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CAPITOL ILLINI NEWSLETTER

RABBITS AND DIABETES



Diagnosing diabetes in rabbits is rare. However it has been diagnosed in New Zealand White Rabbits. The type of diabetes that has been reported in these rabbits is similar to type 2 diabetes in humans which usually is due to poor diet and obesity. Rabbits are herbivores which means that they can withstand going without insulin easier than carnivores and omnivores. Diagnosing diabetes in rabbits can be challenging. The first step in this process would be to

run complete blood chemistries, including a blood glucose level. Abdominal x-rays and an ultrasound may be needed later. Glucose levels should not be greater than 250mg/ml. A normal blood glucose is between 75.6 mg/dl - 149.4 mg/dl. Other possible signs that could indicate diabetes would be an increase in drinking (polydipsia), excessive urination (polyuria), glucose present in the urine (glycosuria), and or an increase in triglycerides.

Many times results may be elevated due to the stress of the visit, car ride, or handling. It is best to check blood glucose and collect a urine sample in a non-stressful environment such as at home. Not eating due to hepatic lipidosis (fatty liver) or ketosis may also affect results. Usually insulin is not needed in rabbits diagnosed with diabetes and can be controlled by diet alone such as a higher fiber diet and losing weight if obese.



ITEMS YOUR CAT SHOULD NEVER CONSUME!!!!!!

Whether your cat primarily lives indoors or outdoors, it is very important to keep them from consuming any of the four items listed below.

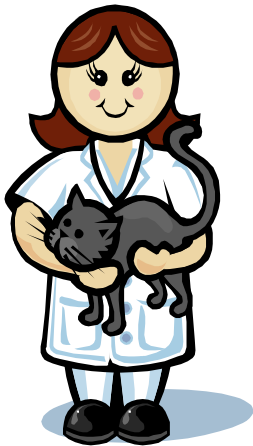
1. Antifreeze which contains the chemical ethylene glycol is almost always fatal even if a

small amount is ingested. It damages the kidneys and can not be reversed if treatment is not began within 6 hours after ingestion. Cats are attracted to antifreeze because it has a sweet taste. Make sure to clean up antifreeze

spills and dispose of it properly.

2. Kitchen ingredients including leeks, onions, and garlic are toxic to cats as well. They are members of the Allium plant species which if ingested will cause rupturing of

over



ITEMS YOUR CAT SHOULD NEVER CONSUME !!!!

red blood cells. 3.) Human medications including over the counter medications such as aspirin and acetaminophen (Tylenol) can cause severe damage to the liver and kidneys. It takes an ingestion of only one Tylenol capsule to be fatal to a cat.. Prescription medications, if ingested, can be just as harmful such as antidepressants, blood pressure medications, and hair growth products.

4.) Plants can also be toxic to our feline friends. Certain plants such as Easter and Asian Lilies will cause kidney failure. Signs of toxicity include : lethargy, vomiting, and loss of appetite. For more information and a list of toxic plants contact the American Society for prevention of cruelty to animals/Animal poison control center (ASPCA) or visit

their website at www.aspca.org/apcc.



UNDERSTANDING PET FOOD LABELS

Selecting a pet food can be confusing and overwhelming. Feeding the inappropriate amount of food can also lead to obesity and other nutritional problems. Today most states have adopted regulations for information on labels from the FDA and AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials). The front of the product will contain the PDP or principal display panel. This includes the name, species intended for, weight, and main ingredient. The AAFCO requires this to be 95% of the Total weight of the ingredients. The information panel on the side or back of the product lists all the ingredients in the pet food, along with the manufacturer's

name and address. The ingredients will be listed in descending order of volume percent in the food. Feeding guidelines will also be listed as amounts to feed your pet daily depending on activity and weight. Remember these are only recommendations; It is best to ask your veterinarian for their expert opinion on how to feed your pet. The guaranteed analysis includes the percentages of crude protein, fat and other nutrients. Dry pet food contain 6 - 10% water, where as canned food have up to 78% water. Therefore, pets that require more water intake such as pets with kidney failure, bladder stones or crystals, and diabetes mellitus, may benefit from more canned food in

their diet. Pet food labels have nutrient levels on a "as fed basis" or "as is basis". This does not account for the water content in the product.

Many pet food labels contain terms such as "premium", "ultra premium" or "gourmet". These lack official regulations and therefore can be misleading. The AAFCO does have specific requirements in the food for terms such as natural, light, less calories, and lean to be on the label. Expiration dates are not required on pet foods, however many companies stamp one on the bags and cans. If you have any questions concerning pet food labels please contact us at 217-546-1541.



IMPORTANCE OF YEARLY HEARTWORM TESTING

There are many different reasons to get your pet tested every year for heartworms including :

1.) Climate changes and increased prevalence of mosquitoes carrying heartworm larvae. The American Heartworm Society recommend testing dogs yearly.

2.) Pets can and do spit out the monthly heartworm pre-

vention tablet from time to time, making them vulnerable to heartworm disease.

3.) Heartworm positive pets may be harmed by the monthly prevention tablet instead of being helped by them!



Heartworm disease can occur in cats as well as dogs.

CANINE SEPARATION ANXIETY

Separation anxiety is a behavioral syndrome in which pets exhibit distress when unable to gain access to its owner. Signs may include: house soiling, destructive chewing, vocalization, salivation/licking, digging, trembling, vomiting or diarrhea, aggression when leaving, or self—mutilation. These dogs may also be fearful of thunderstorms, fireworks, or other loud noises.

Diagnosis may be difficult to obtain. The veterinarian must eliminate a urinary tract disease first if the pet tends to urinate inappropriately. You can also videotape the dog while you are away and observe any destructive or anxious behavior.

Treatment usually involves behavior modification, as well as environmental modification. Environmental modification can be done in several ways:

- 1.) Keeping your dog well exercised and socialized prior to training.
- 2.) Restricting your pet to a designated area where they may not destroy anything and where they also feel safe. This may be a crate, as long as your pet is well acclimated to it so as not to make the problem worse.
- 3.) Making the “safe place” a positively reinforced place to be in and play. Then slowly extend the departure time that your dog is left alone. Also leav-

ing the TV or radio on helps keep your pet more relaxed.

Behavioral modification generally involves desensitizing your dog to different cues that go on when you are preparing to leave, such as picking up the car keys. This is done by softly picking up the keys at various times throughout the day while you are at home. Your dog is commanded to relax (already taught prior), as he or she stays relaxed, shake the keys louder and louder at each time, until there is no reaction. Also positively reinforcing him/her with treats, affection or toys, he/she shows relaxed/calm behavior. When your dog progresses to a more



As few as 1 - 2 heartworms may be fatal in cats.

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CANINE SEPARTION ANXIETY

relaxed state, then try to leave him/her for short periods of time, then gradually increase the time gone. You should also avoid attention to your pet 15 minutes prior and after leaving, also making sure he/she is in it's "safe area" with plenty of toys to keep them occupied.

If behavior modification is not helping, drug therapy may be added to assist in training. These are mainly short term medications to help calm your dog in situations to decrease the severity of the problem and to help focus for training.

