



## Inside this issue:

*Winter Hazards for Pets* 2

*Canine Training* 3

*Pet Portraits for Christmas Cheer* 3

## Points of Interest:

- January is "Dental Health" month
- Keep your pets healthy over the cold winter months
- Have some fun with your dog by joining a class!
- \$300 raised for Thunder Bay Christmas Cheer!

## *Our Pets Need Dental Care Too!*

For most of us, caring for our teeth has been part of our daily routine for as long as we can remember. Caring for our pets' teeth is just as important.

Research has shown that 80% of dogs and 70% of cats have oral disease by the age of 3. It is actually the most frequently diagnosed health problem in pets.

Dental disease can affect a number of organs in the body because bacteria in the mouth can get into the blood stream and cause serious health problems, such as kidney infections, liver disease, and lung disease.

What causes dental disease?

Plaque, which is a colourless film that contains large amounts of potentially harmful bacteria, builds up on the teeth and can cause infection, damaging your pet's gums and the tissue and bone that support the teeth.

Common signs of oral disease include:

- Tartar buildup (yellow-brown crust on teeth)
- Red and swollen gums
- Bleeding gums
- Tooth loss
- Bad breath
- Changes in eating or chewing habits

We recommend that your pet's dental health be evaluated at least once a year because bacteria and food debris can accumulate and if left unchecked and untreated, will lead to deterioration of the soft tissue and bone surrounding the teeth.

It may be recommended that your pet come in for a dental cleaning (prophylaxis). Our hospital houses a fully-functional dental suite complete with a digital dental x-ray machine.

During the months of January and February 2012, a discount will be offered on our dental prophylaxis services.

## *Keeping your pets' teeth clean at home*

Routine home care should be started at 3-4 months of age.

Specially designed pet toothbrushes as well as pet toothpastes in flavours such as beef, poultry, and seafood make brushing much more appealing to pets.

Try to make brushing an enjoyable and rewarding experience. It takes an average of two months for your pet to get used to having his/ her teeth brushed, but the health rewards are well worth it.

Human toothpastes, salt, and baking soda should not be used. Toothpastes' foaming action is irritating and all of these substances can cause illness if swallowed.

You can visit our website for a tooth brushing demo at [www.tbvet.com/helpful\\_videos.php](http://www.tbvet.com/helpful_videos.php).

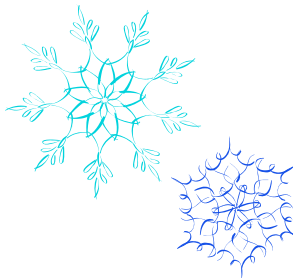
There are also, various mouth rinses, enzymatic dental chews and chew toys available to help with your pet's dental care.

Please avoid giving your dog bones or cow hooves to chew on, as these often cause tooth fractures often necessitating extraction.

In addition, you can feed specifically formulated foods that help reduce the accumulation of plaque and tartar on the teeth.

Speak to your veterinarian about the best method of dental home care for your pet.

## Winter Hazards for Pets



*Dogs and cats left outdoors can easily freeze or suffer from frostbite.*

**“Antifreeze products containing ethylene glycol are highly toxic and can produce life-threatening kidney damage, even in small amounts.”**



*One way to protect your dog's feet from salt and ice melts is with booties .*

Winter can be a fun and exciting time of year. There are, however, some hazards that pet owners should be aware of.

**Cold temperatures:** Dogs and cats left outdoors can easily freeze or suffer from frostbite. Outdoor cats may also crawl under the hoods of cars for warmth, where they may become injured or killed by the fan belt (for this reason always bang on the hood of your car before starting your engine if your pet is left outside).

Covering your dog with a coat or sweater that offers protection from the base of the tail to the belly is a simple way to keep your dog safe from winter weather, and help him enjoy his winter walks.

**Antifreeze, windshield washer fluid:** Antifreeze products containing ethylene glycol are highly toxic and can produce life-threatening kidney damage, even in small amounts. For example, just one tablespoon of 50-50 diluted antifreeze can be lethal to a 10 lb. cat, and as little as 4 ounces in a 20 lb. dog could be fatal.

