

COUNTRYSIDE'S PAWPRINT PRESS

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HAPPY NEW YEAR 2019!

Good Petkeeping

TIME TO TOSS THESE ITEMS

As we ring in the new year, it is always a good idea to take a peek at the state of your furry companion's belongings from months or even years past. This includes everything from wearable accessories and toys to food bowls and medications. Here are several recommendations of things to replace in the best interest of your furry friend:

***Dogs:**

1.) Retractable leashes – Many accidents causing tangling and even injuries to people and pets have occurred with retractable leashes. They can also be confusing to your dog because the place where you want him to walk is constantly changing. Dogs wearing retractable leashes may be more apt to wander or bolt a distance away from you while the leash is unlocked, making control during a walk challenging. This is especially important when coming into contact with other animals or people. Ideally, a sturdy 4-6 foot leash is recommended as an alternative.



2.) Plastic bowls – Plastic is easily scratched and difficult to get truly clean, thus trapping bacteria and oil which can create issues on your dog's lips and face. Also, plastic can be chewed into pieces and swallowed. Ceramic and stainless steel feeding bowls are the best way to go for our furry friends.

3.) Smelly or outgrown collars – Since dogs wear their collars most of the time, collars should be kept as clean and fresh as possible. Collars can rub the skin, creating infections and hot spots (irritated areas) around the neck. Plus, a collar that is too small may exacerbate the problem. To avoid these potential issues, it's never a bad idea to treat your dog to a new collar or have multiples to switch out.

4.) Dull nail trimmers – While nail trims for pets aren't the easiest to begin with, dull nail trimmers only make it more challenging and potentially painful for your furry friend. Nail trimmers have a cutting surface that if not kept sharp, will crush or split the nail instead of trimming it cleanly. More successful and quality nail trims will come from sharp nail trimmers.

5.) Broken or chewed up toys – Ideally, toys should be kept in good condition and whole. It is very easy for dogs to swallow pieces of broken or chewed toys, which can block the GI tract potentially causing a life-threatening situation. For the safety of your pup, it's a good idea to discard any ripped up or shredded toys, including all of the small pieces and parts like squeakers or filling material.



*Cats:

1.) Scratched-up litter boxes- Since most litter boxes are made of plastic, tiny scratches in the floor of the box can trap both odor and germs. It's a good idea to check your litter boxes for scratches because it may be time for to spring for a new litter box. A fresh and clean new litter box could also help with enticing your cat to regularly use their litter box.

2.) Plastic bowls- Much like plastic bowls for our canine companions, they are hard to fully clean and scratch easily. Cats can suffer from feline acne, which can possibly be attributed to the greasiness of plastic bowls. As a result, oil buildup and clogged pores on your cat's chin and face can occur. Like dogs, ceramic and stainless steel are the ideal feeding bowls.

3.) Toys in disrepair or covered in real fur- Naturally, damaged toys can become dangerous if pieces are swallowed, potentially causing a blockage in your cat's GI tract. In the same vein, cats are motivated by their strong prey instincts to chase and hunt. Thus, it's not unfathomable for a cat to eat or attempt eating a toy covered in real rabbit or mouse fur.

4.) Dull nail trimmers- Although cats' nails are sharp, they are also quite fragile. Like dogs' nails, dull blades on a trimmer will uncomfortably crush and fracture the nail. This does not make for a pleasant experience. Replacing nail

trimmers or changing the blade regularly will greatly help the whole process.

5.) Expired or inappropriate medications-

Just like us, it's best not to hang on to our expired or medications treating former problems. Medications are prescribed for the specific cat and the specific problem at that time, not necessarily safe or effective for some other ailment or pet. Even though it may seem like the exact same issue at hand, it is still a good idea to ask your veterinarian prior to giving any medication. Expired medications can be very toxic and inappropriate medications are just not worth the risk.



