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May 2010 Newsletter



Dear friends,

Welcome to our May Newsletter from www.bestdoggietips.com.

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We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

"Dogs laugh, but they laugh with their tails".

--Max Eastman

Recipe - Pumpkin & Cheese Muffins

I warn you now – you'll probably be fighting the dog for these – they're tasty!!!

Ingredients

1 cup of steamed and mashed pumpkin
2 cups wholemeal self raising flour (if plain flour only, add a teaspoon of bicarb of soda)
1 cup of grated cheese
½ cup milk
2 eggs
100g (3.5 oz) melted butter or margarine

To Make

Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Line muffin pans with paper cases (these are quite sticky when warm and make it easier to remove the muffins when cooked).

Place the mashed pumpkin in a bowl and add the eggs. Mix thoroughly with a fork. Now whisk in the milk and melted butter or margarine.

Place the flour in a separate bowl, and slowly add the wet ingredients, mixing gently. Add the grated cheese and mix through.

Spoon the mixture into the muffin pans and cook for 30 minutes or until cooked through. Allow to cool before removing paper cases.

Makes 6 extra large or 15 regular size muffins.

Note: as this contains butter or margarine – feed sparingly as special treats.

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Are Bones Unsafe for Your Dog?

The US Federal Drug Administration recently released a report advising people not to feed bones to their dog. The report makes no distinction between cooked bones (which are **not** good for your dog) and raw bones (which many vets and nutritionists say **are** good for your dog). Below is the FDA report:

The idea that it's natural for dogs to chew on bones is a popular one. However, it's a dangerous practice and can cause serious injury to your pet.

"Some people think it's safe to give dogs large bones, like those from a ham or a roast," says Carmela Stamper, D.V.M., a veterinarian in the Center for Veterinary Medicine at the Food and Drug Administration. "Bones are unsafe no matter what their size. Giving your dog a bone may make your pet a candidate for a trip to your veterinarian's office later, possible emergency surgery, or even death."

"Make sure you throw out bones from your own meals in a way that your dog can't get to them," adds Stamper, who suggests taking the trash out right away or putting the bones up high and out of your dog's reach until you have a chance to dispose of them. "And pay attention to where your dog's nose is when you walk him around the neighbourhood—steer him away from any objects lying in the grass."

Here are 10 reasons why it's a bad idea to give your dog a bone:

1. Broken teeth. This may call for expensive veterinary dentistry.
2. Mouth or tongue injuries. These can be very bloody and messy and may require a trip to see your veterinarian.
3. Bone gets looped around your dog's lower jaw. This can be frightening or painful for your dog and potentially costly to you, as it usually means a trip to see your veterinarian.
4. Bone gets stuck in oesophagus, the tube that food travels through to reach the stomach. Your dog may gag, trying to bring the bone back up, and will need to see your veterinarian.
5. Bone gets stuck in windpipe. This may happen if your dog accidentally inhales a small enough piece of bone. This is an emergency because your dog will have trouble breathing. Get your pet to your veterinarian immediately!
6. Bone gets stuck in stomach. It went down just fine, but the bone may be too big to pass out of the stomach and into the intestines. Depending on the bone's size, your dog may need surgery or upper gastrointestinal endoscopy, a procedure in which your veterinarian uses a long tube with a built-in camera and grabbing tools to try to remove the stuck bone from the stomach.
7. Bone gets stuck in intestines and causes a blockage. It may be time for surgery.
8. Constipation due to bone fragments. Your dog may have a hard time passing the bone fragments because they're very sharp and they scrape the inside of the large intestine or

rectum as they move along. This causes severe pain and may require a visit to your veterinarian.

9. Severe bleeding from the rectum. This is very messy and can be dangerous. It's time for a trip to see your veterinarian.
10. Peritonitis. This nasty, difficult-to-treat bacterial infection of the abdomen is caused when bone fragments poke holes in your dog's stomach or intestines. Your dog needs an emergency visit to your veterinarian because peritonitis can kill your dog.

"Talk with your veterinarian about alternatives to giving bones to your dog," says Stamper. "There are many bone-like products made with materials that are safe for dogs to chew on."

"Always supervise your dog with any chew product, especially one your dog hasn't had before," adds Stamper. "And always, if your dog 'just isn't acting right', call your veterinarian right away!"

BestDoggieTips Comment

In our July 2008 newsletter (available on the website) we had an article by Dr Richard Pitcairn, which recommended feeding dogs (and cats) a Healthy Diet of raw natural foods. And here at Best Doggie Tips we have fed our animals, both cats and dogs, raw bones as part of a natural healthy diet. Have we just been lucky? I suggest you read both articles, and discuss with your vet if you have any concerns.

