

Pet Talk Tuesdays – 3/2/2021

Nick Rusch:

It's time for Pet Talk Tuesday, joining us via the telephone, our friend, Dr. Marty Greer from Veterinary Village in Lomira. Doctor, how are you doing this morning?

Dr. Marty Greer:

I'm doing great, thank you.

Nick Rusch:

Super. Well, here we are it is starting to be spring and we know we can definitely see the difference in our pets. They're excited to be outside a little more than usual. Well, it's true. I mean, instead of a couple of weeks ago here, when it was so deathly cold, you take a quick turn around the block with the doggie, now you can actually get out on the trail and both of you can enjoy it a little bit better.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Exactly. I mean, my dog wouldn't even put four feet down a few weeks ago, so it is quite a blessing to have the weather good. It's really hard to do business when you're standing on two legs.

Nick Rusch:

I would guess, yeah.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah. We actually do see pets for that. We actually have people that come in and think there's something wrong with their pet because of that kind of activity. That they aren't having a stool, so they think they're constipated, I mean, we see things like that. And you can understand why, because it's very disconcerting to your dog and to you.

Nick Rusch:

Absolutely. I think dog and owner might need some mental counseling along with the...

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah, very likely.

Nick Rusch:

Yeah, this is looking kind of weird.

Dr. Marty Greer:

So it's much better now.

Nick Rusch:

Yeah. So this time of year, what are we looking out for, Doctor?

Dr. Marty Greer:

Well, there's a couple of things. We need to talk about Easter, but first we need to talk about not overdoing it with your pet. Because now that the weather is nice, we think we should go out and go on a five mile hike with them and if they've been sedentary for part of the winter and you have too, let's face it, we probably haven't gotten ourselves as fit as we should be, and then you go out for a very long hike that can leave both of you pretty uncomfortable, pretty sore.

So make sure that you get your pet back into condition gradually. Make sure that the weather is really as nice as you think it is, because the time that we see the most frostbite on feet is when it's slushy. So if it's that freeze thaw, freeze thaw stuff, that's when we actually see damage to foot pads from that temperature where it's right at freezing and the ice sticks to their feet. So if it's a dry sidewalk, you're okay, but if it's a slushy sidewalk or a slushy trail, you want to be really careful that you don't end up with a frostbite issue on your hands.

Nick Rusch:

And this is exactly where we're at right now, too. Today, I mean, you wake up this morning, we're at 24 degrees now, we're going to be at 40 later. So that's exactly the cycle we're in for these next few days here, certainly.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Right. So we want to be really careful that we have our pets feet protected. And then of course, like I said, get back into the activities more gradually. Don't just go out and say, "Okay, it's really nice, I'm going to go to Hobb's Woods this weekend and go on a really long walk with the dog.", because you'll both regret it. Now, if you have an older dog and they have arthritis medication, maybe you haven't used it at a full dose. Maybe you haven't used it regularly during the winter time because there hasn't been that much activity, but this is the time to start it back up, if you are going to start going out and getting fit again.

So make sure that you're giving medication as prescribed and remember, don't give medication from one pet to another pet, because each pet has their own dose and their own medical needs. So don't go switching it out and you cannot use ibuprofen, or Tylenol, or Aleve on dogs or cats. So don't go rogue and decide that you're going to play Dr. Harriet from TV, make sure that you are only using medication that is validated for veterinary use.

Nick Rusch:

That's excellent advice. I think people sometimes forget about those things and just as humans shouldn't share a medication, your doggies shouldn't either.

Dr. Marty Greer:

That's right. That's right, as tempting as it is, you need to get veterinary intervention on that. And sometimes we need to do blood work to make sure that our pet's liver and kidney function will be able to support the medications. So we just want to be really careful because we can see some really bad side effects from giving the wrong medication or the wrong dose to a patient, even a healthy patient, or especially a patient that has some underlying medical problems. So be really careful what you're using and talk to your veterinarian before you go off on these long walks.

Now a lot of veterinary clinics now are doing curbside service and they're also doing telemedicine. And the telemedicine is really pretty cool. There is an affiliated fee with that for most veterinary clinics if you call and want to do a video consultation with your pet, they can do it through a number of different apps that we see available now for veterinarians. It's really slick, so we can video chat with you. We can see your pet in their environment and how they're moving and looking and acting. And we can't feel them, but we can do a lot of other things with them.

So, if it makes you uncomfortable or if your veterinarian doesn't have an opening for you to come in with your pet, see if you can do a telemedicine consult with them. We're certainly doing those at our practice, through either Airvet or Tele Tails. So there are multiple companies that are doing it and it's easier to use than things like FaceTime because then you don't have to both have an iPhone. You can do it on an Android or an iPhone. But do remember if you video chat, that it is video and I did four on a Sunday morning with some clients, two of them apparently didn't get the memo because I saw them putting on pants. No kidding. Fortunately, we were all female so it wasn't quite as critical, but it is video chatting and it doesn't mean we can just see your dog or your cat, we can see you, so put on your clothes first.

Nick Rusch:

And let's face it, that show really should be extra. I mean, realistically. Right?

