

## February 2008 Newsletter

If this is your first time visiting our website, we wish to extend a big welcome and thank you for taking the time to see what Bradshaw Vet has to offer. If you are a returning visitor, we thank you also. Unfortunately, our monthly newsletter was put on the back burner for a while, but we are back on track, and look forward to again offering you useful topics regarding your pet's health and safety, as well as other information about our clinic.

February is a big month for pet owners as well as veterinarians. We are celebrating National Pet Dental Month, as well as the National Canine Weight Check. It is also a time of year that pet owners need to be aware of potential dangers that your pet can be exposed to.

This year celebrates the 13th anniversary of National Pet Dental Month. This is a nationwide effort to spread awareness, and to educate pet owners of the importance of dental care for their pets. Periodontal problems begin when food particles and bacteria build up in the mouth of dogs and cats, forming plaque and mineralizing into tartar. This can lead to gingivitis and periodontal disease.

Periodontal disease can result in tooth decay, bad breath, and bleeding gums. In more advanced cases, the bacteria that causes periodontal disease can enter the bloodstream and damage internal organs. The easiest way to prevent oral disease is to have your pet examined by a veterinarian to determine if there is need for a dental cleaning, and then starting a home dental care routine.

To recognize National Pet Dental Month, Bradshaw Veterinary Clinic is offering a 15% discount on all dental procedures for the month of February. If you are concerned that your pet may have dental issues or is in need of some dental maintenance, please call to schedule an exam with your veterinarian to determine your pet's dental needs.

Veterinarians estimate 47% of patients are overweight, rating obesity as the number 1 nutritional disease in pets. This February, we are proud to support the first ever National Canine Weight Check. This is a public service that is sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health, and supported by the American Kennel Club Humane Fund, as well as Veterinarians nationwide to increase owner awareness of canine obesity. All month long, our doctors will provide free weight assessments, including breed-specific information, as well as valuable educational information on the health implications of canine obesity, with a scheduled appointment. We look forward to helping you assist your pet in living a long, healthy life!

February brings that wonderful day that most women look forward to and most men dread-Valentine's Day! This usually means lots of gifts and chocolate around the house. For the most part, we think the only danger of chocolate is a little weight gain, but you should be aware that chocolate can be toxic to animals. Under no circumstances should

any form of chocolate be fed to your pet. Symptoms of chocolate toxicity include vomiting, diarrhea, tremors and seizures. If you even suspect your pet has ingested any form of chocolate, please contact your veterinarian immediately.

We always like to encourage you as pet owners, to be aware of “winter-specific” issues that have the potential of causing problems for animals. Here are a few ideas to help protect your pet.

Be sure to monitor all sources of heat to protect your pet from being burned. Never leave a pet unattended with an open-flame heat source. Candles can be knocked over and stray embers can get into your pet’s coat.

Beware of antifreeze! Antifreeze is sweet to the taste for pets and can be lethal, even in small quantities. Check the floor of your garage, or your driveway daily to assure no antifreeze has leaked onto the ground. Again, if you suspect your pet has ingested even a small amount of antifreeze, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Before starting your vehicle, (especially on cool mornings) beep your horn. It may upset your neighbor, but can save a cat’s life. Cats often seek out engines as warm places to escape the cold weather and can suffer severe injury from the fan belt when the engine is started. Beeping your horn will help startle cats and scare them away.

Last, but not least, always provide your pet with a safe, warm place to hang out when the temperatures dip.