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Canines Helping Cardiac Patients Recover

Some recovering heart patients are getting a new "leash" on life as they gain strength by walking dogs housed at a local shelter.

The innovative program, called Cardiac Friends, is a partnership between ProHealth Care (PHC) and Humane Animal Welfare Society (HAWS) of Waukesha County, in Wisconsin.

"It's a great way to help the dogs and also help our patients too," said Jennifer Ehrhardt, a clinical exercise physiologist at PHC's Waukesha Memorial Hospital.

Motivating patients to get active and stay active can be challenging, she noted. But the year-old Cardiac Friends program gives animal aficionados recovering from open heart surgery, stent implantation or angioplasty a compelling reason to work out.

"We want to get people up and exercising as quickly as they can after they have some sort of heart procedure, if it's OK'd by their doctor," said Ehrhardt.

Exercise not only reduces the risk of another cardiac event but lowers cholesterol levels, decreases blood pressure and wards off depression -- a funk many people fall into when recovering from heart surgery, she said.

Any kind of aerobic activity a patient does is beneficial to their health, Ehrhardt added. "If people have treadmills or bikes in their house we encourage them to use that," she said. "But walking is a great way for people to get that activity in, and it doesn't cost them anything."

A handful of cardiac patients -- so far, all men in their 70s -- visit HAWS three times a week for an hour or more, taking dogs outside for some fresh air and fun.

Fenced-in areas on the property allow volunteers to play fetch with their canine charges, or they can take a stroll on a dirt walking path that zigzags through an open meadow adjacent to the shelter.

"We all enjoy the dogs and I think the dogs enjoy us," said Charles Christenson, a retired corporate pilot who had open heart surgery three years ago.

Christenson said he has a treadmill at home but never uses it. Instead he prefers working out at the hospital's gym and spending time at the shelter interacting with its canine residents.

"When you [first] take these little rascals out, they're scared," he said. "But if you talk nice to them, and treat them nice, pretty soon they're your best buddies."

Christenson and the other men in the program are some of shelter coordinator Sara Falk's favorite volunteers because they spend so much time with the dogs.

"The Cardiac Friends have been a huge bonus to [our dog-walking] program in that most of them have been so consistent and they are taking longer walks than a lot of the other walkers because they have fitness in mind," said Falk.

The patients aren't the only ones benefiting. Getting dogs out of their kennels daily helps keep them physically and mentally sound while waiting for new homes, she said.

Interest in Cardiac Friends is beginning to create a buzz. Susan Kidder, an animal rescue advocate and founder of the program, has received inquiries from shelters in Arizona and California. And this fall, PHC's Ehrhardt will give a presentation about the program at a national health care conference in hopes that other hospitals will start similar efforts.

"It's a great fit for people who can't have a pet because of their living situation," explained Kidder, adding that the program is about much more than just helping cardiac patients stay active. "It's about helping. It's about being needed. It's about making a difference."

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How Dog Slobber is Helping Cure Cancer

Fido's wet licks might hold more than love. They could provide the DNA keys to findings new treatments for rare cancers and other diseases in both dogs and human patients.

The Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) and the Van Andel Research Institute (VARI) have created the Canine Hereditary Cancer Consortium, a program designed to study naturally occurring cancers in dogs to better understand why both pets and people get sick.

"Rare diseases in humans also show up in dogs. By studying the DNA of canines, we expect to more quickly discover the genomic causes of disease and more quickly find ways to better treat dogs, and people," said Dr. Mark Neff, director of the new TGen-VARI Program for Canine Health and Performance.

Using voluntarily donated saliva, blood and tumour samples from many breeds of privately owned dogs, researchers hope that by studying canine cancers they can pinpoint the causes of human cancers. The goal is to translate that knowledge into therapeutics useful to both veterinarians and clinical oncologists.

No dogs will be harmed and many should be helped. Nearly half of all dogs 10 years and older die from cancer. Dogs will be treated as patients at veterinary clinics nationwide. The research is endorsed by the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation and by the Morris Animal Foundation. Samples will be gathered with the consent of owners and veterinarians.

In addition to cancer, TGen and VARI eventually will study neurological and behavioural disorders as well as hearing loss and other debilitating conditions in dogs that could relate to people.

The cancer research will be supported by the recent approval of a 2-year, \$4.3 million federal stimulus grant to the Canine Hereditary Cancer Consortium, which includes TGen and VARI in partnership with the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the University of Pennsylvania, Michigan State University, dog breeders and veterinarians.

