



Along With Cheer, Holiday Season Can Bring Hazards To Pets*

Thanksgiving is at hand, and the rest of the holiday season looms ahead. It's a busy time, but you need to make sure in the whirl of activities that you aren't ignoring any danger to your pets.

The bad news is that many pets will end up at the veterinarian's office this holiday season. The good news is that yours won't be among them if you keep an eye out for these hazards.

Thanksgiving: Don't share the goodies

We love to share food with our pets, and what better time to do it than on Thanksgiving? Your pet knows something special is cooking and he lets you know he's interested -- just look at those begging eyes! How can you resist slipping your pet a little something special: a big piece of turkey skin, a handful of chips with dip, some slices of salami? Resist, or your pet could be spending his holiday at the emergency veterinary clinic.

Problem is, foods that are too rich, too fatty or too spicy -- or anything your pet's not accustomed to -- can trigger a bout of intestinal upset. For some animals, the treat can trigger a serious inflammation of the pancreas or intestine, and that means a life-threatening illness.

Foreign-body ingestion. Poultry bones may seem like the perfect gift for the pet who has everything, but do him a favor and save them for the soup. (Low-fat broth is a wonderful treat poured over your pet's regular food.) Even the largest turkey bones are prone to splintering, sending shards through the animal's intestines. Should one pierce through the lining, the result can be deadly peritonitis.

What to avoid? Anything that you wouldn't eat, your pet should avoid, too. And while a little bit of lean meat -- beef or poultry - can be added to your pet's meal, steer clear of the fatty parts and poultry skin. And no gravy!

While you're waiting for the Thanksgiving feast to begin, don't share the appetizers, either. And as for the sweets in festive holiday bowls? Put them out of reach, so your pets don't help themselves.

The Christmas tree is full of hazards for dogs and cats. Tinsel can be an appealing target for play, but if ingested, it can twist up the intestines. This is a particular danger to cats and kittens, who seem to find tinsel -- along with yarn, ribbon and string -- especially appealing to eat.

Ornaments, too, are deadly in the mouths -- and stomachs -- of pets, and even the water at the base of the tree contains secretions that can at the very least cause a stomachache. Light strings are no good for chewing, and the whole tree can come down on the cat climbing in its branches. Some dogs may even be inclined to break the rules of house-training on a freshly cut tree -- why else, they reason, would anyone bring a tree into the house? The best way to handle the situation is by making the tree off-limits to your pets unless you're there to watch and keep them out of trouble.

Poisonings. Holiday plants such as Mistletoe, Poinsettias and Easter lilies may look intriguing to your pet, but they're also toxic, as are the bulbs of the amaryllis plant. And before you share your holiday candy with your pet, be aware that chocolate is toxic to dogs, and may be deadly to the little dog who gets a good-sized piece. Again, the best cure is prevention. Keep all dangerous plants out of the reach of your pets, and keep the candy dish available to people only.

Poison control center a number to know

If you're not sure about what can be toxic to your pets, you might want to review the information on the Web site of the [American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#).

The ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center is where veterinarians call when they need quick answers for patients who've been poisoned, and the information provided to the general public on toxic plants and products is the best you'll find anywhere.

It's also a good place to check out the rumors that pop up on the Internet regarding various products. The APCC is prompt about investigating such dire warnings and about posting its expert opinion on the Web site on whether or not the concerns are justified.

We will be closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Years Day. If you have any concerns about your pets please call The Animal Emergency Center at 1-248-348-1788.

If you have any questions we will be happy to help. Please call the Animal Health Clinic at 810-629-9882

Have a safe and happy holiday season.

*Information from: www.veterinarypartner.com