

ARK VETS NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2025

Autumn Awareness

With the end of summer comes the season of autumn fruits including cherry laurel, conkers, rowan and acorns.

Pets, particularly dogs often eat fallen fruit and ingestion of any plant material can cause gastrointestinal signs. Some fruits such as acorns and conkers also pose a risk of gastrointestinal obstruction.

Cherry laurel and related species contain toxic compounds. In dogs, signs are generally limited to gastrointestinal effects.

Windfall fruits, such as apples, have the additional risk of tremorgenic mycotoxin poisoning if they are mouldy or ethanol poisoning if they have fermented. Suspected ethanol poisoning has been reported in wild birds after ingestion of fermented fruits.

Wild mushrooms are common in Autumn and can be found in woodlands, parks and even your own gardens. If your canine companion tends to Hoover up objects on a walk, you need to be aware of poisonous species of fungus. Some wild mushrooms can be lethally toxic to pets and as they tend to spring up overnight in wet, mild weather, they can be hard to avoid.



SPOTTING FAKE MEDICATION

The government recently issued an urgent warning about fake veterinary products being sold online. There have been more than 100 seizure notices for the selling of unauthorised animal medicines and supplements, preventing around 18,000 illegal items from reaching consumers.

When fulfilling a prescription online, source them from reputable companies that are on the Register of online retailers, brought to you by [the Veterinary Medicines Directorate](#).

Check all pet medicines carefully before using them. **If it's not from a vet or a trusted seller then please be vigilant!** Even if a product looks authentic, there are often subtle clues something is wrong, such as; missing data sheets or expiry dates, poor quality or damaged packaging, spelling errors, foreign language and low prices that seem too good to be true.

If the medication has any of these warning signs, you should stop using the product immediately and contact your vet for medical advice.



Please don't forget to check your bonfires for hibernating hedgehogs before lighting them on fireworks night!!



MAKE SURE YOUR TREATS ARE OUT OF REACH OF CURIOUS, PRYING PAWS ...

Autumn presents many potential hazards to pets, including the consumption of Halloween chocolates and sweets.

The primary toxins in chocolate are theobromine and caffeine. While many people are aware of the danger chocolate poses to dogs, the same danger to cats also applies. Other sweet treats, especially those containing xylitol (sugar alternative), also pose a significant risk to dogs this season. Xylitol can be found in 'sugar-free' sweets, gum, chocolate, some peanut butters, and many more.

As a popular addition to the doorstep at Halloween, pumpkins may end up being eaten by pets.

Pumpkins can contain extremely bitter tasting compounds, but they have been bred out of crop varieties. Generally, if the pumpkin is shop brought it is not bitter tasting. Accidental ingestion of non-bitter plant material may cause a mild gastrointestinal upset.

Ingestion of bitter roots or fruits can cause significant gastrointestinal signs with severe abdominal discomfort, diarrhoea, vomiting and collapse. Most cases only develop mild signs and make a full recovery with supportive care.





Intestinal blockages in dogs

Dogs put everything in their mouths, and all too often, they swallow something they shouldn't. Blockages caused by ingesting foreign objects account for a large percentage of the gastrointestinal problems seen by veterinarians.

Food blockages

Certain foods can also cause blockages. Dogs love to eat corn cobs, for example, and while this can seem harmless, it's usually not. Once in the dog's intestines, these chewed-up cobs don't digest and can cause a hard blockage. Take care with nuts and stones from fruits as these may be swallowed whole, creating blockages.

Ingesting foreign objects

Objects that are long and linear, like string, yarn, ribbons, bungee cords, and clothing, present a special hazard. As the intestine contracts, the object can't move. Instead, the material can start to erode the lining of the intestines, which could eventually lead to perforation.

Signs such as repeated and heavy vomiting, vomiting with faecal or blood-like material in it, bloody diarrhoea, painful/swollen abdomen, repeatedly taking the prayer position, or any combination of two or more signs, should warrant a vet visit that same day.

While some smaller foreign bodies will eventually pass, larger ones will more likely stay put or eventually form a blockage as the intestinal tract narrows. Partial obstructions usually have less severe signs that may come and go. However, they can become total obstructions as they move down toward narrowed parts of the intestinal tract.

At the end of the day, it's better to go to the vet than to wait, even if you're not sure your dog is sick. If there is a blockage, and surgery is needed, the chances of it succeeding are much greater if you haven't waited. In addition, your veterinarian can sometimes monitor a foreign body using repeated radiographs to see if the blockage is moving down the intestinal tract.



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OPENING HOURS

We are open between

8.30am-6.30pm on Weekdays with
a late night opening to 7pm on Tuesdays
and 8:45am-midday on Saturdays.

Consultations and Nurse Clinics are by appointment.

On Monday to Friday consulting hours are:

- 8.45-10.30am
- 2.30-3.30pm
- 5.00-6.30pm (7pm Tuesdays)

On Saturdays our consulting hours are:

- 9.20-11.00am

Payment is required at the time of treatment

We provide 24 hour emergency cover, just phone the usual
telephone number



PREPARE NOW FOR FIREWORK SEASON!

Firework season is fast approaching and if your pets find the bangs and flashes frightening, it can be an extremely stressful time. However, there are many ways in which you can try to keep the peace in your home – even if it is anything but peaceful outside!

Evenings are drawing in, so start preparing!

Calming products such as **Zenifel** and **Zenidog** should be introduced at least a month before bonfire night, helping to reduce the anxiety threshold, making the fear/phobia more controllable.

Zenifel and **Zenidog** replicate pheromones, helping pets to feel relaxed, safe and secure in their environment.