The public-private program also is funded by \$1 million in grants from businesses involved in pet care - \$500,000 from PetSmart, and \$500,000 from Hill's Pet Nutrition.

"We're proud to be part of such an innovative approach that fully supports our mission of providing total lifetime care for pets, and one that will offer hope to people and dogs who are suffering from these illnesses," said Phil Francis, Executive Chairman of PetSmart.

Neil Thompson, President and CEO of Hill's Pet Nutrition, said support of cancer research in dogs "goes hand-in-hand with the company's mission of enriching and lengthening the special relationships between people and their pets. Maintaining the health of dogs goes beyond good nutrition. We support this research and the hope it provides, which will ultimately benefit dogs and dog lovers everywhere".

Through the federal grant, researchers also will draw on experts at the National Cancer Institute's Pediatric and Genetics Branches and Comparative Oncology program, including Dr. Paul Meltzer, Chief of NCI's Genetics Branch. Dr. Meltzer and his colleagues will use gene expression profiling to identify genes involved in osteosarcoma to determine if the same genetic markers, alterations, and targets found are also found in human osteosarcoma, and in dogs. Comparing data between humans and dogs has the potential to significantly advance understanding of this cancer.

Dr. Meltzer indicated he is hopeful the study will pinpoint the genetic causes of osteosarcoma, as well as identify individualized treatment options.

The program's "bark-to-bedside" approach represents an unprecedented alliance of veterinarians, basic scientists and private practice clinicians, non-profit research institutes, universities, industry and government. The project also will involve TGen Drug Development Services (TD2), a subsidiary of TGen, which will seek partnerships with pharmaceutical companies.

Why study dogs?

Dr. Jeffrey Trent, President and Research Director for TGen and VARI, said that it is difficult to study rare cancers in people because there is insufficient data. But by studying similar types of cancers more prevalent in dogs, researchers should be better able to help those who currently have little hope.

"There's no question that you are doubly-cursed if you get a rare cancer. You may have a very difficult disease course, and you have very little information about how to guide the physician, and what treatment would be best. For some of these rare cancers, we don't even have consensus on what the best treatments might be," Dr. Trent said.

For example, children with osteosarcoma, a rare bone cancer, still often results in the loss of limbs.

"Many rare human cancers are very common in dogs. We're excited about the idea that we may be able to identify areas that could be mutually beneficial — that could help the canine patient and can help the human patient with these various cancers," Dr. Trent said. "The unique and exciting aspect of this is that it's a rare occasion where industry, academia, government and the private sector are joined together in a common goal of obtaining information to advance both pet and human health."

Study will investigate many diseases

The study is focused on sarcomas, those cancers that originate in the connective tissues such as bone, cartilage and fat.

"The sad reality of sarcoma, because it is such a rare human disease, is that very few scientists take the time to do any research on it because it is not possible to get the number of samples you need for those kinds of studies," said Dr. Nick Duesbery, co-director of VARI's Center for Comparative Biology and Genetics.

The project began with the study of hemangiosarcoma — angiosarcoma in humans — a cancer for which there are currently no effective treatments. These tumors start in the lining of blood vessels and in the spleen. They are highly malignant and can be found most anywhere in the body.

Although rare in humans, these tumors are relatively common in certain breeds of dogs, such as Golden Retrievers, German Shepherds and Clumber Spaniels. After as many as 150 years of breeding, there are few genetic variations in these dogs, making it easier to identify the few genetic differences that can affect cancer susceptibility and response to drugs.

Study initiated by VARI

With the support of the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation and the Clumber Spaniel Health Foundation, VARI in February 2008 began to study hemangiosarcoma in Clumber Spaniels. Researchers are using new genetic technologies developed at VARI to create genetic screens, diagnostic tests and treatments for hereditary canine cancers. VARI is analyzing the DNA and RNA of Clumber Spaniels, looking for genetic patterns that eventually could indicate if a particular dog is a carrier of a defective gene that could cause cancer.

With the addition of TGen and federal and private funding, the program is expanding to study four other cancers among as many as 20 breeds of dogs.

In the first two years, the project also will study osteosarcoma, oral melanoma, malignant histiocytosis, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Information from these studies will be used to develop diagnostic DNA tests for larger groups of dogs, enabling researchers to look for genes that influence cancer.

“We’ve got an incredible advantage here with the dogs, because these diseases are much more common in dogs than they are in humans. We can get some insight into the biology. Our strongest hope and desire is that we can translate that into therapies we can use for people,” Dr. Duesbery said.

