Holiday Safety for Dogs

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

We want the holidays to be a happy time for you and your pet, not a time for an emergency visit to your veterinarian. The food and decorations that make the holidays so much fun for us can be dangerous for your pet. We don't want this article to dampen your holiday spirits, but we do want you to be aware of the dangers and plan carefully to avoid these potential hazards.

Dangerous Holiday Foods

Foods you eat or drink that you should never give your pet:

- Rich, fatty foods, like gravy or grease, can cause problems ranging from stomach upsets to pancreatitis.
- Alcohol can cause serious intoxications in pets, and many pets are attracted to the sweet taste of drinks, especially eggnog. Be sure to clean up and rinse all glasses after Christmas parties.
- Chocolate, coffee, and tea all contain components called xanthines that are dangerous to animals. Chocolate is especially a problem because pets love its flavor. Unsweetened baking chocolate and dark chocolate are the worst culprits, but all chocolate, fudge and other candy should be placed out of your pet's reach. A safe alternative would becarob drop dog treats.
- Bones from fish, meat or poultry can also cause problems if swallowed. Be sure to keep bones (other than those made for dogs) away from your pet. Rawhides, Busy Buddy Bouncy Dog Bones, and hardened, sterilized bones are much better alternatives for your pet's chewing needs.

Poisonous Plants

We all like making our homes more festive for the holidays. We enjoy the green foliage and colorful flowers of plants. Unfortunately, many of the plants we have in our homes during the holidays can be poisonous to pets. **Never** let your pet chew or eat any of these holiday plants:

• Holly • Mistletoe • Poinsettias • Hibiscus

So when you brighten up your home, please place these plants well out of your pet's reach, or use imitation holiday plants.

Gifts Under the Tree

Rawhide or other edible items left under the tree can be very tempting. And remember that companies (even Drs. Foster and Smith!) often package rawhide or other pet gifts wrapped in ribbon. Make sure to remove ribbons or ties before you present

*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*

gifts to your pet. If played with and swallowed, yarn, ribbon or string on gifts can cause intestinal obstruction, requiring surgery.

Batteries for toys or other gifts can be toxic and cause intestinal obstruction. Keep in a safe place until they are ready to be inserted in the gift.

Christmas Trees

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, how careful we must be. Christmas trees and their decorations can create hazards for pets.

Place your Christmas tree in a stable stand, and attach it securely to a window or wall. We've known others who have hung their tree from the ceiling! Consider using a Scat Mat to keep pets away, and make sure your pet is always supervised when in a room with a tree.

Tinsel's shininess is attractive. When eaten, it can cause blockages, which often require surgery to remove. This year, think about leaving it off the tree altogether.

Chewing on electrical cords can cause problems ranging from burned mouths, to electrical shock to death by electrocution. Unplug decorative lights when you're not there or spray cords with No-Chew Deterrent Spray.

Place ornaments that are shiny, or could be swallowed or broken high up on your tree. Larger, less intriguing ornaments can go near the bottom.

Decorating trees with food is asking for problems. Candy canes and gingerbread people can be as enticing to your pet as they are to children. We know of one diabetic dog who ran into some problems with regulating her disease because she was stealing candy canes off of the tree. Popcorn, raisin, or cranberry garlands are beautiful, but can cause an obstruction when eaten, requiring surgery.

Visitors

Some pets love visitors and behave very well. Others may be fearful or aggressive. If your pet tends to be fearful around strangers or in crowds, make sure she has a quiet room to sneak away to that has water, food, a place to rest, and if you have a cat, a litter box. When inviting visitors, make sure they know you have a pet. If these people have allergies, you can help them by using a product such as Perfect Coat Bath Wipes to make sure your pet's haircoat smells fresh and is dander free when near the guests in your house.

Pet Gifts and Treats

When choosing a holiday gift for your special friend, be sure it's safe - no small pieces that could come off and be swallowed. Choose healthy holiday treats for your pet and give them in moderation. Our Premium All Natural Biscuits make a great treat for almost any dog and are much healthier than human table food.

The holidays are a time of great fun and excitement for everyone. With a little planning and by following these precautions it can be a safe and fun time for your pet as well.

*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*