

Blue Ravine News

YOUR PET'S HEALTH IS OUR CONCERN

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Backyard Hazards: What You Need to Know to Protect Your Pets

What is one of the worst hazards to the health of your pets and to the environment and helpful backyard critters? **That would be pesticides.**

Homeowners and gardeners use many million pounds of chemicals from pesticides and fertilizers in backyards and on public property each year.

Many of the pesticides used to eradicate weeds and insects are toxic; they are poisons that may kill living organisms, such as pets, helpful



wildlife such as insects like ladybugs and garden lizards, and your garden plants.



Some commonly used pesticides are found in groundwater, have the ability to leach into drinking water, are toxic to fish, bees and birds.

How can you control some of the dangers? Use pest prevention methods such as removing sources of food, water and shelter

in your yard. Store food in tightly sealed containers and garbage in covered trash cans. Eliminate places for pests to hide. If you must use pesticides, make sure that you use them safely and correctly!

- Use chemicals that are approved for use in homes/yards.
- Dispose of pesticides correctly: if necessary, call your local waste disposal organization for information.

- Twice as much is not better! Read labels and follow directions.
- Don't use outdoor chemicals in your home.
- Avoid using pesticides altogether if you can: Pests need three things to survive—food, water and

shelter. You can starve them out by eliminating access to food. You can dry them out: roaches can die in a week if they have no water—fix leaky faucets. Keep them out of your house by sealing cracks and openings that allow them access. Set traps for rats and mice, rather than using poisons that your dog or cat could find.

Other Pet Dangers in Your Yard

Dogs love nothing more than rolling around in fresh cut grass, sniffing flowers, and having a convenient option for pottying. A backyard is an invitation to fun! But there are dangers in your yard.

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Backyard Hazards: What You Need to Know to Protect Your Pets, cont'd.

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Toxic Plants

Some weeds, plants and flowers are toxic. The ASPCA has a long list of toxic weeds and plants that are unsafe for dogs and cats. (Consult their site for a list.) Toxic plants are one of the most prevalent backyard dangers to dogs. In addition to common garden plants, such as daffodils, hydrangeas, elephant ears and anything in the lily family, wild mushrooms and some weeds like milkweed also pose a threat. While typically not harmful unless ingested, if your dog gets curious and eats a toxic plant, they could experience clinical signs as mild as upset stomach and vomiting or as serious as heart or liver failure.

Depending on where you live, poison ivy, oak or sumac might also be hazardous to your dog. While long fur may protect your dog from developing a rash, they can transfer the oils from these plants to humans. And if your dog is allergic, ingesting these plants could cause a severe reaction that could include difficulty breathing and anaphylactic shock.



Foxtail



Certain grasses and weeds can also produce burrs that could become painfully embedded in your pooch's paws and skin; foxtails will make their way into your dog's body. And splinters don't just come from chewing sticks — weathered

boards on wooden decks or porches can hurt your pup's paws as well.

A closely related threat is certain kinds of mulch. Cocoa mulch is becoming increasingly popular among gardeners for its insect-repellent properties and nutrient value. But, as a byproduct of chocolate production, this mulch is just as toxic to your dog as a chocolate bar.

Being curious critters, dogs, especially puppies will pick up everything in their mouths, including sticks, rocks and mulch chips. This can irritate their digestive tracts and cause vomiting or diarrhea.

Internal Parasites

If you have mosquitos, they may have a field day with your furry pets. Heartworm disease can result from just one bite from an infected mosquito. Intestinal worms—roundworms, hookworms, whipworms or tapeworms—contaminate soil or poop that your pet may ingest. You may need fecal screenings or the use of monthly heartworm preventatives to deworm against parasites.

Water—Swimming Pools, Lakes or Ponds

Not all dogs can swim so falling into a pool may lead to drowning if the pet does not know how to get out. Pools of

fresh water—ponds, puddles, streams, even grass—may expose your dog to leptospirosis, which is infectious to dogs and humans. Fence any areas of water to avoid danger and prevent accidents.

Sharp Objects in Your Yard

This is one dog safety hazard that's often overlooked. While you might think to place barriers around cactus plants, rose bushes or other thorny plants to protect your pup, it might not occur to you that those sticks your dog loves to chase and chew can also pose a threat. Splinters can break off and cause damage to your dog's mouth or intestinal tract, even potentially damaging the lungs if inhaled,



And don't forget about other objects that you might leave lying around outside such as rakes, shovels or small children's toys. While these might seem fairly harmless for your dog to sniff around, the potential of them not seeing a sharp object while chasing a squirrel or other small critters can be enough to turn it into a real hazard.

