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# The NOAH News

## *Something to Chew On...!*

Chewing is a natural behaviour for dogs. All dogs investigate the world with their mouths, especially during puppy hood, and many beyond!! Chewing can be a play and fun behaviour, as well as occasionally a more serious manifestation of a personality/psychological disorder. Factors contributing to a dog's tendency to chew inappropriately may include; teething, stress monotony and inadequate exercise. Definitely, some breeds, including many of the larger breeds, are known to be more voracious chewers than others. Occasionally, chewing behaviors may be directed toward inappropriate and dangerous items, such as furniture, household items, clothing and shoes. As our dogs' guardians and caregivers, it is essential that we work with them through appropriate training and conditioning programs to attempt to train them to steer clear of these inappropriate items. However, there are many dogs that gleam great, healthy pleasure in the chewing process and so for these pets it is important that we provide them with safe, appropriate chew toys otherwise, they can become even more likely to chew destructively. Also, for many dog owners, it makes us feel good to see our dog "havin' a good chew". Therefore, a common question that we get asked is "What is a safe chew toy to offer to my dog?"

There are several safety concerns to consider when choosing appropriate chew toys for your dog. Things to keep in mind when making this decision include your dog's age, size and also how chewing gregarious your dog is! Firstly, chew toys should always be size-appropriate for your particular dog. This is very important when the item the dog is given is one that can actually be consumed by the dog - examples of such are, rawhide or compressed vegetable chews (i.e. "Greenies"). Choosing a size that is too small for your dog can lead to ingestion of pieces that may cause intestinal obstruction or choking hazards. So please, always carefully read and adhere to size guidelines on these types of products. A second important thing to consider when choosing a chew item is oral health. This is also an area where many dog owners are hoping that chewing alone will help maintain a healthy mouth. Although there is no disputing that chewing appropriate items can help with oral hygiene, it never replaces a good brushing! (Sorry, we had to slide that in coming out of dental health month and all!!). From a dental health perspective the most ideal chew is one, which is both safe for the teeth and effective at reducing plaque and tartar buildup. Items that fit into this category include; Kong products, long flat rawhide products and compressed vegetable chews (i.e. "Greenies"). "Kongs" can be a particularly good choice in our opinion, especially if you prepare them ahead of time with nutritious packing in their middle (like water softened dog kibble and peanut butter mixed together!) and then freeze them. Provide one of these gourmet frozen treats to your dog and you will have him working for hours trying to get the inside out! The "Blue KONG" variety sold exclusively at veterinary hospitals is actually 25% stronger than commercially available red and black varieties and they have the added benefit of showing up on x-rays if there were ever any concerns about ingestion! Final safety considerations to keep in mind when providing a chew toy need to include the forethought of removing any strings, buttons or loose fabric that could be consumed by the dog (be very cautious of "stringy" toys). Ideally, most toys should only be given to your dog when supervised as some can splinter and cause choking, while rope and stuffed toys can fray or become unstuffed and cause intestinal obstruction or choking if ingested. Any toy with a squeaker should be closely supervised, as most dogs find it necessary to seek and destroy the squeaker, which may then be swallowed. Finally, keep in mind that you do not want to provide your dog with an item to chew that you don't want them to - for example; some people think that since their dog seems to love to chew on their shoes, they will just give them an old pair of their shoes as their chew toy. Unfortunately, this is a great leap of faith that your dog is going to be able to distinguish your retired slippers from your brand new pair of very expensive leather shoes sitting at the front door, so please, don't fall into this trap!

It is a good idea to rotate your dog's toys periodically. If your dog stops playing with a toy, put it away. In a few weeks reintroduce the toy. Your dog will think it's new. This will break the monotony, and save you money. Keep a variety of appropriate types available for your dog. Of course, all chew toys have a certain element of risk involved. Extra strong chewers can tear apart just about anything, even so called indestructible rubber. Some toys can cause chipped teeth, while others can cause gastrointestinal problems. But with forethought and supervision, you can make your dogs toys as safe as possible!



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North Oakville Animal Hospital Professional Corporation, 2530 Sixth Line, Oakville, ON

Ph (905) 257-3700

Fax (905) 257-8115

E-mail [noah@on.aibn.com](mailto:noah@on.aibn.com)

YOUR FAMILY PET WELLNESS CENTRE

# HAVE YOU FOUND AN INJURED BIRD?

What should I do if I find a wounded bird in my backyard?  
What do I do with baby birds that have fallen out of their nest?



