

Holiday Pet Safety Tips

Holidays are time for friends and family, and oftentimes that includes four-footed as well as two-footed. Keep your holidays merry, bright, and SAFE for everyone by keeping the following tips that we have collected from various sources over the years in mind.

Holiday decorations of all kinds can bring out the mischief in otherwise sedate pets, and can certainly be the focus of attention for any young household members- children, puppies and kittens alike. Restrict access to tinsel, lights and electrical cords, artificial snow, ornaments and other similar items if you are not certain how your companions will behave.



Be aware of holiday plants that are toxic as well as plants that you have moved into new locations as part of holiday decorating. Seeing a plant in a new or more accessible location may inspire renewed interest in taste-testing. Although poinsettias are likely to be top of mind, they are not among the most toxic. Holly, mistletoe, and many types of holiday bulbs including paperwhites, lilies and amaryllis, can cause severe gastrointestinal upset, convulsions, and even death. Other common houseplants like weeping figs and dieffenbachia also pose a risk. Otherwise basically innocuous plants like Christmas cactus may cause digestive upset when consumed in sufficient quantity; so again, be aware when decorating with plants.

Most people are aware that chocolate is highly toxic to dogs, but be advised that even in the form of a cocoa mulch, it may make your pet ill. It is wise to pay extra attention if holiday celebrations cause changes in regular schedules: a pet left to her own devices may start up with new and unwelcome behaviors, including eating mulch that she left alone in the past. Other common holiday and winter-time products like icemelt, antifreeze, batteries, and cut tree preservatives can pose a hazard to your pet's health, so be certain to keep these products up and out of your pet's reach. Even items like dried needles and holiday greens, potting soil from a tipped-over plant, and water from the Christmas tree stand can cause digestive upset.

Make sure that your tree is well-stabilized (a safety line may be needed) to prevent it from falling over when bumped by children or pets or jumped upon by aerobic pets. Play it safe, and minimize your pet's access to unfamiliar and possibly tempting and dangerous holiday items, to make certain that everyone enjoys the happiest of holidays.

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