



Date: October 31, 2008

Media Contact: Julie Robbins

(646) 981-3342

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Julie@FetchingCommunications.com

Vets Share Unusual List of Pets’ Most Commonly Swallowed Objects *Everyday Household Items Can Cause Harm and Cost Pet Owners*

New York, NY – They say “the cat swallowed the canary”, but what about a dog swallowing a pair of panty hose or a hearing aid? It’s true. **An unusual list of pets’ most commonly swallowed objects proves our furry friends really may eat just about anything-some may surprise pet parents.**

While it’s true that chew toys and treats can pose potential threats, pet owners may be amazed to know they actually rank low on the top ten swallowed items list. **Local veterinarians say it’s often the least suspected household items pets can be attracted to, like dental floss or socks.**

PETS’ TOP TEN MOST COMMONLY SWALLOWED OBJECTS	
1. SOCKS	6. CHEW TOYS
2. UNDERWEAR	7. CORN COBS
3. PANTY HOSE	8. BONES
4. ROCKS	9. HAIR TIES
5. BALLS	10. STICKS



SOURCE: Veterinary Pet Insurance Co. (VPI)

“While it may seem strange that a pet would actually swallow some of these items,” says Dr. Jennifer Mlekoday, a veterinarian and Co-Chief of Staff at West Chelsea Veterinary in Manhattan, “pets that ingest any foreign body could land themselves in a serious medical situation and put their owners in a potentially costly and heartbreaking position.”

A foreign body is anything ingested other than a pet’s own wet or dry food. Although popular, rawhides and marrow bones can be risky choices for treats, because they can obstruct or cause damage anywhere along an intestinal tract, if not digested properly. “While some objects can pass naturally, others have a tendency to become compacted or lodged in pets’ gastrointestinal tracts, resulting in pain, vomiting, or internal injury. In those cases, surgery may be an immediate necessity,” says Dr. Mlekoday. “It’s not just the big stuff either,” she says, “even things that seem too small to do damage, can. Individual items, that are small, can obstruct the narrow portions of the small intestine, especially if stomach acid is unable to break them down. I’ve seen small pieces of

rubber, very small toys (a Barbie® shoe!), and even uncooked chickpeas that have completely obstructed the intestine and required immediate surgery!”

Signs a pet may have ingested a foreign object:

- Repeated Vomiting and Dry Heaving
- Sensitive or bloated stomach, pain to the touch
- Continued stretching or attempting to get comfortable
- Extreme Lethargy
- Not eating

“Pet owners who suspect their pet has swallowed a foreign object should bring them to their family veterinarian as soon as possible,” urges Dr. Mlekoday. “Fast diagnosis and treatment lead to fewer complications and quicker recoveries for pets in trouble.”

So, what can pet owners do to keep their pets safe and prevent a costly vet visit? Dr. Mlekoday says her best advice for pet owners is to “give pets as much supervision as possible. Take a good look around the pet’s environment, using the pet’s point-of-view. Make sure personal items aren’t left lying around at a level where pets can gain access to them. When your dog’s rawhide or chew toy becomes small enough to swallow, just throw it away. Also, watch the sidewalk when out for a stroll. Tempting sidewalk foreign bodies can include discarded wrappers, popsicle sticks, and even half-eaten fried chicken meals. When visiting the dog run, take one lap around before setting your dog free. Check the area for items that don't belong and pick up any toys or balls your dog could swallow. ”

Media Opportunities: Dr. Jennifer Mlekoday, of West Chelsea Veterinary in Manhattan, is available for interview. Media inquiries, please contact Julie Robbins (646) 981-3342 / Julie@FetchingCommunications.com



About Jennifer Mlekoday, DVM, Co-Chief of Staff

Dr. Jennifer Mlekoday grew up in Andover, Minnesota, just outside of Minneapolis. She attended the University of Minnesota for her undergraduate and graduate studies, where she obtained her Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine. After graduation, she relocated to New York City to practice veterinary medicine. She joined the West Chelsea Veterinary staff in October of 2002. Her commitment to medical excellence earned her the title of West Chelsea Veterinary’s Co-Chief of Staff in January of 2005. Dr. Mlekoday is an aquarium hobbyist, motorcycle enthusiast and in her spare time enjoys camping, scuba diving and cooking. She lives in Manhattan with her two cats Tarzan and Danial and a miniature pinscher mix named Ernie.

About West Chelsea Veterinary

West Chelsea Veterinary was founded in 1997. Our exceptional health care team provides the highest quality of care to our patients and those that love them. We take great pride in our state-of-the-art-facility and our commitment to practicing cutting edge medicine and diagnostics. We are dedicated to giving our clients the guidance they need to make informed decisions with regard to their pet’s health.

At West Chelsea Veterinary, we consider each pet to be special and unique, and we will treat your treasured companion with the same caliber of care as we would demand for our own.