



# CHB VETS LTD

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Veterinary newsletter

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## Grass seed invasion



With the growing conditions ideal for grass, there is plenty around to cause problems. These seeds have the ability to get in through the skin and cause a nasty infection as they track inwards. They also get into eyes, ears and any other opening they can find.

When seeds get into these places they burrow in deeply and can cause ear drum rupture, blindness or a life threatening infection. Removal involves sedation or even a full anaesthetic and surgery,

depending on where the seed ends up and sometimes we never find the seed.

Check paws, ears, and armpits regularly after walks to catch the seeds before they break the skin. A suddenly droopy ear, head shaking, swollen weepy paws or a closed eye can be a sign that a barley grass has gone astray.

These seeds have hundreds of tiny barbs which means once they get in through the skin they can only move forwards and will keep travelling through the body. Finding the seed can be like looking for a needle in a haystack as they have often moved on by the time we get to treat the animal.

Prevention involves avoiding areas where these seeds are found if possible. Unfortunately long grass is widespread in Hawkes Bay and becomes seedy as soon as the weather starts to dry off. Clipping the coat of long haired dogs will help you see the grass seeds before they break the skin and will help keep the dog cooler in the summer.

If you suspect your animal may have a grass seed in it, please bring it in to be checked as soon as possible to help make removal that much easier.





### What is bloat?

Bloat, also known as gastric torsion, and also as gastric dilation volvulus (GDV) syndrome, is a life-threatening disorder that happens when a dog's stomach fills with gas and becomes twisted. It mainly occurs in deep-chested breeds.

### What causes gastric torsion?

We don't really know why bloat happens. It is thought that if there is enough room in the abdomen for gas-filled organs to move, then occasionally they will. This is why the

condition is most common in deep-chested dogs.

### Why does the stomach become gas filled?

Vets believe that there are two likely triggers: anxiety and diet

Either way the dog is now bloated, which is an emergency in itself even if not one requiring surgery. If this inflated stomach twists however, the situation rapidly changes from serious to catastrophic.

### How can I tell if my dog has bloat?

As with any emergency with your dog, if you suspect something is wrong, speak to a vet immediately, as time is crucial.

### Signs to look out for:

- Gut bloating: if you notice a distended stomach, seek advice fast
- Anxiety
- Problems breathing: the expanded stomach prevents the dog from breathing properly
- Dribbling or drooling
- Trying to be sick, without success
- Pain around the stomach



### How is bloat treated in dogs?

Treatment for bloat will depend on how unwell your dog is. Your vet will usually x-ray them to see whether surgery is needed. Animals critical with GDV are high anaesthetic risks, so your vet may use heavy intravenous sedation first to make sure the dog is pain free and lying still.

### How might my vet treat a severely bloated stomach?

If the stomach is an abnormal size your vet may:

- pass a stomach tube through the mouth and down the oesophagus to try to decompress the bloated stomach
- clip a small patch of skin on the left flank and puncture the abdominal wall with a catheter to release excess gas, which immediately decompresses the bloated stomach and restores normal breathing patterns and blood flow

### Why is it important to act fast?

Time is very important in bloat cases because a twisted stomach can reduce blood flow, causing death of the dog's stomach wall (necrosis). This can lead to perforation and fatal peritonitis. Once the stomach has been partially decompressed and intravenous fluids are flowing and breathing is improved, the next step is invasive surgery. Sometimes the vet may reposition the stomach and fasten it to the inner abdominal wall to help prevent GDV happening again.

Patients are usually hospitalised for at least 24 hours as post-operative effects such as toxins released by traumatised tissues can cause major complications including heart attacks, peritonitis and sudden death.

# Pet proof your garden

Make sure your garden is free of these dangers to keep your pet safe and happy.

Thanks to their curious nature, dogs can sniff, lick and chew their way into a case of poisoning or injury in the blink of an eye. And cats aren't immune to mischief! Make sure your garden is free of these dangers to keep your pet safe and happy.

## Common garden dangers:

### Compost

Depending on what you're tossing in the compost bin, it could be hazardous for your pet.

**Keep your compost free of human foods that are toxic to pets.**



### Fertiliser

Blood and bone fertilisers are appealing to dogs; however they can cause vomiting.

**Use fertiliser that is free of toxins, and make sure pets are indoors when you are spraying.**

### Slug, snail and rat bait

Baits are tasty for pets but toxic if ingested.

**Keep snail bait out of reach and in a pet proof container. You can use salt instead or pet friendly baits.**



### Garden tools

Many gardening tools, like rakes, are sharp and can easily cause puncture wounds, then the cuts can cause tetanus.

**Make sure garden tools are put away, or at least not hiding in tall grass.**

## Poisonous plants

Plant poisoning is fairly common for pets. It helps to be aware of which plants in your garden and neighbourhood can be harmful. Remove any toxic plants, or put them out of reach of pets

## What to do if you suspect poisoning

1. Make a note of signs shown
2. Identify the poison
3. Check for opened containers, spilled liquids or known poisonous plants and collect a sample of the possible toxins.
4. Call your vet immediately for advice.



### Signs of poisoning

- Excessive salivation
- Racing or irregular pulse
- Vomiting
- Lethargy
- Rapid breathing
- Cold extremities
- Trembling
- Seizures
- Itchiness

## Cat Bite abscess

A common problem in cats is the so called “Cat Bite Abscess” – occurring all year around but we mostly see it through the summer months when Tomcats wander through the neighbourhood and your pet cat is trying to defend his/her property.

The reason why these cat bites/scratches tend to go nasty is because of their small entry wound – which leaves the bacteria of teeth and claws deep in the tissue – causing painful muscle cellulitis – on the legs - or if the wound closes quickly and there is loose skin - often on head,neck - the enclosed bacteria are situated in the perfect environment to multiply and form an abscess over the next 2-4 days.

Often you may not even realise what the actual problem is – in a lot cases Owners bring their cats in with following problems – which can be caused by cat bites:

- Lameness on one or more legs
- Swollen leg or face
- Doesn't want to be touched in one specific area
- Lethargic, flat
- Stops eating



And as varied the presentation can be – as different can the bite/scratch turn out- which also depends on the stage the cat is being brought in and the location of the wound. These wounds are very painful and treatment is needed to reduce this.

Not all cat bites will lead to an abscess – and not all Cat abscesses are caused by a cat bite – there can be many other causes such as barley grass, foreign body reaction etc.

Overall – bring your cat in if you are concerned in any way! A swollen leg may not seem that threatening at first – but if an infection is missed and leads to a systemic sepsis – your cat may decline to eat and drink and it can become fatal. And as there are many other causes of swollen legs, and lumps and bumps on your cat it is hard for us to give you advice on the phone – so bring your cat in and let us give them a proper check over.