Study compared to the Human Genome Project

Dr. Trent drew a parallel between the Human Genome Project and the new study of dogs, predicting that new and useful information will soon become available to aid human health.

“The Human Genome Project provided a new playbook for biomedical research and patient care,” Dr. Trent said. “As we begin to catalog the dog genome, we have the opportunity to really understand a number of the problems that afflict the dog, but also a number of possible health solutions for people.”

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Cats & Dogs are a Health Hazard!

Dogs and cats are a lurking household danger, according to a new report showing that pets cause all kinds of injuries related to falls. The pet trips — estimated at more than 80,000 a year — occurred while people were chasing after them, stepping over them, breaking up a fight, and other scenarios.

Dogs are the biggest hazard. Those injured noted various circumstances for their injuries, including: "tripped while crossing the street with their dog," "fainted while training her dog," and "walking dog and fell up steps," among other circumstances.

The researchers don't suggest you send your four-legged resident packing.

"Certainly pets are wonderful and have many benefits, so we're not saying anything about not having pets," said study researcher Judy Stevens, a senior epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

Dogs More Dangerous

The results come from a nationally representative sample of emergency department visits to about 60 hospitals from Jan. 1, 2001 to Dec. 31, 2006, finding some 7,456 records were linked to pet-related falls.

From this, the researchers calculated the national estimate would reach 86,629 for fall injuries associated with cats and dogs in the United States in 2006. Though an alarming number, it's just 1 percent of the 8 million fall injuries treated in emergency departments, Stevens said.

Even though cats are known to follow at your heels, or right beneath your feet, dogs were involved in nearly 7.5 times as many injuries as cats.

That's "mainly because dogs are bigger and stronger, and we do see children and women are most likely to be involved in a fall with a dog," Stevens said, adding that women and children are on average smaller and weaker and so more likely to get pushed or pulled.

In fact, gals were more than twice as likely as men to have pet-related fall injuries. And children and the middle-age group were the most likely to end up in the ER after an accident with the fur balls.

Dogs vs. Cats

More than a quarter of dog-related injuries happened while people were walking the pet, with the most frequent circumstances falling or tripping over one's dog (31 percent of cases) and being pushed or pulled by the four-legged friends.

As cats are mostly homebodies, it's no surprise most falls involving the bossy felines (nearly 86 percent) occurred in or around the house. Nearly 12 percent of these injuries happened while people were chasing cats.

In 2006, about 43 million U.S. households owned dogs and 37.5 million households had cats. Nearly 64 percent of households with pets had more than one pet, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association.

With so many furry residents, falls are bound to happen. But Stevens offers tips for reducing the risk:

- 📄 Just being aware that pets can be a fall hazard is a step in the right direction.
- 📄 For dogs, obedience training is important and can minimize behaviours such as pushing and pulling.
- 📄 Be aware of pet-related hazards, such as toys and food bowls, which can also cause falls.

The findings are detailed in the current issue of the Journal of Safety Research

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Fun Stuff - A Rescuers Answering Machine

Hello: You have reached (*insert name*), Tender Hearts Rescue. Due to the high volume of calls we have been receiving, please listen closely to the following options and choose the one that best describes you or your situation:

Press 1 if you have a 10-year-old dog and your 15-year-old son has suddenly become allergic and you need to find the dog a new home right away.

Press 2 if you are moving today and need to immediately place your 150 pound, 8-year-old dog.

Press 3 if you have three dogs, had a baby and want to get rid of your dogs because you are the only person in the world to have a baby and dogs at the same time.

Press 4 if you just got a brand new puppy and your old dog is having problems adjusting so you want to get rid of the old one right away.

Press 5 if your little puppy has grown up and is no longer small and cute and you want to trade it in for a new model.

Press 6 if you want an unpaid volunteer to come to your home TODAY and pick up the dog you no longer want.

Press 7 if you have been feeding and caring for a "stray" for the last three years, are moving and suddenly determine it's not your dog.

Press 8 if your dog is sick and needs a vet but you need the money for your vacation.

Press 9 if you are elderly and want to adopt a cute puppy who is not active and is going to outlive you.

Press 10 if your relative has died and you don't want to care for their elderly dog because it doesn't fit your lifestyle.

Press 11 if you think we are veterinarians and want free medical advice.

Press 12 if you know we are a rescue organization but want to save money and have us give you free, untrained medical advice anyway.

Press 13 if you make \$200,000 a year but still want us to pay to spay the "stray" in your yard (house).

Press 14 if you are calling at 6 a.m. to make sure you wake me up before I have to go to work so you can drop a dog off on your way to work.

