Halloween Safety for Your Pet

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Soon enough the season of costumes and Jack-O'-Lanterns will fill our neighborhoods with an endless parade of trick-or-treaters heading for our doorsteps. This year, be prepared to make the season a safe one for all members of the family. Here are some important tips our veterinarians recommend:

1. Halloween season is a time of mischief and pranks, and too often dogs and cats become unwilling participants. Keep your pets well supervised in the yard or, better yet, keep them indoors and safe from neighborhood hooligans at night.

2. If your dog has the personality and temperament to accompany the while kids trick-or-treating, there are a variety of costumes available in pet-friendly sizes. Just make sure the costume doesn't interfere with his ability to breathe, see, hear, move, or bark. Always make sure the fit isn't constricting, and keep an eye out for signs your dog may be getting stressed out.

3. Like any other night you take your dog for a stroll, make sure he's wearing his collar and nametag/ID. And with so many other people on the street, it's important to keep him on a lead or leash. Many styles are now offered with reflective or lighted features.

4. Just as you'd make sure your kids aren't eating unsafe candy, never let your dog get a hold of any bite-size sweets. Candy and wrappers are potential

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choking hazards, and chocolate is particularly dangerous for dogs - a toxin. Instead, pick up a container of your pet's favorite biscuits and treats.

5. No other time of year will so many strange kids (in even stranger costumes) be knocking on your door. This can be especially nerve-wracking for the territorial dog. With the door opening and closing all night, be careful of him darting out. You may even want to put up a temporary gate in the entranceway, or keep your pup in a separate room.

6. For nervous animals, the haunting screams of kids and the endless chiming of doorbells can become overwhelming. Our calming products are designed for storm- and travel-shy pets and they are also useful on Halloween.

7. Finally, decorations and Jack-O'-Lanterns are tempting for pets. Needless to say, it's too easy for them to get hurt if left unsupervised, whether it's in a tangle of crepe paper or a singed coat from an open flame. Always keep these Halloween favors out of your pet's reach!

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