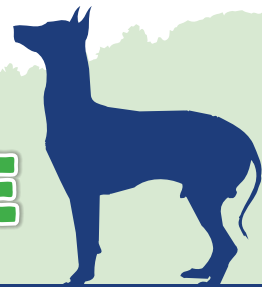




KEEPING OUR PETS SAFE AT THE COTTAGE



It's been a long winter but now it's finally come time to open up the cottage! As exciting as it is to come back up north and get outside, there are a few extra hazards in this area that are important to consider.

Here are some of the hazards and ways to avoid them.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDS: We often put out mouse bait or traps and antifreeze in our toilets and drains prior to closing up the cottage. Some of the newer generations of bait are very poisonous to our pets. For some dogs and cats, after a long car-ride up north, a drink from the toilet is the first on the list of things to do. Antifreeze is sweet tasting and can cause kidney failure in a dog or cat within hours.

PREVENTION KEY: Take a walk-through the cottage and garages to clear out any potential toxins or hazards for your pet before letting them come and do their own inspection.

SKUNKS AND PORCUPINES: These creatures enjoying the warmer weather and longer daylight are most often found in the bushes early in the morning and later at night. Dogs for some reason can't resist these potentially dangerous critters. A summer of skunk smell or a face-full of porcupine quills can ruin anyone's vacation plans!

PREVENTION KEY: Keep dogs on a leash at dusk and dawn. For porcupine quills, it is best to have these pulled by a vet under sedation so that a thorough examination can be performed, including the top of the mouth and back of the throat. Get quills professionally pulled as soon as possible!

OTHER WILDLIFE: One of the things we love about cottage country is all the wildlife right in our backyard! However, there can be issues when our dogs and wildlife come in contact. Sometimes the wildlife can carry diseases such as Distemper, Rabies and Leptospirosis. Even indoor cats can be at risk if a bat flies into the house.

PREVENTION KEY: Ensure your pets are properly vaccinated for the added risk factors of living in the country.

TICKS: In the county we are more likely to be hiking through brush and long grass, which is exactly the type of environment these eight-legged spider-like monsters like to live in. Once they bite, they can transmit diseases to both you and your pets, most notably Lyme disease. Good to note, disease transmission for most things takes greater than 12 hours.

PREVENTION KEY: There are products, namely K9 Advantix from Bayer, that are excellent products for killing ticks. Good tick prevention is important. As well, it is a very good practice to thoroughly examine your pets daily and remove any ticks immediately since the chances are good they haven't yet transmitted disease. It's also a good practice to check yourself.

BLUE GREEN ALGAE: If the water appears to have a gray or green tinge or has sludge on it, there is a chance this could be Blue Green Algae. This type of algae can produce a deadly toxin with very low survival rates.

PREVENTION KEY: Better safe than sorry - If there is any concern, do not let your pet drink or swim in this water. Report blue green algae outbreaks by calling 416-325-3000 or 1-800-268-6060 & let your lake association know so that they can let everyone on the lake know not to swim in or use the lake water.

FISHING HOOKS: Every year our man's best friend gets stuck hooked on these rather than the scaly amphibians we are aiming for. The smell of fish is very attractive to the dogs and before you know it there's a hook sticking through the mouth.

PREVENTION KEY: Place all rods and hooks well out of reach from the inquiring tongues of dogs. If your dog does get hooked, call the vet immediately and get it dealt with. Be prepared that most dogs will need to be sedated to remove the hook safely.

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