Wild Animals and Strays

While fences are great for keeping your dog in, they're not always so good at keeping other animals out. Fences are usually little to no barrier to determined stray cats or dogs and wild animals like raccoons. In addition to the potential wounds your pup might get if they find themselves in a confrontation, these animals also carry rabies and other transmissible diseases.

Fur-covered wildlife isn't the only potential doggie danger. Venomous snakes and poisonous toads are hard to keep out of any garden. Even non-poisonous reptiles could transmit salmonella and other bacteria and parasites if your pooch gobbles them up. Also keep in mind that in some areas small dogs make a tantalizing target for hawks and other large birds of prey.



Rattlesnake

Help for Pet Hazards

Keep a dog first-aid kit on hand for emergencies and keep your veterinarian's phone number in a prominent place for emergency access. Having to find it or hunt for it in an emergency will waste time and cause you more stress!

If your dog shows any signs of being poisoned, including vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, lethargy, dizziness or breathing problems, contact your veterinarian as soon as possible. If your veterinarian is not available, Poison Helplines offer help and advice for treating poisoned pets 24 hours a day. Just keep in mind that you may be charged a fee when you call.

[Animal Poison Control | \(888\) 426-4435 | ASPCA](#) or

[24/7 Animal Poison Control Center | Pet Poison Helpline®](#)

Call Blue Ravine Animal Hospital for help—916-984-0990.

Live in Rattlesnake Country? Consider Rattlesnake Vaccine

Most snake bites are harmless but a bite from a venomous snake can be dangerous. What should you do? First, stay calm, and call your veterinarian to seek immediate care.

Some dogs have no reaction to a snake bite but others may react almost instantly or begin to show symptoms up to 24 hours later. The intensity of snake bite symptoms can vary; your dog could experience sudden weakness and collapse; trembling, shaking or twitching of muscles; excessive salivation, drooling or frothing at the mouth; bloody urine; dilated pupils; paralysis; diarrhea and/or vomiting; unsteadiness/weakness in the hind legs.

If the snake bite was venomous, you'll see significant swelling where the dog was bitten. Your veterinarian will be able to talk you through the situation and tell you what to do. But if your dog is having difficulty breathing or has collapsed, get them to an emergency pet clinic right away.

A veterinarian will usually begin to treat your dog by conducting a physical exam and ordering bloodwork. Based on the severity of the bite and suspected type of snake, the veterinarian may administer antivenom, which is a first-line treatment in areas where rattlesnake bites are common.

The type of treatment provided to your dog will vary depending on the circumstances. Some

common treatments for snake bites on dogs are clipping and cleaning bite wounds; giving antibiotics for a tissue injury; using supplemental oxygen for trouble breathing; giving intravenous (IV) fluids; pain medications; giving vaccine to protect against future bites; giving steroids or anti-inflammatory drugs.

In some cases, the veterinarian may advise that your pet be hospitalized for additional support care for at least 24 hours, followed by 1-2 weeks of rest at home.

Be proactive: Discuss risks with your veterinarian and where to go if your pet is bitten by a snake. And seek out Rattlesnake Aversion Training: this training will teach your dog how to recognize the scent, sound, and sight of a rattlesnake and learn how to avoid it.

with your veterinarian and where to go if your pet is bitten by a snake. And seek out Rattlesnake Aversion Training: this training will teach your dog how to recognize the scent, sound, and sight of a rattlesnake and learn how to avoid it.

Ask your veterinarian about the rattlesnake vaccine to help protect your pet! If your pet has been bitten after previously being vaccinated, it's still important to seek treatment!



A snake bite can be life threatening and your pet's life depends on getting treatment quickly. Dogs left untreated are less likely to recover.

Veterinarians have been known to say—"Your best medicine in the case of a snake bite is your car keys."

Five Tests Every New Pet Should Have

Dr. Ruth MacPete, DVM: Dr. MacPete lists the five tests all new pets should have, regardless of age. For more from Dr. MacPete, find her on Facebook!

Getting a new pet is a big deal and everyone knows it's important to get off to a good start. So besides buying supplies and making your home pet-safe, what else should you be doing if you're adding a new, furry, four-legged member to the family? As a veterinarian, it's a question I'm often asked by prospective pet parents. So, whether your new pet comes from an animal shelter, breeder, or pet store, I'd like to share important things I believe all new pets should have.

