OAK FOREST
Veterinary Hospital

PET TALK **SUMMER 2026**

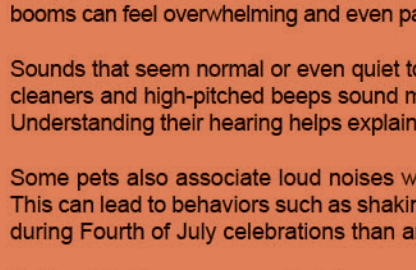
Feline Obesity
Is Your Cat Overweight?

We've all seen the funny pictures of morbidly obese cats that get passed along in social media, but feline obesity is anything but amusing. As with humans, obesity can cause severe health problems for your kitty, including arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney disease, and cancer. Some studies report that obesity can shorten a cat's life by five years or more.

At a proper weight, you should be able to easily feel their ribs, and they should have a defined waistline when viewed from above. Underneath, a hanging, rounded belly is a sign of obesity.

Of course, overfeeding is the number one cause of obesity, but other conditions can also contribute to this. They include:

- **Diseases.** Hypothyroidism, Cushing's disease, Insulinoma, pituitary gland diseases, and brain diseases can change the metabolic rate and affect appetite. We may need to rule out these potential causes.
- **Social and environmental issues.** Conditions such as stress can affect how much food a cat eats. Kitties in multi-cat households may eat more and faster because of perceived competition.
- **Age.** Cats are most likely to gain weight from 2 to 12 years of age, while young and senior cats are less likely to gain weight.



- **Neutering or spaying.** Metabolic and hormonal changes that take place after these surgeries can allow your cat to maintain the same weight with fewer calories.
- **Low activity.** The more active your cat is, the more calories they burn.
- **Medications.** These can also influence metabolism and appetite.

Obesity is always a health risk. It's important to provide opportunities for active play, and to let us assess your cat's weight and recommend the best diet. If you suspect your feline friend is on the chubby side, make an appointment so we can help your cat avoid the health issues that obesity can create.

Goose Honks
Why My Mom Keeps Letting Them Steal My Blood

HELLO. Goose here.

I need everyone to know that my own mother, Dr. Moore, continues to betray me annually.

Every year she brings me to Oak Forest Veterinary Hospital, tells me I'm "the best boy in the whole world," gives me snacks, and then casually allows the team to STEAL MY BLOOD.

Motherhood is apparently complicated.

She says it's because mosquitoes carry heartworms, which are dangerous parasites that can make dogs very sick. Personally, I think mosquitoes should focus less on crime and more on minding their business.

And before the indoor pets start acting superior; mosquitoes absolutely come inside your house as well. They sneak in like tiny flying burglars with terrible intentions.

According to my mom, yearly heartworm testing is important even if pets are on prevention year-round. She also says annual bloodwork helps detect health problems early and checks how the body is functioning.

I guess that sounds smart. Unfortunately.

So, here's your official Goose Summer Safety List:



- Keep pets on heartworm prevention year-round.
- Stay current on flea and tick prevention.
- Don't skip annual testing.
- Dump standing water where mosquitoes like to party.

Anyway, I survived my appointment, received several treats, and have decided to forgive my mother until next year's betrayal.

– Goose

Keep It Cool
Hot Weather Dos and Don'ts

During the hot summer months, we see too many avoidable pet emergencies. These include heat stroke, severe dehydration, burns on pads of feet, and severe sunburn. An extreme rise in body temperature requires immediate treatment to prevent organ failure. If your pet has been exposed to high temperatures, seek medical care immediately if you see excessive drooling or panting, reddened gums, rapid or irregular heartbeat, disorientation, vomiting blood, seizures, or signs of shock.



Fortunately, summer emergencies can be avoided. Follow these dos and don'ts to keep your pet safe this summer:

DON'T

... leave a pet unattended in a car. Even with the windows cracked, the interior can quickly become like a furnace.

... allow pets to be outdoors for more than a few minutes during the hottest hours of the day.

... let pets walk on pavement that is too hot for your bare feet.

