

Happy Holidays




Lights, decorations, good food... every year, as we celebrate the holidays, we fill our homes with seasonal cheer for ourselves and our families. However, what may seem beautiful and harmless to us may pose hidden dangers to our pets. Don't let an emergency spoil the festivities! Below are some common holiday hazards for dogs and cats and ways to prevent them.

Holiday Hazard	Keeping Your Pets Safe
Dangerous Foods	The following can be toxic to pets: chocolate, raisins, grapes, macadamia nuts, garlic, onion, alcohol, caffeinated beverages, bread dough, and sugar-free candy and gum containing the artificial sweetener xylitol.
Regular Foods	Despite tradition, bones should never be given to pets. Even beef, ham, and other "regular" foods that are not considered toxic can cause illness in pets. If your pet is a moocher, keep a saucer of his regular treats on the table to offer when he asks. He probably won't know the difference!
New Treats and Toys	Even a pet-safe treat can cause stomach upset if it is new to your pet. Offer only one of these at a time (ideally, separated by a few days). If your pet becomes ill after eating a holiday treat, it will be easier to trace the source and discontinue it. Also, check new toys for sharp edges, pieces that can be chewed off, or other potential hazards.

Holiday Hazard	Keeping Your Pets Safe
Plants	Hazardous plants include mistletoe, some evergreens (including some types of pine), and holly bushes and berries. Try to keep these plants away from pets, or at least supervise pets when dangerous plants are nearby.
Decorations	Tinsel, tree ornaments, ribbons, string, and garlands are some items that can be dangerous if eaten by pets. Keep these items away from pets -- especially when pets are unattended. Don't forget to cover any electrical cords or keep them out of reach.
Fire and Carbon Monoxide	Monitor pets near fireplaces, wood-burning stoves, candles, and portable heaters. Also, don't forget to check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors to make sure they are functioning properly. Space heaters, furnaces, and idling cars (in a garage) can increase the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning in pets and humans.
Christmas Trees	Monitor your pets when they are around your holiday tree. Pets may eat the needles (even from artificial trees) or drink water from the base of the tree, which can be toxic (especially if there are preservatives in it). Keep electrical cords and decorative lights out of reach, too.

In many cases, if your pet has eaten or drunk something toxic, warning signs will include gastrointestinal problems, such as vomiting and diarrhea. Other signs may include tiredness and lack of appetite, especially in cats that have eaten lilies. If your pet shows any of these signs, or if you think he or she has eaten something dangerous but is not showing any signs yet, please call your Veterinarian right away. Treating your pet as soon as possible is essential!

Information is courtesy of:
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