

# '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>

# Reminders / Ideas For The Holidays

If you've been frustrated trying to keep decorations on the tree and your pets off of it,

these suggestions may help you make your house look festive, keep your pets safe -- and help you keep your sanity.

1. If you really would like to have a tree this holiday season, place one on an outdoor deck, patio, balcony, or porch. Or try a room that is off limits to your pets. An outdoor tree can be decorated to please the birds and squirrels and will be fun to watch for the entire family, including the pets.
2. Instead of a tree: Decorate a fireplace mantel or dining room buffet with miniature evergreens or artificial tree boughs decorated with velvet bows. Or you can decorate with real fruit, nuts or dried seed pods.
3. Hanging garland or gnarled grape vines above the door frames will provide your home with holiday cheer yet prevent your pets from jumping up to it. Decorate with tiny lights, bows or miniature ornaments.
4. Craft stores now carry two-dimensional trees that are meant to hang on the wall. These can be decorated to suit anyone's taste or decor. Once on the wall, your pet will be forced to admire it from a distance.



If you do have a tree: Cayenne Pepper works! Sprinkle the pepper on the tree & tree skirt. (Be careful! It will work on you too!) It'll look like a light dusting of red snow. Chili pepper or Paprika will not work. (Works in the yard too.)

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### **\*DANGERS\***

#### ELECTRICAL CORDS

If tempted to chew on cords, enclose them in plastic casing available at hardware stores or rub the cords with hot pepper sauce, eucalyptus oil, cayenne pepper or bitter apple.

#### CANDLES

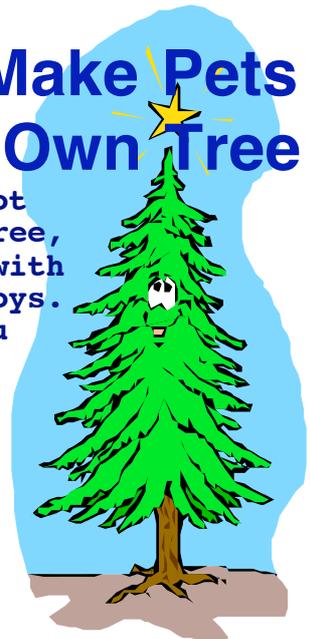
Place glass chimneys over any candles you burn to keep your pet from accidentally catching itself or your home on fire.

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## Make Pets Their Own Tree

Use a two foot artificial tree, decorate it with cat or dog toys. For cats, you can also sprinkle it with catnip.



## Household Hints "Gift Wrapping Can Harm Pets"

### Dear Heloise:

I am the owner of a young (2 yrs. old) cat named Kasper. I adopted him at the Humane Society. I read numerous books on how to take care of a cat and also watched a video prior to adopting him, but I was never informed of the danger of yarn or ribbon that you use to wrap gifts.

One day my cat was having a grand time playing with a gift that we had wrapped for a birthday party. It had all kinds of ribbons dangling from it.

Not aware of its danger, we allowed him to continue playing with it. We left the room, but when we returned we discovered that the ribbon was missing and, worse than that, the cat may have eaten it! Two days later, the cat's life was in danger. He had some serious medical complications in his digestive tract and was not expected to survive the operation. Unfortunately, Kasper had to undergo two serious operations only because we were not aware of this danger.

I am 11 years old and I pay for all of Kasper's medical expenses, food and litter. I pour all of my heart into my cat, and all of my allowance!

Thanks to the veterinarian, Kasper's life was spared. In the future, I will protect Kasper with all of my might.

I'm doing my part to educate the public of the dangers of allowing your furry loved ones to play with ribbons and yarn.

Kristen  
Tampa, FL

We're so happy Kasper survived. **So many PETowners have written us about their pets choking on shoelaces, strings, yarn, ribbon, bows, etc. It's amazing how many household items can be fatal to a pet.** You're a very responsible and loving pet owner and your letter is important for ALL pet owners to read.

Thanks for writing.



## TREE TINSEL & ANGEL HAIR TOO !!!

*If you go away for the holidays be sure to leave, for your Pet Sitter:  
The phone number where you can be reached, pet ins. info., the name,  
phone & address of your pet's vet, & permission for emergency treatment.*

## Plants That Poison

Potential killers or the cause of serious illness if eaten:

**CHERRIES** (wild & cultivated), twigs and foliage  
**CHERRY LAUREL**, all parts are very dangerous  
(contains hydrocyanic acids)  
**CHERRY SEEDS**, see **CHERRY LAUREL**  
**CHRISTMAS BERRY**, berries  
**CHRISTMAS ROSE**, all parts, esp. leaves  
**HOLLY**, leaves and berries  
**IVY**, all parts  
**MISTLETOE**, plant is poisonous, berries  
are fatal  
**POINSETTIA**, leaves and sap are fatal  
**TREE -WREATH** Needles, bark, pine cones are toxic  
And the **WATER** in a X-mas tree reservoir is also  
harmful



## Stow candy and treats.

**Holiday Candy can be  
harmful, even toxic, to  
pets.**

Have some of your  
pet's favorite treats,  
manufactured specifically  
for them, on hand so they  
can join in the fun.

**Know The Location  
& Phone Number  
Of Your Nearest  
Animal Emergency Center**

**Wishing You A Safe & Furry Holiday**

Information compiled from: L.A. Times, Catnip Newsletter, & Cat Fancy Magazine

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