Press 15 to leave us an anonymous garbled message, letting us know you have left a dog in our yard in the middle of January, which is in fact, better than just leaving the dog with no message.

Press 16 if you are going to get angry because we are not going to take your dog that you have had for fifteen years, because it is not our responsibility.

Press 17 if you are going to threaten to take your ten year old dog to be euthanized because I won't take it.

Press 18 if you're going to get angry because the volunteers had the audacity to go on vacation and leave the dogs in care of a trusted volunteer who is not authorized to take your personal pet.

Press 19 if you want one of our PERFECTLY trained, housebroken, kid and cat friendly purebred dogs that we have an abundance of.

Press 20 if you want us to take your dog that has a slight aggression problem, i.e. has only bitten a few people and killed your neighbour's cats.

Press 21 if you have already called once and been told we don't take personal surrenders but thought you would get a different person this time with a different answer.

Press 22 if you want us to use space that would go to a stray to board your personal dog while you are on vacation, free of charge, of course.

Press 23 if it is Christmas Eve or Easter morning and you want me to deliver an eight week old puppy to your house by 6:30 am before your kids wake up.

Press 24 if you have bought your children a duckling, chick or baby bunny for Easter and it is now Christmas and no longer cute.

Press 25 if you want us to take your female dog who has already had ten litters, but we can't spay her because she is pregnant again and it is against your religion.

Press 26 if you're lying to make one of our younger volunteers feel bad and take your personal pet off your hands.

Press 27 if your cat is biting and not using the litter box because it is declawed, but you are not willing to accept the responsibility that the cat's behaviour is altered because of your nice furniture.

Press 28 if your two year old male dog is marking all over your house but you just haven't gotten around to having him neutered.

Press 29 if you previously had an outdoor only dog and are calling because she is suddenly pregnant.

Press 30 if you have done "everything" to housebreak your dog and have had no success but you don't want to crate the dog because it is cruel.

Press 31 if you didn't listen to the message asking for an evening phone number and you left your work number when all volunteers are also working and you are angry because no one called you back.

Press 32 if you need a puppy immediately and cannot wait because today is your daughter's birthday and you forgot when she was born.

Press 33 if your dog's coat doesn't match your new furniture and you need a different colour or breed.

Press 34 if your new love doesn't like your dog and you are too stupid to get rid of the new friend (who will dump you in the next month anyway) instead of the dog.

Press 35 if you went through all these 'options' and didn't hear enough. This press will connect you to the sounds of tears being shed by one of our volunteers who is holding a discarded old dog while the vet mercifully frees him from the grief of missing his family.

~Author Unknown, but much appreciated

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The Weird & the Wonderful

Seeing my dog the day I got back from Afghanistan

BestDoggieTips received this YouTube video from a friend, and it brought a smile to our faces! It is a video of a returning US serviceman greeting his dog – heartwarming!!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysKAVyXiOJ4>

The Dog & The Piglet

A giant farm dog and a tiny piglet cuddle up as if they were family after the baby runt was dismissed by its own mother.

Surrogate mum Katjinga, an eight-year-old Rhodesian Ridgeback, took on motherly duties for grunter Paulinchen - a tiny pot-bellied pig - and seems to be taking the adoption in her stride.

Lonely Paulinchen was luckily discovered moments from death and placed in the care of the dog who gladly accepted it as one of her own. Thankfully for the two-week old mini porker, Katjinga fell in love with her at first sight and saved her bacon.



And the unlikely relationship has made the wrinkly piggy a genuine sausage dog.

In these adorable images, Paulinchen can even be seen trying to suckle from her gigantic new mum.

The two animals live together on a huge 20-acre farm in Hoerstel, Germany, where Katjinga's owners Roland Adam, 54, and his wife Edit, 44, a bank worker, keep a pair of breeding Vietnamese pigs.

Property developer Roland found the weak and struggling piglet after she was abandoned by the rest of her family one evening after she was born.

He said: "The pigs run wild on our land and the sow had given birth to a litter of five in our forest.

"I found Paulinchen all alone and when I lifted her up she was really cold.

"I felt sure some local foxes would have taken the little pig that very night so I took it into my house and gave her to Katjinga.



"She had just finished with a litter of her own, who are now 10 months, so I thought there was a chance she might take on the duties of looking after her.



"Katjinga is the best mother you can imagine. She immediately fell in love with the piggy. Straight away she started to clean it like it was one of her own puppies.

"Days later she started lactating again and giving milk for the piggy. She obviously regards it now as her own baby."

Mum of the year? Quite possibly.

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