

## **Christmas is coming...**

Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat! And it's not just the geese; there is a national pet obesity epidemic!

Up to 5 million of our pets are overweight meaning 1 in 4 of our pets need to lose weight. Many are fed inappropriate food such as takeaways, crisps, cake and left over meals. Coupled with far too little exercise it is the road to disaster.

So how much should we allow our pets to enjoy Christmas. Definitely out are chocolate, Christmas cake, Christmas pudding, mince pies and cream. They are either poisonous or have far too much fat and sugar for our pets. Vegetables such as sprouts and carrots are fine but no roast potatoes or gravy! A little bit of turkey is fine in most dogs and cats and that long Boxing Day walk is definitely something our dogs should participate in for both health and enjoyment. It is certainly wise to avoid excesses of anything, especially things our pets are not used to eating. They will be much happier having lots of attention and play, along with lots of exercise, rather than being filled up with foods that make them feel ill.

Beware leaving seasonal foods where dogs may get access to them. It is easily done, with so much going on at Christmas, and especially if you have guests in the house. They may not own pets and so may not be so aware of shutting doors to keep hungry dogs at bay. The last thing both you and your pets need is for chocolate, puddings and cakes to disappear at the last moment. You may be left short of food or gifts and your pet may be left needing veterinary attention!

More important than how we treat our pets at Christmas is how we are going to treat them in the long term. The top ten new years' resolutions are to exercise more, and eat more healthily. So why not make the same resolution for your pet. Talk to your Veterinary Surgeon or Nurse soon as to whether your pet is overweight and take their advice on how much food to feed them and, if necessary, what diet to use. If you have made a new years resolution to take more exercise then, if you have a dog, take it along with you. Get your cat to run around more by throwing things for it to chase or letting it outside more during the day. Don't let

them lie on the couch all day, every day, they need to be moving around!



So I wish you, and your pets, a very merry Christmas and a happy, and healthy, new year!

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