

The Scratching Post

A newsletter from your friends at Vancouver Veterinary Hospital

Happy Howloween from Vancouver Veterinary Hospital! Did you know that we decorate our clinic every year in October with a festive halloween theme? What a great reason to come by and say hello. This year we are also carrying a stylish line of pet costumes. You can dress your dachshund as a hotdog or your pug as a pig! This time of year is fun, but can also be stressful for pets. If your dog or cat has anxiety over firecrackers, doorbells ringing and people dressed as goblins and ghouls, there are ways we can help. No animal needs to suffer needlessly, even when it comes to internal turmoil. We have solutions for you if you have a "nervous Nelly" who hates Halloween. Talk to our vets about the options available for quelling your pet's jitters.



Does Halloween drive your furry friend bananas? You are not alone. Talk to our staff about ways we can alleviate your pet's stress.

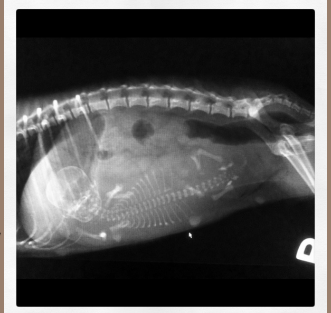
6 Tips for a pet-safe Halloween

- Make sure your pet's costume is comfortable and does not obstruct vision, hearing, or restrict movement. Avoid tying anything around your pet's neck to prevent choking. Avoid small parts or pieces that may be easily chewed off and swallowed.
- Do not bring your dog along for trick-or-treating. Dogs can become spooked or aggressive in the noise and confusion of Halloween. Children you encounter may also be fearful of dogs.
- Keep your dog in a room separate from the trick-or-treaters. This will prevent them from becoming frightened by noisy children in costumes. Too many strangers can overwhelm a pet and cause them to be unusually protective or aggressive.
- If you haven't done so already, visit your veterinarian for a microchip prior to the festivities of Halloween. If your dog does escape from the house or becomes lost, a microchip will increase the chances that they will be returned home again. Also make sure your pet is wearing a collar with proper ID tags.
- Avoid decorations such as flaming jack-o-lanterns and candles which can burn your pet. Don't use streamers or ribbons around your pet's neck, on their collars or costumes or in your home. These items are often ingested and can cause intestinal obstruction which requires surgery to remove.
- Keep Halloween candy out of pet's reach! Chocolate is toxic to pets and candy can make your pet sick. Also avoid giving your dog alcohol or any rich fatty foods. Keep all countertops clean and a lid firmly locked on the garbage can to prevent them from eating wrappers and food packages.

Little Loca's only pup

A Vancouver Veterinary Hospital baby story of gargantuan proportions!

Last month we were presented with an interesting case. A small chihuahua, 'Loca', was in labour, but having difficulties. We decided to do an xray, as it is not totally uncommon for small dogs like chihuahuas,



to have a tough time delivering large puppies. What we saw on the xray was a big surprise! One single puppy occupied Loca's womb, but she was taking up alot of space! She was too big for Loca to deliver naturally, so the doctors had to perform an emergency C-section to deliver her rather sizeable puppy. The surgery was a success and when Loca woke up she had her new baby by her side. Despite the fact that she had just undergone surgery, she was very excited to see her little female pup! She cleaned her and kissed her, and the little one latched on to feed right away. Loca is a truly natural mother! Our staff is delighted to have been part of this not so little miracle. Loca and puppy came by to visit recently and already at only 2 weeks the puppy is almost as big as her mom! Congratulations Loca! Thank you Doctors!



Too much of a good thing?



It's no secret that everyone loves a jolly fat cat. In animals, obesity often translates into cuteness. At the hospital, we see it all the time. Owners will talk about their pudgy pets with the utmost endearment. "That's my little footstool! He just loves people food, especially french fries! So adorable..." All this oohing and aahing is understandable;

pudgy pets ARE cute! Giving treats to our pets is a great way of bonding and showing our love and appreciation for their unwavering loyalty.

Unfortunately, there are many risks associated with overfeeding our animals. We may think that we are bringing joy to their lives through mountains of food, but in truth we are opening the flood gates to a myriad of behavioral issues and health problems. Are we killing our pets with kindness?

Obesity is not just a human problem anymore. It is becoming a health risk for animals all over the world. Usually you can tell if your pet is fat just by looking at it. If you are unsure, you can use this easy scoring system with your pet.

Royal Canin created this chart to help owners decipher whether their pet is ideal, overweight or obese. Our vets would be happy to discuss solutions with you if you find that your pet is tipping the scales.

IDEAL BODY WEIGHT	OVERWEIGHT	OBESE
*Ribs are easily felt with slight fat cover.	*Ribs are difficult to feel under moderate fat cover.	*Ribs are difficult to feel under thick fat cover.
*Tail base has some contour with slight fat cover.	*Tail base has some thickening, bones felt under moderate fat cover.	*Tail base is thickened and difficult to feel under fat cover.
*Abdominal tuck from side view.	*No abdominal tuck from side view.	*No waist, fat hangs from abdomen from side view.
*Well proportioned waist from overhead view.	*Slightly broadened waist from overhead view.	*Back is markedly broadened from overhead view.



Did you know that a 12 pound yorkie is the same as an average female weighing 218 pounds? A cat weighing 15 pounds is equal to a 5'9" man weighing 254 pounds! Obesity is a real issue with pets and we want to help! This month we are offering free trial bags of Hill's weight loss diets to owners who are ready to take the weight loss challenge with their furry friend. We can also offer nutritional advice and exercise tips if you are unsure of where to start. We will have your pet feeling and looking better in no time!

Pet obesity: cause and effect

Causes of obesity in pets:

- *Excessive food at meal times
- *Too many snacks, treats and table scraps
- *High fat diets
- *Lack of exercise
- *Age- as pets get older, their metabolism
- *Some breeds are predisposed to weight problems
- *Physical injury or disease that prevents exercise
- *Indoor lifestyle
- *Some animals have an underlying endocrine disorder such as hypothyroidism or Cushing's disease

Risks associated with obesity in pets:

- *High blood pressure
- *Skin problems
- *Hip dysplasia
- *Heart disease
- *Heat intolerance
- *Poor circulation
- *Increased anaesthetic risk
- *Respiratory illness
- *Diabetes
- *Joint pain
- *Joint ligament rupture
- *Pancreatitis
- *Cancers- especially those in the digestive tract
- *Urinary tract infections

You can do it!

Weight loss tips for pets:

- *Set realistic weight loss goals
- *Visit the vet for regular weigh-ins and checkups to monitor progress
- *Gradually reduce your pet's food intake and switch to a calorie reduced food
- *Minimize snacks and treats, and find a low fat treat alternative
- *Increase walks and exercise time
- *Encourage your pet to play more often