



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 5, ISSUE 12 • DECEMBER 2013 NEWSLETTER

FELINE FOREIGN BODY OBSTRUCTION

As we all know, cats are curious by nature. They love to check out new sounds, sights, and smells. Sometimes, these things can be irresistible to a kitty. Small objects, string, ribbon, thread, rubber bands, or tape can all become something to bat around, chew on, and swallow.

Unfortunately, if your kitty swallows something he or she shouldn't, the situation can quickly turn serious and even life-threatening. When an object is too large to pass through the stomach or intestines, it can cause an obstruction. A linear foreign body, such as string or ribbon, can cause even more damage as it winds its way through the intestines.

If the foreign object has managed to move to the colon, it may successfully pass. But defecating a sharp object may prove extremely painful, and may require veterinary assistance.

Never pull a protruding object from your kitty's rectum. If part of the object is still lodged inside, you can cause serious damage. Pulling a protruding string or ribbon from the rectum can cause irreparable damage higher up the digestive tract.

The most typical symptoms of an ingested foreign body include:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Depression or lethargy
- Decreased appetite
- Abdominal tenderness or pain
- Straining to defecate or producing a small amount of feces
- Behavioral changes such as biting or growling when picked up or touched around the abdomen

- Pawing at the face or mouth if a string or thread has become wrapped around the base of the tongue

Diagnosing a suspected foreign body most typically includes abdominal radiographs (x-rays). Several views using a contrast material (such as barium) may be necessary in order to determine the object's location. Your veterinarian may also recommend blood and urine tests to assess whether your kitty's health has been compromised by the obstruction.

If a foreign body obstruction is diagnosed, surgery is typically necessary. Time is critical because an obstruction often cuts off the blood supply to vital tissues. If the blood supply is interrupted for more than a few hours, intestinal tract tissue may become necrotic, resulting in irreparable damage.

During the holiday season, tree and household decorations such as tinsel, ribbons and bows, foil, angel hair (spun glass), artificial snow, cranberry and popcorn strands, glass bulbs, small ornaments, and metal ornament hooks can cause choking and intestinal obstruction if ingested.

Help keep your feline family member safe during the holidays by keeping decorations and small objects well out of your pet's reach.

HOLIDAY SAFETY FOR YOUR PETS

Though the holidays can be a wonderful time of the year, they pose some special dangers for your pets. The following tips can help keep your four-legged friends safe during the season's festivities.

Several Christmas-season plants are poisonous to pets, including lilies, ivy, holly, mistletoe, Christmas greens, and poinsettia. A comprehensive list of toxic plants can be found at:

www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants

Keep lit candles, simmering potpourri, and potpourri oil away from your pet at all times; many potpourri ingredients are quite toxic.

Keep all sweets safely out of reach of your pet; large amounts of sugar can be extremely toxic.

And don't forget, increased activity and visitors during the holiday season can upset your pet's routine. Try to keep your pet on his or her regular feeding and exercise schedule—and be sure to give your pet plenty of love to ensure that you both enjoy the holidays.

DECEMBER SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR READERS

Through December 31, **receive \$25 off a metabolic panel** when your kitty comes to the Sacramento Cat Hospital for a wellness exam. Please call us for more information or to schedule your appointment.



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