1. Veterinary examination

Taking your new pet to the veterinarian is probably the most important thing you should do. Your veterinarian will do a complete physical exam to ensure your new pet is healthy or



address any medical issues. They will also make sure your pet is protected from preventable illness by recommending vaccines and parasite preventatives. Your veterinarian may

also suggest microchipping your pet and spaying or neutering them if it hasn't been done already.

2. FIV and FeLV test

If your new pet is a cat, then feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and feline leukemia virus (FeLV) tests are essential. FeLV and FIV are important disease-causing viruses in cats. FIV is sometimes called feline "AIDS" because like HIV, it attacks the immune system and makes the host vulnerable to opportunistic infections. FeLV also weakens the immune system, but in addition to predisposing them to infections, it increases their risk of lymphosarcoma, a highly malignant cancer. Testing cats for FIV and FeLV is important for 2 different reasons. If you already have a cat, you want to make sure that your new cat is free from FIV and FeLV. FIV can be transmitted by a bite or scratch from an infected cat and FeLV can be transmitted by sharing food and water bowls or even a litter box with an infected cat. If you know your cat carries one of these viruses, take measures to limit exposure to other cats to reduce transmission.

The second reason to test is that while there is no cure for FIV or FELV, knowing they have the disease can help your

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Five Tests Every New Pet Should Have

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veterinarian better manage concurrent illness. These two viruses are very serious and life-shortening but given the right home environment and management some cats can live for some time with a good quality of life with these diseases.

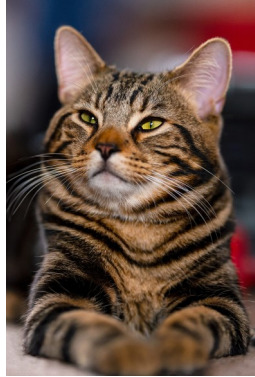
3. Heartworm testing

When most people think of heartworms, they think of a disease that only affects dogs. In reality, heartworm disease can also affect cats, although less frequently.

Heartworm disease is a potentially fatal condition caused by a type of worm that lives in the heart and the arteries of the lungs. It is transmitted by mosquitos and is found in every state, although it is more prevalent in the South. The best treatment for heartworm disease is prevention. Before starting preventative treatments, it is recommended that pets are tested for heartworm disease because serious complications can develop if an animal is already infected. Also, it is important to speak to your veterinarian about the best product to prevent infection.

4. Fecal testing

Internal parasites can affect both cats and dogs. Examples of internal parasites include tapeworms, roundworms, whipworms, hookworms, and protozoa like toxoplasma and cryptosporidia. Internal parasites can be detected by testing



an animal's stool with a fecal flotation test (also called a fecal float) and fecal antigen testing. It's important to test for internal parasites because they can be transmitted to other pets, and some can even spread to people. Fortunately, current parasite treatments are very effective.

5. Screening blood tests

If you are adopting an older cat or dog, it is always a good idea to get screening blood tests. By definition, a screening blood test is a test done to detect disease before it shows manifestations and becomes symptomatic. So even if the cat or dog you are adopting looks healthy, it is ideal to get a screening blood test to make sure they don't have problems like diabetes, kidney disease or thyroid disease. Screening tests are also important for animals of all ages if they will be undergoing surgery.

Depending on where your animal came from, some of these tests may have already been done. For example, most animal shelters routinely test for FIV and FeLV before placing a cat in their adoption program. However, never assume and always check your pet's medical record to find out what has already been done. This is another reason why taking your newly adopted pet to the veterinarian is important: they will review your pet's medical records to determine which tests or vaccines have been done and what if anything still needs to be done. Following these recommendations can help ensure a healthy start for your new animal friend.

If you have any questions or concerns, visit or call your veterinarian – they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.

BLUE RAVINE OFFICE HOURS

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 6:00 pm; Saturday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday, closed.
For emergencies outside regular office hours, please call MarQueen Pet Emergency & Specialty, 916 757-6600 or Sacramento Veterinary Referral Center, 916 362-3111.

www.blueravineanimalhospital.com

OPEN HOUSE IS BACK!

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Blue Ravine will have its Open House in December:
Saturday, December 2, 2023
from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

With all the usual Festivities,
including photos with
Santa Claus.

Come one, come all!!!



Blue Ravine Animal Hospital
1770 Prairie City Rd., Folsom, CA 95630
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