Dr. Marty Greer:

We add on a surcharge for that.

Nick Rusch:

Yeah. That show should be extra. I mean, that shouldn't be included in the cover, that show...

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah. I didn't think about that, but that's a great point. So yeah, those are the things that we want to be attentive to. And then we have the upcoming fabulous holiday of Easter.

Nick Rusch:

I know it's one of your favorites, because there's so many things we need to be concerned about. Everything from the Easter grass, to the ham bone, to chocolate. I mean, there's just so many dangers that pop-up with this one.

Dr. Marty Greer:

And don't forget the Easter lily. So Easter lilies are toxic to cats, the stamens, the petals, the leaves, and for some reason, cats think that they should eat them. So as soon as you get an Easter lily, make sure that you put it in a place that your cat can't get to it. They don't seem to be as toxic for dogs, but we wouldn't encourage a dog to go chomping through the new Easter Lily. So be really aware that lilies in general, but in particular, Easter lilies are highly toxic to cats, they can cause kidney failure fairly quickly. So if you do find chew marks on some of those leaves, petals, or stamens, contact poison control and contact your veterinarian for assistance on how to manage that case.

Nick Rusch:

I hadn't thought of the Easter lily, but I'm glad you brought it up. Let's talk about the Easter grass a little bit. Now I saw that a manufacturer, I don't remember who it is now, but somebody is going to make their Easter grass smell like marshmallows. Maybe it's the folks at peeps, I don't know. And-

Dr. Marty Greer:

That it would be a bad thing.

Nick Rusch:

This is bad.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Because believe it or not, cats like the flavor of marshmallows. So when we compound medication for cats, we make it marshmallow flavored, so that would be a really bad thing. You need to have something that's not going to be causing an obstruction. So Easter grass, similar to tinsel on your Christmas tree, will cause intestinal obstructions and serious damage that requires intervention surgically for cats that eat any quantity of it. If they eat one strand, maybe you're okay, but cats don't do that. They start to eat and then they just keep going.

So put the Easter baskets where your cats and dogs can't get to them and don't use Easter grass. And then the Easter candy, not only just is there a concern with chocolate, but there's also a concern with the wrappers. So I've had dogs eat an entire two pound basket of Easter candy, wrappers and all. And although the chocolate can be toxic, the more dark chocolate it is, the more likely it is to be toxic. The bigger concern, in my mind, are the foil wrappers. The paper wrappers aren't too bad, but most of them have some kind of foil or plastic that's non-digestible and that will cause bowel obstructions in, it's mostly dogs that do that. Usually retrievers, labs, goldens, they get their mouth into the Easter basket and they're like, "Woo hoo." And they eat it as fast as they possibly can take it down.

Nick Rusch:

Yeah and they're not going to stop until they get it all. That's that's just how that works there, they're going to keep going until there's nothing left.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah. So in those cases, we often need to have the dogs come to the practice to make them vomit. And then we may or may not need to treat for chocolate toxicity, depending on the kind of chocolate. If it's milk chocolate with peanut butter, it's probably not so bad. If it's dark chocolate, then it is more serious. And of course the smaller, the pet, the more serious it is for the volume, because they are a smaller. Just like someone that drinks alcohol, the smaller you are, the less you can drink without having a toxicity. So you have to be really careful with all size dogs and cats, but especially as little dogs. They don't have any judgment, they're like your kids, they get their hands on the Easter basket and they're just going to eat until they can't anymore.

Nick Rusch:

Let's talk about the ham bone a little bit and, and things like that. I mean, I'm guessing that most people, in this day and age, what we're dealing with, are not going to have the huge gathering, but nonetheless, you've got all those things going on as well. I mean, you're doing the cooking and believe me the dog, if you're making it, he can smell it.

Dr. Marty Greer:

They know loud and clear that there's some really tasty meat being cooked in the kitchen. So yes, we want to be really careful with ham bones, with any kind of bone really, if you decide to have poultry instead, you still need to be cautious of that. But the ham bones are great, big bones and yes, they're delicious and yes, it's fun to watch the dog chew on it until the dog either eats the whole thing and swallows a great big piece whole, or they eat so much again, that it causes a bowel obstruction. So this is where you want to have your veterinarian on speed dial. You want to know where the can of spinach is. If they eat little bits of bone, little shards, you can probably get by with feeding canned spinach and have it pass through. But if they eat a gigantic piece of bone and it's too large for them to pass, then you're going to end up with an obstruction and you're going to end up in trouble.

My first year out of school, we had a little tiny four pound poodle puppy, just that little bitty thing that would fit in the palm of one hand, that swallowed a rib eye bone that was about six inches long. It was as long as the dog was from its stomach to its neck. I don't know how the dog even turned their head because it was so long. So dogs with those kinds of situations, either end up being scoped to remove the bone, or they end up going to surgery to take out the bone surgically. So please, please, please don't do that.