With the warm weather approaching the team at NOAH knows they will begin to hear these questions more frequently. The first thing to remember is to try not to touch any wildlife too much unless it is in imminent danger. These creatures are naturally afraid of humans and don't understand that we humans mean them no harm. Next, is the bird truly injured? Many birds that hit your windows will most likely be only "stunned" for a while, recover, and then fly away. The best thing to do is to leave the bird and observe it for an hour or two. If the bird is obviously injured i.e. a broken wing or leg or bleeding, then please, transport the bird to the hospital to have its injuries evaluated. Gently pick up the bird with a towel and place it in a small box for transportation. But...finding a baby bird on the ground is a dilemma (especially when our children find them!) . . . what to do!

- If the baby is **feathered and hopping around** the best course of action would be to leave it alone. Many birds leave their nest (fledge) before they can fly. Chances are very good that the parents of this newly aspiring Howard Hughes are nearby and watching over it. By interfering you may actually lessen its chances for survival. Try to rein in your parental instinct and walk away a little distance and watch. You may see the parents rush to the baby and then you'll be assured everything is okay and "bird rescue" isn't necessary.
- If you find a **featherless baby** that has obviously fallen out of its nest, the best thing to do is simply put it back. If you find a whole nest that has fallen from a tree try to replace the nest, as near to its original location as possible. It's very likely that the parents will return. Again, bird rescue won't be necessary.



People often ask us if they should call the Oakville & District Humane Society to come and pick up the bird. The Humane Society's mandate with regards to wild animals is to rescue injured or sick wildlife. They cannot respond to "nuisance" wildlife calls. So calling about an "abandoned" baby will not likely render an officer to your doorstep. More often than not the safest, best thing to do is to stand back and observe this orphan closely, as interfering almost always ends up not in their best interest. Unfortunately, with Oakville and Milton growing so rapidly, a lot of wildlife is losing their natural habitat and this is why we are seeing them more and more in urban areas. The Humane Society's web page, [www.oakvillehumane.ca](http://www.oakvillehumane.ca) has useful information on how to deter wildlife from taking up residence on your property.

## + Sprayed by a Skunk? +

As the warm weather comes upon us this frightful event seems to occur more commonly than most of us realize! If you are the unfortunate owner of a pet whose curiosity gets the better of them this spring here are a few helpful hints to get you through this "odiferous" experience!

- Don't let your pet in the house. Try to minimize the odour area outside.
- Make sure your pet is physically ok. If there are any bites or scratches, your pet should be seen by a veterinarian.
- Check the eyes and nose. This is usually the heavy "blast" zone. Gently wipe with a warm, wet cloth. Pay particular attention to the eyes, skunk secretion can be very toxic to the eye tissue, if the eyes continue to water or remain red, take to a veterinarian.
- Now it's time to get the smell out! Any acid product will work, hence why the old recommendation of tomato juice! However, for those who are a little less inclined to douse their pets in the red sauce, there are also "SKUNK-OFF" preparations available to aid in the de-stinking process. A very important point to remember is that it is better to "spot" treat your pet with products rather than wetting down and lathering up the whole animal as this latter procedure just tends to spread the oily secretion deeper through the entire coat!
- For those more adventurous cooking types, the following recipe has also been used by many as an odour antidote...

### Ingredients:

1 quart (or liter) of never opened 3% Hydrogen Peroxide available in most drug stores.  
1/4 cup (50 ml.) of Baking Soda  
1 teaspoon (5 ml.) of liquid dish soap

### Directions:

Using a pair of rubber gloves mix the ingredients together IN AN OPEN container like a bucket and watch it fizz up. Try to see where your pet got hit and rub the mixture well into the fur while avoiding the eyes, and other sensitive parts like the nose and mouth. Let it stay on for 5 minutes or longer if the smell keeps lingering. Rinse extra well. This usually works well once but you may need to do this twice if your pet took a particularly nasty spraying. The solution will not change the colour of your pet's fur. DO NOT STORE or REUSE MIXTURE as it will build up pressure in a closed container and possibly explode. Dump it all after using it once.



