

VETERINARY SURGEONS

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CLINIC NEWS

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter. We hope you enjoy the articles on Foods that can poison and Feline Diabetes.

Also don't forget to check all the other amazing articles on our website. www.veterianrycentre.co.nz . If there isn't an article on something you want to know more about, please let us know so we can find one for you.

RISKY FOODS

Food that can cause your pets to become ill

By Pam, VN

Food can be a source of nourishment, pleasure and reward for our pets, just like they are for us. However, it is important to be aware that there are a number of foods that can be harmful for them.

Chocolate:

Some foods contain chemicals that our pet's body is not designed to handle and chocolate is one of these foods. Although too much chocolate may hurt our waistline, it can be dangerous for our pets, especially dogs. Cocoa contains theobromine which can cause vomiting and diarrhoea, a rapid heartbeat, and potentially seizures and death. The amount of chocolate that is "safe" for a dog is dependent on the type of chocolate (the darker the chocolate, the less they can tolerate) and the size of the dog (smaller quantities are more dangerous for smaller dogs). It is important to be particularly vigilant around Easter, Valentine's day and Christmas, as chocolate is a large part of these traditions. If your dog has eaten chocolate, it is best to get them to the vet to make them vomit it up again so it isn't digested.

Grapes and raisins:

Grapes are also toxic to dogs and can lead to kidney failure. Some dogs are more susceptible to this than others. As raisins are dehydrated grapes, these are also harmful. This is often an issue around Easter (hot

cross buns) and Christmas (fruit cakes and fruit mince pies), and if ingested, it is best to bring your dog to the clinic to bring it up again so that they won't suffer the harmful effects.

Fatty foods:

Foods high in fat, such as ham, sausages and other processed meats, or fatty bones, can lead to pancreatitis for your pet. This is due to inflammation of the pancreas as it struggles to deal with the fatty load and it can be very harmful. Symptoms of pancreatitis can include vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy. If you suspect your pet has developed pancreatitis, take them to the vet for blood tests so that they can receive the appropriate treatment.

Bones:

As mentioned above, fatty bones can lead to pancreatitis. However, bones can also cause other issues for animals. Cooked bones can often splinter, damaging your pet's mouth or digestive system if eaten. Small bones such as chicken bones or knuckle bones may get stuck in your pet's throat or digestive system. If a piece of bone causes an obstruction, your pet will need veterinary treatment and may even need surgery to remove it. Other things that can cause an obstruction include corn cobs, stones of stone fruits, or even pieces of their favourite toys

Xylitol:

Xylitol is an artificial sweetener that is slowly becoming more common in foods as we try to decrease our sugar intake. However, it is very dangerous for our pets and it is important that it is not in any of the foods that we treat them with. Most commonly, xylitol is found in chewing gum and lollies, but it is starting to be used for other foods such as cakes and even peanut butter. Even very small quantities are potentially deadly for small dogs, so be sure to bring your animal directly to the vet if you think they may have consumed any amount of xylitol.

If any of these foods are in your home be sure to keep them out of reach of your pets and ensure that everyone in your household knows to do the same.



Caring Vets, Healthy Pets

FELINE DIABETES

What is it?

When we use the term 'diabetes' in cats we are usually referring to the condition 'Diabetes Mellitus' or 'sugar' diabetes. This is where the cat has a problem controlling its blood sugar levels and they are too high in the blood stream.

Diabetes is relatively common in cats, but unlike dogs where most diabetes requires the injection of insulin for life, depending on the type of sugar diabetes they have, cats may not always require insulin to control the disease for life.

Like humans, there are 2 types of sugar diabetes:

- Type 1 – The pancreas does not produce enough insulin. This type requires the injection of insulin to control it.
- Type 2 – The body's cells don't respond correctly to the insulin that is produced. With Type 2 diabetes, insulin is not always required to control the disease.

Why does the body need insulin?

Insulin, produced by the pancreas, is required to control the level of sugar (glucose) in the blood of animals (or humans for that matter).

When a cat eats, food is broken down and absorbed through the wall of the intestines. The breakdown products of food include glucose. Glucose is required by all the body's cells to provide energy so they can continue to grow and repair themselves. In a normal cat, the pancreas produces just the right amount of insulin to enable the blood glucose to be absorbed into the body's cells.

If the cat has diabetes, the glucose is not absorbed into the body's cells, so they are unable to use the glucose. The glucose then accumulates in the blood stream and the cat develops hyperglycaemia which means the level of glucose or sugar in the blood is too high. Glucose may soon be seen in the urine as the excess levels in the blood stream are filtered through the kidneys.

Why is high blood sugar a problem?

Effect on body cells

If the body's cells are unable to get the supply of glucose they need, the cells are starved of energy. The consequence of that is the cat begins to lose weight despite having a normal (or in many cases excessive) appetite. If the diabetes continues uncontrolled, the body begins to break down the fat and protein to use for energy which leads to further weight loss.

The breakdown products of fat and protein result in increased levels of ketones. These then start to be seen in blood in urine tests and are a sign of further progression of the disease. Ketones result in a condition called ketoacidosis which is a

serious consequence of the disease and requires immediate veterinary attention. The body's cells are also unable to reproduce, so in tissues where cells are replacing all the time, such as skin, the number of cells reduces causing serious problems to the integrity of that organ.

Effect on kidneys

As well as ravenous appetite, the cats also have increased requirement for water. This is known as polydipsia and occurs when the kidneys filter glucose into the urine, taking excess water with it because of osmotic pressure. This also creates a high workload for the kidneys and in uncontrolled diabetic cats, the kidneys are often the first organ to show signs of damage.

Effect on blood vessels

High blood sugar is damaging to the blood vessels. The smallest blood vessels in the eyes are the first to show signs. The condition is known as diabetic retinopathy and can lead to problems with sight, ranging from mild sight deficits to complete blindness.

Effect on nerves

Diabetes also has a significant effect on the nerve cells. Diabetics can have weakness in the legs (known as a neuropathy). Nerve, eye and kidney cells do not require insulin to take up glucose in the diabetic cat so may take in higher than normal levels of glucose.

The earlier diabetes is picked up, the less damage occurs to the cat's organs and therefore the better the chance of maintaining the cat's quality of life. If you notice any changes in your cat, no matter how mild, contact your veterinarian for advice.

To read more of this article about Feline Diabetes visit our website:

<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/feline-diabetes.php>

PROMOTIONS

Get a cool Tote bag with every purchase of Frontline, Nexgard, Nexgard Spectra and Broadline*.

*You must purchase 2 of the single Broadlines to get a bag but only one of each of the other boxes.

We would love to hear your feedback on our newsletter. We thank you for your custom and we look forward to seeing you again soon.



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Healthy Pets**