



Holiday Hazards

The holidays are coming. Oh boy, your pet is thinking. This is what I've been looking for – a chance to pig out and get into all kinds of trouble! It would be much better to take precautions to keep your pets healthy and avoid the ER this holiday season.

Foods

Food is the cause of many holiday emergencies. Keep everything wrapped and out of your pets reach. Don't discover how high your pet can jump onto your kitchen counter! One of the biggest problems is just overeating.

Strings off turkey, the wrappings off meat, and everything you leave on the counter or put in the garbage are potential feasts. Dogs will wolf down without asking questions and even some cats get into the garbage. At the least, it will cause diarrhea, at the worst a stomach blockage or severe pancreatitis. All of these can mean a trip to the vet.



Everyone knows that chocolate is bad for pets. The type of chocolate and amount makes a difference. The darker the chocolate the more likely it is to cause problems. Other foods that can be toxic include xylitol (often-in sugar-free candy and gum), macadamia nuts, bread dough, alcohol, grapes or raisins, onions and garlic.

If you know your pet has eaten something potentially toxic, call the **Pet Poison Helpline®**, at **855-764-7661**, or us to find out what you should do.

Plants

Poinsettia plants have gotten a bad rap for being toxic to pets. The plant is not truly poisonous. If your pet chews on the plant, though, he will regret it. The milky sap in it can be irritating and cause drooling or vomiting.



It is usually mild, however, and most pets don't need any treatment. Mistletoe and holly are also overrated on the toxicity scale and irritate more than poison.

On the other hand, Japanese yew that often makes up wreaths can be deadly as can lilies and amaryllis. It's best to keep them out of your house. Don't take a chance.

Check out any plant that you want to have in your home to see if it's toxic. Cats are especially prone to poisoning from plants so even a high shelf won't necessarily keep them away.

Pine needles, if eaten, can make your pet sick. Fortunately, the water in the Christmas tree stand is usually not a problem. However, products added to keep your tree fresh so it lasts longer can be an issue. Try to find a product that is pet-safe.

Ornaments and decorations

Tinsel, ribbons, string, or anything that is thin and long can be a very serious hazard. Cats especially are attracted to these things. They can cause serious injury to the intestines and even death. Be extremely cautious with these.

Many pets are attracted to ornaments. They can break glass ones or swallow others. Homemade ornaments are often made with large amounts of salt, which can sicken your pet.

Some pets will chew electrical cords from trees and lights. This can cause burns on the mouth or electrical shock. Keep all batteries, especially any button ones, off of tables and counters. Candles can also be a potential hazard to your pet and to your home, if knocked over.



Liquid potpourri can be a serious problem for cats. The essential oils used in them can be very toxic.

Peace and quiet

Some pets are stressed from all the activity and noise that happens with people visiting and schedules changing. Try to keep things as normal as possible. Provide a little more attention to your pets and have a place where they can get away from it all. Some stress relieving supplements or medications might be the answer.



Help your pets have a happy holiday along with you.