Probiotics: A Balancing Act



The Gastrointestinal Tract is the body's largest immune organ, for humans, dogs, and cats alike, housing incredible amounts of bacteria and microorganisms. As a result, if the belly isn't healthy, it's likely the rest of the body isn't either. Enter probiotics! Probiotics are living microorganisms that reside naturally in the GI Tract, the numbers of which can be increased through supplementation that stimulates the growth of beneficial microorganisms.

Aiding in overall immune functions, probiotics also produce enzymes that help digestion, make B vitamins, and enhance protective barriers of the intestinal wall lining. Generally speaking, probiotics boost good GI bacteria to counteract the bad. Diarrhea, constipation, flatulence, and sometimes vomiting can be helped with the use of probiotics.

However, before adding probiotics to your furry companion's plate, it is important to speak with your veterinarian and consider the following:

1.) **Brands:** The probiotic supplementation market can sometimes lack great quality control and the standardization in products that one would expect. For example, a shortcoming among different brands can be misleading label descriptions. Since probiotics come in a variety of forms (oral supplements, capsules, chews, and powdered packages), continuity among all products on the market can be difficult to achieve and regulate. Efficacy and reliability are two major factors in selecting the right probiotic for your pet. **VETERINARIAN RECOMMENDATIONS ARE THE BEST OPTION!** At Countryside Animal Hospital, we both recommend and carry FortiFlora (shown above).

2.) **Using with Antibiotics:** Essentially, antibiotics can cause an overgrowth of bacteria, which disrupts the natural flora (a complex community of

microorganisms) in the GI Tract. Many good bacteria can get killed in the process. Thus, the balance between healthy and potentially harmful bacteria may become upset, causing diarrhea, for example. The good microorganisms may aid in promoting the healthy, desired balance during your pet's treatment of antibiotics.

3.) **Yogurt:** While it is true yogurt is a probiotic helping maintain proper intestinal organisms and isn't toxic to animals, some pets are **lactose intolerant** and need to avoid dairy products altogether. In this case, the reverse effect could occur and an upset GI system may result. Yogurt is a great source of calcium, protein, and potassium, yet is primarily created for human consumption which often means sugars and additives. These are just a couple examples of ingredients that are not ideal for our pets' diets. **PLAIN YOGURT** is the safest option if your pet does well with lactose. As always, moderation is key!

Lactose Intolerance in Dogs and Cats

Although puppies and kittens start out by drinking their mother's milk, many adult dogs and cats struggle with dairy. Some animals do not have a sufficient amount of *lactase*, the enzyme necessary for the digestion of dairy products. In these cases, the undigested lactose moves to the large intestines, where it ferments and can cause flatulence and diarrhea. Naturally, the higher the lactose content in food, the greater the potential response can be for your pet. For example, many kinds of cheese and yogurt contain considerably less lactose than milk.

Many animals do just fine without the use of probiotics, but these supplements may prove very beneficial to your pet's ailment in conjunction with your veterinarian's treatment plan. Currently, probiotics show great promise for disease prevention and treatment in the future.

Keep in mind also, veterinarians generally recommend giving probiotics that are **formulated specifically for the canine and feline digestive systems**. If you elect to give your pet probiotics, finding the best balance for your pet's individual needs is a very important step. Feel free to ask us about probiotics for your furry companion!

Countryside's Superstar

SUNNY JIM



Meet Sunny Jim! This spunky kitten has truly melted the hearts of the Countryside staff! This cutie pie first came to Countryside at 10 weeks old and 2.6 lbs. in the beginning of July 2018 for a routine wellness exam and boosters.

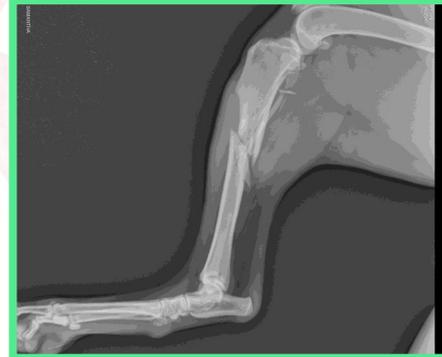
At the end of August 2018, Mr. Sunny Jim returned for his next kitten exam and boosters, however with a new concern. Sunny Jim was favoring his left hind leg. He had recently knocked over a ladder at home and his owner, Michelle, was concerned the ladder may have gotten his paw or leg when it fell.

