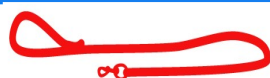




COMPANION ANIMAL NEWSLETTER – September 2021

THE MEANING BEHIND COLOURED COLLARS AND LEADS



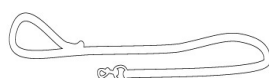
RED - CAUTION
I just want some space!



ORANGE - NO DOGS
I like people, just not dogs



GREEN - FRIENDLY
I like meeting new friends



WHITE - DEAF/BLIND
I can't hear you, I'm deaf / I can't see you, I'm blind



BRIGHT YELLOW - ADOPTION
I'm looking for a new home



LIGHT YELLOW - NERVOUS
Give me some space, I'm nervous



BLUE - TRAINING/SERVICE
I'm learning new things/I'm for work, not play



PURPLE - DO NOT FEED
Please do not feed me



Did you know that there is a colour coding system used by dog owners to highlight specific health or behavioural issues their pet may have?

Coloured leads or collars are a great way to indicate if your dog is aggressive, blind, in season or even in training. And even if your dog doesn't fall into any of these categories, it's important to be aware of these to avoid any potential issues with other dogs you may come across when out for a walk.

Another option for dog owners is to use coloured ribbons or bandanas tied onto a dog's lead to make others aware. Even if you are not a dog owner, it is good to be conscious of these.

Yellow ribbons are probably one of the most commonly used ribbons, signifying that the dogs who sport them need extra space when on a walk or around strangers. We also supply the yellow ribbons at the Settle branch. It is important to know that these dogs are not necessarily aggressive but can be uncomfortable or nervous around strangers, may be experiencing pain from a recent surgery, or not fully trained.

It is important to remember that regardless of what colour the dog may be wearing, even if it's green, you must always ask the dog's owner if you can touch their pet.

With the increase of dogs and puppies after lockdown spreading the word about the use of coloured collars, leads and ribbons is the first step in encouraging responsible pet ownership and can help ensure dogs are given the space and support they need when out for a walk.

PET STAYCATION KIT – 10 ESSENTIALS

With more of us having to 'staycation' this year, the upside is we can take our dogs with us! Here are 10 essential items to pack for your pet:

Collar with ID Tag . Water bowl . Spiral stake . Poo bags . Tick remover . Routine medication . Pet first aid kit . Fun safe toys . Tasty healthy treats . Crate or their own bed from home.

Don't forget your medication! If your pet is on repeat medication make sure you have enough to last your stay. Order more in plenty of time, our vets need at least 24 hours

notice for repeat prescriptions and if we have not seen your pet for some time your animal may need to be examined by one of our vets before we can dispense further medication. It is also important that vaccinations and parasite control are up to date before exploring new environments.

CANINE SEPARATION ANXIETY



✓ Have Indoor Accidents



✓ Persistently Bark



✓ Attempt to Escape



✓ Behave Destructively



✓ Pace Incessantly

With the easing of COVID restrictions and the slow trickle of life returning to some semblance of normality, our pets may struggle to adjust to being left home alone whilst we head to work or out to socialise again. For pets obtained during lockdown all they have known is having us there pretty much 24/7, but also for our longer term companions who have adjusted to seeing so much of us in the last 18 months it can be an anxious time dealing with separation from their owners again.

Separation anxiety is a condition which affects dogs who are overly attached/dependent on family members. Signs of this anxiety can include barking excessively, house-soiling, being destructive or even appearing withdrawn when separated from their owners. It is important to remember that these behaviours could also be due to numerous other problems including medical reasons. For this reason you will need to work with the vet who can check over the pet and confirm a diagnosis.

Treating separation anxiety can be a long and intensive process. In the short term however, to prevent damage, immediate intervention may be needed such as a dog sitter, taking the dog to work, leaving with a friend or finding a day boarding service. Crate training can be useful, but only if the pet is used to and feels safe being crated. If not, this can add to their anxiety and even cause injury if the dog struggles to break out. Anti bark devices are of limited value but in the short term certain medications may help.

The underlying problem is anxiety and can not be cured by a magic pill! The long term solution is retraining and reducing all forms of departure and homecoming anxiety. It is not possible in this short article to set out a comprehensive retraining plan, but we are here to help so contact our nursing team here at the practice for advice and a further, more comprehensive advice sheet is also available from our surgery. We can make a start with some basic principles here however!

Before any lengthy departure provide a vigorous session of play and exercise. Not only does this burn some energy, it also provides a positive period of attention. Brief training sessions can also be a good way to interact and work with your pet. However, for the final 15 – 30 minutes prior to departure the dog should be ignored and you need to minimise giving off any departure signals. A few minutes before you leave distraction is key, give a fresh toy or treat to take their attention and avoid saying goodbye! Be certain these distraction devices last as long as possible so the dog is still occupied until you are long gone (e.g. frozen treats, well stuffed feed toys, or those designed to be worked at and manipulated to give up their treats). Timed feeders to open throughout the day can also help. At homecoming ignore your dog until they are calm, this can take 10 – 15 minutes. Exuberant greetings or punishment for misbehaving will only heighten and compound their anxiety.



Medication can be useful during initial therapy and would need to be discussed with the vet. Drugs alone are not the answer but may be needed to facilitate the retraining programme. All dogs are different and

it's finding a combination of tools that is key. Neutraceutical supplements and pheromone non drug therapy can also be useful. All are available from the surgery and the pheromone products come as a spray or as a handy plug in room diffuser to take the edge off anxiety.

Although some of the steps needed to help your dog to cope with being alone may seem simple it can be very difficult to implement retraining and you need to be prepared for a high level of commitment. Detaching yourself from an over dependant pet and encouraging it to stand on its own 4 paws is not easy for the pet or the owner, but persistence pays. We are here to help, so stick at it and you will get there!



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