## ...It's Heartworm Time Again.

It's that time of year again where you begin to see this saying popping up on veterinary clinic signs all over town.... What exactly do we mean?! We mean that it is almost that time of year where we have to start worrying about mosquitoes transmitting that pesky heartworm disease among our canine companions again. Our protocols for protecting your dog continue to change gradually year to year with the advent of more and more research into this disease and its transmission. This year our only change is that we have begun to implement "year-round" testing when it's your dog's heartworm test year. What this means is that you still need to place your dog on preventative medication to avoid heartworm infection during the summer months (June to November) but that instead of cramming every bodies heartworm blood test into a three month period from April to June we began performing heartworm tests with your dogs Annual Health Exam irregardless of the time of year (as of January 2006). We still only recommend that we perform this screening test every other year, we are just hoping to alleviate a little of our bottleneck in the springtime by spreading out the testing yearlong.

So.... if your dog has had a negative test in the last year AND received all 6 doses of preventive medication last year, OR your puppy was born after September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005 then a test is not required this year and you can start the medication on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Otherwise, a test will be required this year prior to starting medication.

Don't worry! We will be contacting you to remind you to pick up your dog's preventive medication or to schedule a test in the next few weeks!

For those of you who's dogs have already had their test performed this year and only require medication to be picked up, ask us about our new, convenient Mail-out program!!! Contact us by email at [info@oakvilleanimalhospital.com](mailto:info@oakvilleanimalhospital.com) or phone for more information.

## *N.O.A.H.'s ADMISSION PROCEDURES.*

We understand that leaving your pet at the hospital is a stressful and anxiety filled time, even if you are just leaving your friend for a "spaw" day or some restful boarding while you go away on vacation! For those of you who have been through our admission procedure you are familiar with the plethora of questions that we pile upon you at the front desk. We thought it might be a useful exercise for us to explain the importance of all of this paper work and questions that we ask whenever a pet is admitted to the hospital.

It is essential to us that you read and understand the consent form that you are signing. This form lists the procedures being performed with all the estimated associated costs involved. By signing it for us you are permitting us to proceed with the appropriate care for your pet. Please help us to serve you to the best of our ability by putting in writing on the consent form anything we have not specifically listed that you would like performed! One of our most crucial pieces of information that we gather from you are your contact phone numbers where we will be able to reach you during the time that your pet is in our care. Whenever your pet is having surgery or is sick, it is vital that we be able to contact you in a timely fashion. Decisions may need to be made, that only you can make. These phone numbers are also used so we can give you progress reports on your animal. We also make a detailed list of all belongings brought with your animal, so we can be sure that everything is returned safely to you. Has your pet eaten this morning? We ask this one a lot too! It is very important for us to know if you have been able to follow all presurgical feeding instructions, as an animal that has recently eaten is a greater anesthetic risk. Some medications are intentionally started prior to surgery and should be given the morning of surgery. If you are unable to give this medication, please bring it with you and let a team member know that the morning dose of medication needs to be given.

Finally, we really appreciate it when you are admitting your pet to please schedule enough time in your morning for our team members to be able to gather this required information. As mornings are never a time of day that most of us have tons of spare time, if you know you will be in a hurry, you can always come in the day before to process the paperwork at a more leisurely pace.

All these questions and forms help us to do a better job of taking top quality care of your pet. If you are unsure of anything, please ask our team members any questions you have regarding the cost estimate or information we are gathering.

### *ANNOUNCEMENTS*

Well, the time is upon us where Dr. Machell and Dr. Ralston are easing their way out of busy practice life and into busy family life for a few months! The NOAH team is thrilled to welcome two new veterinarians to our dedicated professional line-up to help us during this "expansion" time - Dr. Leanna Duckworth and Dr. Emmanuelle Sellier. Both are graduates of the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph, Dr. Duckworth and Dr. Sellier will be working together with our returning from maternity leave professional, Dr. Shari Wiseman to help hold down the fort for the next few months! (PHEW...this place is a little baby crazy! Be careful where you sit when you come in!)

Also, Many thanks to all of our clients and patients who helped us to make Dental Health Month a huge success again this year! If your pet was among our dental health month superstars please feel free to come by and pick up your pet's "tooth" picture!

Finally a special "thank-you" to Malcom Reid for the new header design for our newsletter we think it is just great, hope you do to!