less attractive to curious animals. However, to reduce the risk of poisoning, all antifreeze should be handled carefully and treated as a highly poisonous substance. Ensure that antifreeze is stored well away from animals and children, spills are completely cleaned up, and leaks are immediately repaired.

How to detect poisoning

For pets exposed to antifreeze, the first few hours are critical. Animals who receive immediate veterinary care can recover successfully—but the longer they remain untreated, the less likely they are to survive.

Antifreeze poisoning occurs in two phases. In the first phase, the animal typically appears lethargic, disoriented, uncoordinated and groggy. Symptoms usually appear 30 minutes to one hour after ingestion and can last for several hours.

The second phase, which can last up to three days, is characterized by symptoms such as vomiting, oral and gastric ulcers, kidney failure, coma and death.

Monitor your pet for strange behavior. If you think she may have ingested antifreeze, take her to a veterinarian immediately.

– Your Paw