

'Tis the Season to Take Extra Precautions for Your Pet's Safety

provided by American Humane

Christmas, Chanukkah & Kwanza

This a wonderful time of year. But make sure it's a wonderful time for your pets, as well. The decorations, food, and festivities can add up to disaster for your companion animal.



Here are some very important pet safety tips provided by American Humane.

Christmas trees

- Hang breakable, glass ornaments well out of reach. The small glass and metal fastenings can be stepped on or even swallowed by your pet.
- Keep tinsel, ribbons, and garland out of reach of pets, especially cats that are intrigued by them. These can become lodged in their intestines and cause obstruction and lead to surgery or death.
- Clean up pine needles frequently. They can be toxic when eaten by your pet.
- Prevent your pet from drinking water in the tree stand if you have added preservative chemicals. These can be poisonous to pets. Also, stagnant water can contain bacteria, which may lead to vomiting and diarrhea if ingested.

Holiday house plants

Although they add a warm touch, many plants can harm your pets. Keep these potentially dangerous bloomers well out of reach.

- Lilies can be deadly to cats, and many types can cause cats to have kidney failure.
- Poinsettias, although not as toxic as people often think, can upset your pet's digestive system.
- Mistletoe, especially the berries, is highly toxic, can cause stomach upset, and has the potential to cause fatal heart problems.
- Holly can cause vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, and lethargy.
- Certain types of Ivy, such as English Ivy, can also cause severe harm.
- Amaryllis can cause vomiting and diarrhea.
- Hibiscus can cause diarrhea.

Lights, candles, and fragrance

- Keep lights and extension cords safely secured or covered to deter chewing, which can lead to electric shock or even electrocution. Better yet, invest in pet-proof extension cords, or spray with products such as Bitter Apple or Chew Stop.
- Candles can be fragrant and enticing to pets. But they can be a fire hazard if knocked over by an exuberant pet, and the fumes can be harmful to birds.
- Nicotine is a stimulant that can increase the heart rate leading to collapse, and in the worst case, even death.
- Liquid potpourri and sachets, popular during the holidays, can be very dangerous. Exposure can cause skin or oral damage to your pet and may cause illness or death.

Food

- Chocolate can affect the nervous system and cause urinary system and heart muscle damage in your pet.
- Onions are toxic. They inhibit an animal's ability to coagulate blood.
- Grapes and raisins can lead to loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and acute renal failure in dogs resulting in death.

Make the holidays special for your pet

Provide your pet some extra love and attention to let them know they're not forgotten.

- Take your dog for an extra walk -- it'll help both you and your pet relieve some of that holiday stress.
- Keep a supply of pet treats handy and reach for one before you're tempted to toss your pet that little bite of "people" food.
- Let your pet get into the gift-giving spirit by making a donation (e.g., food, litter, toys) to your local shelter in his name.

For a complete list of American Humane's seasonal animal tips, please visit <http://www.americanhumane.org>