Peroxide is what a lot of people reach for when they want to induce vomiting, whether it's a bone or chocolate or Easter lilies or whatever, but I have had some very serious reactions happen in our practice from the use of peroxide. We've seen one dog that threw an air embolism to her brain and had some permanent damage. And we've also had a cat that died of gastric ulceration from peroxide being administered. So even though the internet says peroxide is okay, remember not everything on the internet is necessarily true or safe. So you do want to contact your veterinarian, we have a product that is intended only to make the dog vomit.

Now there's a new product that's supposed to have come to market last year. It's called Clevor, C-L-E-V-O-R, that's an eyedrop and we're going to be able to dispense this to clients, to put an eyedrop in their pet's eye to induce vomiting and 80% of the time it works with one drop within 20 minutes. So it's going to be really a cool product when we finally get our hands on it. But like a lot of other drugs, things got shelved on the back for COVID because people were busy making human drugs. And so the veterinary drug industry, which often uses similar plants, or the same plants and the same materials, ended up being put on the back burner. So I think we'll still see it come to market, but not as soon as I was hoping to see it.

Nick Rusch:

You mentioned spinach before. Tell me about the can of spinach, because, does that work as a diarrhetic? Is that the deal for dogs?

Dr. Marty Greer:

No, actually what it does, is it's slippery and fibrous. So what it does is it wraps around the sharp pieces of ballpoint pens, or razors, or bones, or diamond rings, or floral wire, or whatever it is that your dog happened to decide that it looked really tasty to consume. So when that happens, then it keeps that material moving through the GI tract, through the gut, and it keeps it slippery and it keeps it moving. Some people use bread or mashed potatoes, but I've actually had much better luck with canned spinach. So I encourage my people with dogs that have a tendency to have these unfortunate tendencies, to keep a couple of cans of spinach on the shelf. Some dogs will eat it pretty readily mixed with some ground beef or some chicken. Other dogs need to have more encouragement.

Now, if the item is too big to pass, it's not going to take care of the problem. So if your dog ate a towel, it's not going to bring it through. If your dog ate little bits of things that just need to have some help staying slippery and well lubricated and the ends kept from being too sharp, spinach is your game. So I always have canned spinach on the shelf, just for such an emergency. We have lots of cans at the practice and I encourage my clients to have two or three on the shelf. It's got a good long shelf life and the canned spinach works better than frozen or fresh spinach. So I stick to the cans of that green, slimy stuff that nobody really wants to eat when their mother puts it on their plate.

Nick Rusch:

I had never heard that, but-

Dr. Marty Greer:

It works like a charm.

Nick Rusch:

It sounds like it would.

Dr. Marty Greer:

One of the brands is Popeye, so just go to the store, look for the spinach. It's usually on the very top shelf because nobody wants to buy it, but it's magnificent, as far as helping with possible GI obstruction, but always talk to your veterinarian or Poison Control. Poison control is answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There is a fee for it, because they have to pay their people, there's no government subsidy that where there is human poison control, like when your kid ate a bottle of ibuprofen. But when your dog eats a bottle of ibuprofen, then you need to call either Pet Poison or National Animal poison control, have those phone numbers written down in the inside cupboard, or in your phone so that you can look them up promptly if you need to.

And for under \$75, they will give you great advice that will probably save you more than \$75 in veterinary care. Because many times they can avert needing to go into the emergency clinic, where \$75 or more just to walk in the door and then they still have to call poison control. So take advantage of that phone number, call it in, they'll give you a case number and then you can trot into the veterinary clinic if necessary with the case number, and they don't charge a second time when your veterinarian calls and gets the specifics of treatment if it's necessary. So, if you're trying to figure out how much Easter lily is toxic to a cat, my cat weighs 12 pounds and he ate this much, they can help you calculate those things. It's really very, very lifesaving and useful information.

Nick Rusch:

Maybe throw those numbers on a piece of paper in the same cupboard you keep the spinach in, so you got everything handy, right on the inside of the door.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yes. You are clearly a master of organization.

Nick Rusch:

This is how I think of things. This is how I process things. Can you tell that I've been a parent? Kids, it's all right here, it's all here.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Exactly. Put it all together in one place.

Nick Rusch:

Make it easy. Make it as easy as you possibly can. Doctor, I always get a kick out of talking to you, because we always learn so much and it's always great advice. So let's give people your contact information so they can contact you for further great advice from the veterinary office.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Sure. So we are open seven days a week. We are located at the corner of Highway 41 and 49, across from Quad/Graphics, just south of Fond du Lac. So we're actually at the Brownsville exit, even though our address is officially Lomira. Our phone number is 920-269-4000. You can email us at vv@k9stork.com, or you can check us out on the web at smallanimalclinic.com. It's very handy.

Nick Rusch:

Always a pleasure, Dr. Greer. And your dogs all doing okay, everybody good and healthy? Are you, are you spending any time with them? I know you're working all the time.

Dr. Marty Greer:

No, we're doing great. We've had litters of puppies. It's been a great COVID season. I mean, what the heck, we're home anyway, right?

Nick Rusch:

You might as well be playing with the dogs.

Dr. Marty Greer:

You got it.

Nick Rusch:

All right. Thanks so much, Dr. Marty Greer from Veterinary Village, is our Pet Talk Tuesday.