



Pet Care: Holiday Safety Tips

The holidays can be an exciting time with people visiting, lots of packages, lights, music, trees, wonderful smells from the kitchen, and days getting busier and busier. To ease your pet's stress, it's important to try to keep their routine as close to the same as possible. Of course we want to include our furry friends, but keeping their exercise and eating habits as close to their normal routines as possible is important. Be sure to also keep your pet from eating unhealthy treats, toxic plants and dangerous decorations.

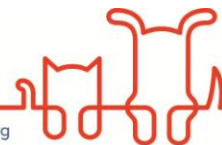
Christmas trees. Make sure your tree is securely anchored so it doesn't tip and fall, causing a possible injury to your pet. You can always use fishing line to secure your tree to the ceiling or wall in case of any accidents, and place your breakable ornaments in higher spots. This is also insuring that the tree water doesn't spill, which might include fertilizers. That and pinesap can be dangerous and could cause your pet to have an upset stomach. To prevent your pet from drinking the tree water, try covering the base around the stand with a tree skirt.

Tinsel. Kittens especially are attracted to this shiny, sparkly "toy" that they can bat around and carry in their mouths. A nibble can easily lead to them swallowing the tinsel, which can lead to an obstructed digestive tract and can cause severe vomiting, dehydration and possible surgery. If at all possible, try to find something else to decorate with, other than tinsel.

Food. It's very important that we keep our sweets and especially chocolate away from our furry friends. Along with chocolate, there are also many other things we need to keep in mind such as table scraps which often times have herbs and seasoning that can make our pets very sick. It's important to do your research before feeding them anything from the table – and instead of table scraps, try spoiling your pet with a new toy or pet biscuit. Be aware our pets can be sneaky and will try to reach anything left out on the counter.

Toys. We all love to give our pets gifts for the holiday season, but make sure to pick out toys and gifts that are safe for them. Some things to keep in mind:

- Dogs often like to tear toys apart and can swallow the smaller pieces that come off which can lead to them becoming lodged into the esophagus, stomach or intestines.
- Kong toys are a great and safe gift for your pet to enjoy, and it can be cheap to refill. It's easy to stuff different foods and treats in your pet's Kong to keep them entertained and safe from harm's way.
- Although our feline friends enjoy the long, stringy toys, these can be the most risky toys for them. It's important to watch out for ribbon, yarn, string and other loose little parts that can get stuck in their intestines that can often lead to surgery. Instead, surprise your kitty with a new ball that's too big to swallow or a stuffed cat nip toy – they will be very happy.



Holiday plants. Some plants such as poinsettias, mistletoe, holly and various berries can cause pets to suffer from serious illness. Instead of taking the chance that your pet could ingest this, try to opt for some holly-jolly artificial plants to ensure that they are pet-safe.

Candles. Having that holiday glow is nice, but be sure not to leave them unattended because if they are knocked over it could cause a fire or our pets could burn themselves. Also use appropriate candle holders, and place them on a stable and higher surface out of reach.

Wires. Try to place electrical wires and cords along with lights strings in out-of-reach areas, especially if your pet is a chewer. Wires can deliver a potential lethal electrical shock to your pet. Also make sure that batteries are out of reach too, a punctured battery can cause burns to the mouth and esophagus.

House rules. If you have animal-loving friends who just need to play with your pet, ask them to feel free to start a nice play or petting session, but then after a while let your pet have the opportunity to retreat to their own quiet space. Sometimes our pets just need a little alone time in their own private space. Make sure to provide them ample fresh water and a nice place to snuggle up and relax. Often times the noise can be too overwhelming for our furry friends and it's nice to have an outlet for them.

