



Pet Safety During the Holidays

These safety tips are from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)

As you gear up for the holidays, it is important to try to keep your pet's eating and exercise habits as close to their normal routine as possible. It is also important to steer pets clear of the unhealthy treats, toxic plants and dangerous decorations.

Be Careful with Seasonal Plants and Decorations

- **Oh, Christmas Tree:** Securely anchor your Christmas tree so it doesn't tip and fall, causing possible injury to your pet. This will also prevent the tree water—which may contain fertilizers that can cause stomach upset—from spilling. Stagnant tree water is a breeding ground for bacteria, and your pet could end up with nausea or diarrhea should he imbibe.
- **Avoid Mistletoe & Holly:** Holly, when ingested, can cause pets to suffer nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Mistletoe can cause gastrointestinal upset and cardiovascular problems. And many varieties of lilies can cause kidney failure in cats if ingested. Opt for just-as-jolly artificial plants made from silk or plastic or choose a pet-safe bouquet.
- **Tinsel-less Town:** Kitties love this sparkly, light-catching "toy" that's easy to bat around and carry in their mouths. But a nibble can lead to a swallow, which can lead to an obstructed digestive tract, severe vomiting, dehydration, and possible surgery. It's best to brighten your boughs with something other than tinsel.
- **That Holiday Glow:** Don't leave lighted candles unattended. Pets may burn themselves or cause a fire if they knock candles over. Be sure to use appropriate candle holders, placed on a stable surface. And if you leave the room, put the candle out!
- **Wired Up:** Keep wires, batteries and glass or plastic ornaments out of paws' reach. A wire can deliver a potentially lethal electrical shock and a punctured battery can cause burns to the mouth and esophagus, while shards of breakable ornaments can damage your pet's mouth and digestive tract.



Visit www.lwrcert.org for more tips on how to keep yourself, your family and your home safe during the holidays and year-round.

Avoid Holiday Food Dangers

- **Skip the Sweets:** By now you know not to feed your pets chocolate and anything sweetened with xylitol. Keep your pets away from the table and unattended plates of food. Be sure to secure lids on garbage cans.
- **Leave the Leftovers:** Fatty, spicy and no-no human foods, as well as bones, should not be fed to your furry friends.
- **Careful with Cocktails:** If your celebration includes adult holiday beverages, be sure to place your unattended alcoholic drinks where pets cannot get to them. If ingested, your pet could become weak, ill and may even go into a coma, possibly resulting in death from respiratory failure.
- **Selecting Special Treats:** Stick with chew toys that are basically indestructible, Kongs that can be stuffed with healthy foods or chew treats that are designed to be safely digestible. Long, stringy things are a feline's dream, but the most risky toys for cats involve ribbon, yarn and loose little parts that can get stuck in the intestines, often necessitating surgery.



Plan a Pet-Safe Holiday Gathering

- **House Rules:** If your animal-loving guests would like to give your pets a little extra attention and exercise while you're busy tending to the party, ask them to feel free to start a nice play or petting session.
- **Put the Meds Away:** Make sure all of your medications are locked behind secure doors and be sure to tell your guests to keep their meds zipped up and packed away, too.
- **A Room of Their Own:** Give your pet his own quiet space to retreat to—complete with fresh water and a place to snuggle. Shy pups and cats might want to hide out under a piece of furniture, in their carrying case or in a separate room away from the hubbub.
- **New Year's Noise:** As you count down to the new year, please keep in mind that strings of thrown confetti can get lodged in a cat's intestines, if ingested, perhaps necessitating surgery. Noisy poppers can terrify pets and cause possible damage to sensitive ears. And remember that many pets are also scared of fireworks, so be sure to secure them in a safe, escape-proof area as midnight approaches.



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