Many windshield washer products contain methanol, which if ingested can cause drooling, vomiting, drunkenness, and severe central nervous system depression.

**Ice Melts:** Ice-melting chemicals can irritate and burn the pads of your pet's feet and can cause serious injury if ingested.

Use a damp towel to wipe your pet's feet and underside. Another way to protect your dog's feet is to purchase pet booties.

**Rodenticides:** If ingested, can result in potentially serious or even life-threatening problems such as bleeding, seizures, or damage to the kidneys and other vital organs. Therefore, when using any rodenticide it is important to place the product in areas that are completely inaccessible to companion animals.

**Getting lost:** More dogs are lost during the winter than any other season. This is because snow and ice cover up the scents your dog uses to find his or her way around.

So, avoid letting your dog off leash in snow or ice, and always make sure his or her ID tags are fastened securely to his or her collar.

Keep snow from piling high next to your fence. A packed snowdrift will provide a boost for your dog to jump over the fence and escape the safe confines of your yard.

**Grooming:** Keep your pet's coat well groomed. Matted fur won't properly protect your pet from the cold.

**Leaving your dog outdoors:** When it falls below -6 degrees Celcius, it's best to keep your pet indoors. If you must keep your dog outside for any period of time, provide a dry, draft-free doghouse. It should be large enough to allow your dog to sit and lay down comfortably but small enough to hold in its body heat. The floor should be raised a few inches off the ground and covered with cedar shavings or straw. The doghouse should be turned to face away from the wind, and the doorway should be covered with waterproof burlap or heavy plastic.

Make sure there is plenty of fresh drinking water available. Animals can't burn calories without a fresh supply of water, and if they can't burn calories, they'll get cold. Also, use a tip-resistant, ceramic or hard plastic water bowl rather than a metal one, as your pet's tongue can stick and freeze to a cold metal object.

## Join one of our great dog training classes!

Thunder Bay Veterinary Hospital is pleased to offer several dog training classes.

We use reward-based training which focuses on rewarding for good behaviour. This helps build trust and improves your relationship with your dog.

Our goal is to provide family-based training to assist owners in having a happy, healthy, well-mannered dog.

Various classes are offered:

**Puppy Playschool:** An excellent opportunity to socialize your puppy to other pups, new experiences and new people. For puppies 8-14 weeks of age.

**Early Learning:** Focuses on socialization and basic manner training, such as sit/down/stay, anti-jumping, recall and anti-pull walking.

**Continued Learning:** This class is a continuation of the basic skills learned in Early Learning with increased difficulty and added distractions.

**Clicker Training:** For dog owners who have had some previous training and are looking to further their dog's education with a new, fast, fun and motivational teaching method.

**Confidence and Obstacles:** For dog owners that want to build their relationship with their dog as well as increase their dog's self-confidence.

You will learn some basic agility skills as well as off-leash handling.

**Tricks and Playtime:** This class is designed to build the bond between you and your dog.

You will learn some fun new tricks and your pet will socialize with other pets and people.

### Dog Aggression

**Fundamentals:** If your dog needs a little extra socialization with other dogs, this class may be the right choice for you.

Some areas of focus are handling, bite-inhibition, interacting with other dogs and staying focused while in a group setting.

### Behavioural consultations:

Private consults are also available to help dog owners with their dog's behavioural issues such as: separation anxiety, aggression, barking, fearfulness, and resource guarding.

Give us a call to reserve your spot in one of these great classes.



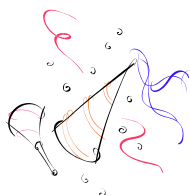
Visit our website for more info:  
[www.tbvet.com](http://www.tbvet.com)

## Pet Portraits for Christmas Cheer



During the months of November and December, we offered to take pet portraits to raise money for the Christmas Cheer Fund in Thunder Bay.

\$300 was raised for this worthwhile charity. Thank you to all who participated.



Happy New Year!