After performing a series of x-rays to check his leg, Dr. Stacy Latelle discovered Sunny Jim had a mid-tibia fracture. For this tough little rascal, that meant he'd have to wear a splint large enough to cover both above and below the break in the leg for proper healing. As a result, his bandaged leg would be much bulkier than his other legs for the time being and take some getting used to. The splint needed to be changed weekly for at least 4 weeks.



Unfortunately crate restriction at home was a must. No fun for a 4 month old, 5 lb. rambunctious kitten who just wants to play!

As with most bandages and splints, they need to be replaced if they get wet or slip off. Sunny Jim



EXAMPLE OF A TIBIA FRACTURE IN CATS AND DOGS

kept his family on their toes during this time with appointments and just a few extra bandage changes. On one occasion, Sunny Jim got his leg caught in a baby gate and the splint slipped off. Another time, his owners came home to his crafty little self in his crate with the bandage nicely removed.

Sunny Jim's kitty housemate also became interested in this giant leg of Sunny Jim's from time to time while playing.

RELIEF!! A chatty and snuggly Sunny Jim proudly displayed his leg for the first time on October 5th! He was able to put weight on his leg and strut around. What a happy camper! According to his owners, Sunny Jim is doing great and getting back to normal! Now 5 months old and almost 7 lbs., Sunny Jim is back to adventuring and exploring the world with his "new" leg!



CONGRATULATIONS BRAVE BOY!!

SMILE!



February Is National Pet Dental Health Month

Ready, set, BRUSH! Although caring for your furry companion's oral hygiene is a concern all year long, just like us, pets need regular dental care to feel their best and enjoy a much happier mouth. Fresh breath and pearly whites are always a bonus too!

Plaque, tartar, gingivitis, cavities and root abscesses can all cause poor dental health. Oral disease can lead to serious consequences for pets, including infection, severe pain and organ damage while putting a strain on the animal's immune system. With regular oral health maintenance at home such as brushing, dental exams and professional dental cleanings performed by a veterinarian, many of these problems can be avoided and possibly eliminate the need for tooth extractions. There are also supplemental products such as **DuoClenz dental chews**, **Healthy Mouth water additive** and **Royal Canin Dental diet** formulated specifically to prevent tartar buildup for our pets.

Tips for brushing your pet's teeth:

***ANIMAL TOOTHPASTE ONLY!!**

A little goes a long way.

*You can use a small human toothbrush, an animal toothbrush, a finger brush or wrap a piece of gauze around your finger.

*Focus on the gumline and larger teeth.

*Even if some teeth go without a brushing, just getting animal toothpaste in their mouth helps.

***Common signs it may be time for an oral checkup with your veterinarian include:**

- Bad breath
- Red swollen gums
- Yellow-brown tartar along the gumline
- Oral bleeding
- Pain when gums and mouth are touched
- Frequent pawing at their face and mouth
- Excessive drooling

It is important to note that a painful mouth may cause a change in your pet's eating behavior or routine as well. Your pet can experience inappetence or an unwillingness to eat hard foods due to oral soreness.



Sometimes the unexpected happens too! Naturally, both dogs and cats are susceptible to tooth fractures and injuries. Teeth can be broken by chewing on a hard object or enduring blunt force trauma to the face, for example. Inflammation and infection are two common complications associated with fractured teeth.

If your pet has a fractured tooth, your veterinarian may recommend taking x-rays of your furry friend's mouth to review the full extent of the fracture and determine how to proceed. In addition to the dental care involved with fractured teeth, assessing your pet's overall oral health with a full examination is suggested in case there are other issues at hand.



BEFORE



AFTER CLEANING