



# CHB VETS LTD

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Veterinary newsletter

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## Winter chills

Would a fur coat keep you warm sleeping outdoors? No? Well, your pet's fur coat isn't enough protection for your pet during winter either. Dogs that live outdoors need a warm and dry kennel away from cold and wet wintry weather. A dry warm bed is essential and a heating pad can also offer extra comfort for your puss or pooch. Older or unwell cats and dogs should sleep inside on a soft bed of blankets or supportive bed, which will help prevent painful conditions such as arthritis. With more time spent indoors providing a litter tray or pet door for your pet will aid in avoiding those wee accidents.



The cold weather, frosts, rain and even snow in some parts of NZ can cause our pet's serious problems, especially for paws, tails, ears, skin and joints. Existing conditions such as sore joints and arthritis can flare up. Along with a warm, soft and supportive bed, ensure your pet has a balanced diet and consider supplements to improve symptoms of aches and pains. If the pain persists please consult your vet.

Because it takes more energy to stay warm when the weather is cold, some outdoor animals can eat more during winter. Likewise, fresh water is vital for maintaining your pet's health.

Indoor animals may have different dietary needs as they conserve energy by sleeping more in the winter. Dogs and cats may be exercising less so you may need to adjust the amount of food accordingly so your pet does



not become overweight.

A good quality jacket or coat can provide the extra warmth your pet needs as well protecting them from the wind, rain and snow. Ensure the jacket or coat fits your pet properly for maximum comfort. To ensure a correct fit measure your dog from the base of neck to base of the tail.

It is vital for your dogs physical and mental wellness to get out for exercise. But as the bad weather sets in and the days get shorter the amount

of time for exercise with your dog can decrease. Wrap up in warm clothing (including a coat for your pet) and get out there. Keep it interesting by playing a game such as fetch or hide and seek.

If you really can't brave the weather consider some indoor activities for your pet. If your pet is a cat or small breed dog you may be able to play games with them down the hallway or in the garage. For larger breeds consider a treadmill.

## Rat bait and your dog

As the weather changes, we all start placing rat bait around to control rodents. Unfortunately, this is also about the time we start to see an increase in dog poisoning.



*Things you need to be aware of:*

- Rat bait is tasty to encourage rats to eat it and dogs find it tasty too!
- Rat bait kills. It stops the blood from clotting and causes death by bleeding. After ingestion, internal bleeding occurs throughout the body and this will eventually kill the animal.
- It takes several days after eating bait before the bleeding starts.
- Vitamin K is the antidote but you need to start using this BEFORE bleeding starts as it can take up to 24 hours to work. If your dog is bleeding then it is life-threatening and they may require a blood transfusion to provide clotting factors and red blood cells.
- As a treatment, Vitamin K can be expensive, and you need to give it every day for at least 2 – 4 weeks. A blood test is recommended after finishing the treatment to ensure your dog's blood clotting is normal again.

*Things you should do:*

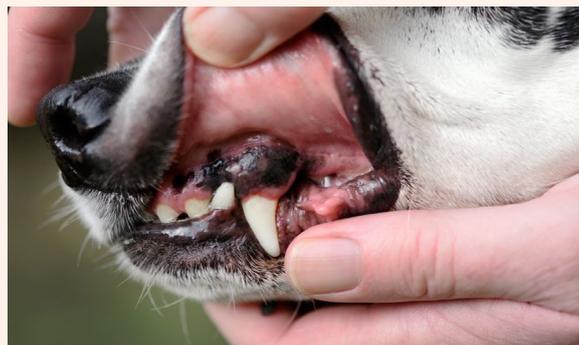
- Avoid using rat bait if you own a dog. No matter how safe you are, accidents can happen.
- If your dog eats rat bait, take them to the vet immediately. We will make them vomit if it is within 2 hours of eating the bait. If it has been longer then vitamin K will be needed.
- If you are unsure if your dog has eaten bait, then a blood clotting test will be necessary.

*Signs of internal bleeding include:*

- Very pale or white gums
- Coughing up blood
- Blood in their urine
- Bleeding nose
- Wounds that will not stop bleeding
- Sudden collapse



If you think your dog may have eaten rat bait – our best advice is to contact your vet immediately.



Note the pale gums in the photo of the poisoned dog on the left compared to normal colour on the right.

## WHAT IS OA?

Osteoarthritis is a gradual deterioration of your pet's joints. When the joint cartilage is damaged, inflammatory changes occur, eventually leading to destruction of the cartilage and subsequent damage to the underlying bone. These changes cause pain and mean that the joints don't move as well as they should.

## SIGNS OF OSTEOARTHRITIS

It can be difficult to detect the early signs of osteoarthritis, so it is important to monitor your pet for any signs.

Sometimes pets will only show one or two signs, and sometimes they will show several.

Things to look for include:

### DOGS:

- General stiffness, especially early in the day
- Moving/rising more slowly
- Tires more easily
- Unable to jump or perform other high-impact activities
- Limping (occasional, frequent, or consistent)
- Reluctance to exercise
- Restless when standing
- Slow or unable to get into position to go to the bathroom

### CATS:

- Difficulty or reluctance to jump up and down
- Difficulty climbing stairs
- Slowing down/stiffer movements
- Not grooming properly
- Changes in behaviour – more aggressive
- Inappropriate toileting

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU SPOT ANY SIGNS:

Many cases of OA in both dogs and cats are believed to be undiagnosed, but this can change if pet parents, and veterinarians work together when signs of OA are spotted. Furthermore, all of these signs can also be caused by other conditions, so a consultation with your vet is the best place to start.



## HOW CAN WE MANAGE OSTEOARTHRITIS IN OUR PETS?

- Weight management – joints that are already sore and stressed are made worse when they have to support extra weight. Reducing weight leads to significant improvement in the quality of life of your pet.
- Therapeutic exercise – Exercise must be a balance between not overexerting the joints but getting enough exercise to reduce stiffness and muscle wastage. “Little and often” low impact exercise is preferred to a big run/walk every now and then. Hydrotherapy and physiotherapy options are increasing for pets in New Zealand now too, and can be very effective at promoting muscle strength, tone and joint motion whilst limiting impact on joints.
- Help around the home – Thick padded comfortable beds help to alleviate excess pressure on sore joints. It is important to prevent your pet slipping on flooring such as lino, laminate and tiles. Adding more grip, such as carpet runners, can work well on hard floors. Ramps are useful to help dogs access favourite places (such as the couch!) and to get in and out of cars. Try to place your cat's bowls, bed, litter box and favourite toys in areas that are easily accessible so that they don't have to walk far to get to them.
- Medications – Your vet may prescribe pain relief/ anti-inflammatory medication/s. There are also joint supplements available without prescription for mild arthritis, or to use in conjunction with anti-inflammatories. Bomazeal™ Mobilize™ is a tasty tablet that can be used as a safe, natural alternative for dogs with osteoarthritis, based on NZ Green-Lipped Mussel Extract, available over the counter at the clinic. It is the only nutraceutical registered with the ACVM to reduce mild OA pain. Or ask about Bomazeal™ CatPep™, which can help maintain mobility, improve condition, and enhance general well-being.





# A HEALTHY WEIGHT STARTS WITH HEALTHY HABITS

Being overweight puts your pet at risk of developing weight related health problems. If your pet is overweight, adopting healthy habits can help return your pet to its ideal weight – improving its health and quality of life.

Ask your vet about how to help maintain your pet's ideal weight.



HEALTHY GROWTH

HEALTHY ACTIVITY

HEALTHY SHAPE

HEALTHY PORTIONING