



Make Sure Your Pet Has a Happy Halloween

Halloween is just around the corner and this time of year can be stressful for our pets. Regular knocks on the door from people in costumes can leave animals feeling quite spooked.



Decorations and sweets can also pose a potential risk to our four-legged friends.

If you have an animal of a nervous disposition but still want to carry out Halloween traditions it may be worth leaving treats on the front doorstep. That way, any visiting trick-or-treaters can just help themselves without upsetting your pet. Sweets containing the sweetener xylitol can be dangerous if consumed by our pets and even a small

amount of chocolate can be fatal so make sure your four-legged friends don't have access to these sweet treats.

Seeing an animal dressed up in Halloween costumes may look cute but it is unlikely your pet shares the same enthusiasm. Costumes can make pets feel uncomfortable, too hot and stressed so we recommend avoiding them altogether. Your furry companions are adorable just the way they are!

Stick Injuries in Dogs



Many of the staff here at Castle Vets are dog owners and we understand that nothing brings more joy than watching dogs play. Sticks are so frequently used in a game of fetch as they

are readily available on walks. The majority of the time, this is harmless fun but sometimes a stick can cause injuries ranging from cuts and scrapes in a dog's mouth to infections from stick splinters and life-threatening injuries.



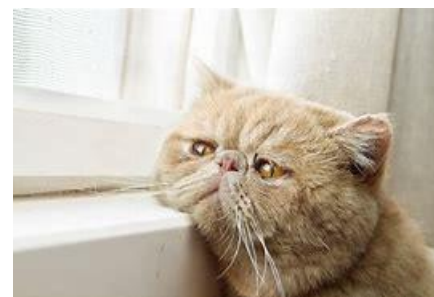
If you have a dog who can't resist a game of fetch then we recommend using a safer alternative to a stick such as dog friendly frisbees, slinger balls or rubber sticks.

If you suspect that your dog may have incurred a stick injury, seeking veterinary attention as soon as possible can be life-saving.



Recognising Pain in Cats

Cats are very good at hiding signs of pain, discomfort or distress but the clues are there if you look for them. By knowing how to tell if your cat is in pain, you will be better equipped to ensure your feline friend gets the care they need. Even small changes in a cat's behaviour, grooming or activity level can signal pain.



Common signs of pain include:

- **Trembling** – A more noticeable sign may be shivering or trembling.
- **Appetite** – A decrease or increase in appetite, refusal to eat, or changes in drinking patterns can indicate pain somewhere.
- **Indoor accidents** – Cats may have accidents outside of their litter tray. If cats experience pain while urinating or defecating, they may go to the toilet outside of the litter tray as they associate the pain occurring while inside the litter tray. Straining, blood in urine or faeces and frequent accidents further support your cat is in pain.
- **Grooming** – Cats may decrease the amount they groom themselves or stop grooming altogether if it is painful for them to get into position to groom or if they are not feeling well. Excessive grooming can also occur especially if pain is causing the cat to become stressed. They may also groom the painful area more frequently.

- **Increased respiratory and heart rate** – Pain activates the body’s stress response, releasing hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones increase heart rate, respiratory rate and blood pressure.
- **Posture and body language** – It is important to pay attention to your cats’ body language as unusual positions such as a hunched back or tucked tummy could be signs of pain.
- **Tense body** – Keeping the body tense with rigid muscles restricts movement in a painful region.
- **Limping** – If a limb is painful a cat may avoid putting weight on it. They may even hold the limb up.
- **Vocalising** – Excessive meowing, hissing or growling can be a sign of pain. This could occur during movement, going to the toilet or when touched in the painful area.
- **Lethargy** – sleeping more than usual.
- **Difficulty moving** - your cat may be reluctant to jump down from furniture or go through the cat flap. They may also experience stiffness after resting.
- **Behavioural** – Look out for behaviour changes in your cat, like aggression, hiding more than usual, increased anxiety and fear or being restless/agitated.



If your cat is experiencing any of the above symptoms or if their behaviour just seems off, it is worth speaking with one of our vets.

Even if your cat doesn’t show signs of pain, it is important for your cat to receive regular health checks alongside the usual vaccinations.

Mandatory Bird Registration 2024

Starting from 1st October 2024, a new law mandates that anyone keeping poultry or any other captive birds, regardless of the number, must register them with the [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#). This requirement, including chicken registration, applies even if the birds are kept as pets. This new regulation is part of the mandatory bird registration 2024 initiative.

Exceptions to the Rule

There are specific exceptions for certain bird species, namely psittaciformes and passeriformes. These include popular pet birds such as budgies, parrots, cockatiels, and finches. If these birds are kept entirely indoors with no access to the open air, they do not need to be registered. However, if they have any access to the outside world, registration becomes mandatory. Additionally, you can take these birds to a vet without registering them, provided they comply with the indoor-only condition at all other times.

Poultry Registration Process

For Fewer than 50 Birds: If you have fewer than 50 birds, the registration process is straightforward and can be completed quickly online. You do not need a Holding (CPH) Number. Simply go to the [GOV.UK website](#) to register.

For More than 50 Birds: If you have more than 50 birds, you should already be registered. If not, you need to obtain a Holding Number and complete the registration on the [GOV.UK website](#).

Above information was sourced from [New Poultry Registration Requirements from 1st October](#)