... assume that your pet can't drown.

... let your pet drink or play in stagnant water.

... allow pets anywhere near a barbecue grill. And don't let them have access to grease from the grill, which can cause acute pancreatitis.

DO

... Walk dogs in the early morning or evening hours when the weather is cooler. Otherwise, keep them indoors during extreme heat.

... provide access to fresh, cool water at all times.

... apply sunscreen to light colored or thin-coated dogs. Shaving dogs in summer adds to the risk of sunburn.

... use a life jacket for dogs swimming in deep water.

Scary Noises
Reduce Your Pet's Anxiety

Many pets are terrified of fireworks, thunder and other loud noises, and summer brings plenty of opportunities for discomfort. Dogs and cats have much sharper hearing than we do, so sudden booms can feel overwhelming and even painful. Add in the unpredictability (they don't know when the next bang is coming), and it can trigger a real fear response.

Sounds that seem normal or even quiet to us can be overwhelming for pets. Not only things that go boom in the sky but also vacuum cleaners and high-pitched beeps sound much louder and more alarming to them. They may react strongly to noises we barely notice. Understanding their hearing helps explain those behaviors and reminds us to be mindful of the sound environment we create for them.



Some pets also associate loud noises with past negative experiences or simply don't have enough exposure to them early in life. This can lead to behaviors such as shaking, hiding, pacing, barking, or even trying to escape. In fact, more missing dogs are reported during Fourth of July celebrations than any other time of year.

Fortunately, there are ways to help your pet feel safer. Start by creating a calm, secure space. This could be a quiet room or a cozy bed or blanket. Close windows and curtains to muffle sound and reduce flashes from lightning or fireworks. Turning on a TV, fan, or white noise can also help mask sudden noises. Of course, unnecessary noise such as loud music or TVs and extremely loud voices should be avoided altogether to ensure your pet's comfort.

Since pets pick up on your energy, remain calm and use a soothing voice. Comfort them if they need it but don't reinforce fear by fussing over them. For some pets, ThunderShirts, calming treats, or pheromone sprays help. If your pet's anxiety is severe, we may prescribe medication. With some preparation and a lot of understanding, you can help your pet through noisy events with less stress.

info@OakForestVet.com www.OakForestVet.com
Call (713) 682-6351 today to make an appointment!

Avoiding Disaster

National Pet Fire Safety Day

July 15 is National Pet Fire Safety Day when the American Humane Society tries to bring awareness to fire dangers for pets and how to protect them. Each year, more than 500,000 pets are affected by house fires, and 1,000 of them are started by pets themselves. Take these steps to protect your four-legged family members:



Prevent Fires: Open flames are a common way that pets accidentally start fires. Be sure that candles or fireplaces aren't left burning without supervision. Cover burners or remove knobs to prevent a curious pet from bumping them and turning on the stove or releasing gas. Lamps and plugs can also be fire hazards. Be sure to secure loose wires so pets can't chew on them. Never let your pets near fireworks, grills or fire pits.

Plan Ahead: Be sure to include your pets in your family's fire emergency plan. If a fire should occur, your furry family members need a way out. Designate someone to grab your pets—someone who knows their hiding places. Make sure to keep the contact information on their collars and microchips up to date in case they escape. In case you aren't home at the time of a fire, place a decal in your window giving the number and types of pets in the home.

During a Fire: If there is no time to safely retrieve them, leave your home but leave doors open so they can escape. Do not endanger yourself or another family member. Once responders arrive, inform them that your pet is still inside. Firefighting procedure manuals prohibit responders from endangering themselves to rescue your pet, but they will know what to look for in case they can save the pet without putting themselves in harm's way.

Refer a Friend and Save!

Refer a new client and save $10 on your next doctor's visit.

Be sure to mention the refer-a-friend savings when you make your appointment.

OAK FOREST VETERINARY HOSPITAL

When you're here, you're family.

2120 W. 34th Street
Houston, TX 77018

www.OakForestVet.com

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Call (713) 682-6351
to make an appointment!

