

A CAUTIONARY TAIL!!

We have had some scares over the last few months and if anyone can pick up any information to help them in a similar situation this will have been worth writing.

First there was our Christmas Day excitement! We have a wall around our land, and gates-----but somehow the gates were left open on Christmas Day. Our 14 month old German Shepherd managed to go out for her own walk for about 10 minutes. Luckily she got herself home and we found her foaming from the mouth and unable to stand. She was very ill. Panic phone call to the Vets at 15.00pm Christmas Day. She was taken straight to the Vet where it was discovered, as we suspected, she had been poisoned. She had a cocktail of drugs, was put on a drip and it was touch and go for the next 6 hours. She survived and returned home on Boxing Day, very quiet and subdued. A couple of days later I decided to wander around the area and see what evidence I could find. A few orange groves up I found empty fertiliser containers, laying in a puddle. Obviously she must have drunk from that. Of course it is impossible to know a) who owns the land, b) who owns the containers but customers in the shop have told us that you can notify the camara of things like this and they will remove the items..

Next kittens. In the Algarve we are encouraged to give homes to cats and dogs that are in the re-homing centres. The work done by them is admirable and the people who run them are wonderful. We decided to re-home 2 six month kittens, so collected them and paid the centre money to cover their spaying costs. From day one they both had runny tummys, which we put down, naively, to a change of living environment, one of them had the snuffles. Within five days one was at our Vets being stitched back up from the spay, this was the healthier of the two. 6 weeks later the snuffly one was at another Vet and declared to have an infection, she was put on antibiotics for 8 days. Another 6 weeks of continual problems with them both getting worse. Return to our main Vet, within moments they are diagnosed with Leukaemia. There is another two year old cat at home so that is most likely to now be suffering the same. So, we are now faced with the costs involved in Vets and treatment but the worst thing is the heartache. These cats live with a family with two very small children; this is very upsetting for them. This is a sad story with a sad ending and the probable loss of three cats in a short space of time. We will give them all the care they need and give them the happiest short lives that they will have. A learning curve.

Next a strange and unexpected one. Living in the beautiful Algarve does present our pets with some unpleasant illnesses, obviously much as we hate to we have to protect them with chemical products. These are constantly changing and upgrading. Having had ours on the same products for about four years we decided we should change to the newer ones. We researched them via the internet, Vets, friends. Finally this week we changed them over. This was to prove a very bad thing for one of the dogs, an Old English Sheepdog. She has had a very bad reaction to one of them. Within two hours of administering, she was pacing the floor, going around in circles, eyes were wide and frightened. We had put it on very late at night to avoid any contact between the three of them through play. That night we got little sleep. She was worse by morning, frightened of her own shadow, very hyper, back arched, tail down between legs, jumping at every small noise. Off to Vets, she has to injections to counteract an allergic reaction. During the afternoon she steadily got worse and was back at the Vets in the evening. Blood tests were done, luckily no damage to organs was found. I bathed her on our return to try and cool her down as by now she had a temperature. She continued to deteriorate. By 01.00am, she was so restless and hyper we were very concerned. Suddenly I remembered some advice I had been given years ago, 'the T-Shirt' theory. I found an old

T-Shirt of mine, put it on her, stroked her, settled her on her bean bag. Amazing within 5 minutes she was asleep and slept till the morning. Unfortunately it did not stop there, she was still very ill the next day, back to the Vets she was on a drip for the day and gradually she calmed down a little bit. It will take days for her to return to normal but at least we can see a light at the end of the tunnel. So, a complete rethink as I obviously cannot use that product on her again. I hasten to add that the other Old English Sheepdog was fine on the same product. This has made us more aware that we must go on to the Internet and print off all details of these products in English pre using. Not that it helped us much as this problem was not listed!! Should anyone be desperate to know what the instructions are in English please contact us at www.paws4pets.net Luckily she is now chasing around the garden with the other dogs, but it was touch and go for a while.

Protect your pets in knowledge-----we can only learn by each others experiences.

Jan Cobley

Copyright© 2006 Paws 4 Pets 2006