

Holiday Dangers: Keep Your Pets Safe During the Holiday Season

As the holidays approach, food, guests and dangers for our pets are right around the corner. Keep these tips in mind as you prepare for the holiday season.

CHOCOLATE

Keep chocolate gift boxes in places where your dog can't reach, and be extra careful with dark chocolate or baker's chocolate. Dark chocolate is much worse than milk chocolate, as it takes less dark chocolate to make our pooches sick.

CHRISTMAS TREE/PLANTS

The Christmas tree may offer a new place for your cat to play. Cats can tip over trees so make sure to secure the trees, and if ingested tinsel can get stuck in a cat's intestines causing an obstruction.

Some of our pets may also like to drink Christmas tree water. Use a tree stand designed to prevent pets from accessing the water or cover the stand.

Also, watch out for holiday plants. Mistletoe ingestion can cause minor stomach upset. Poinsettia ingestion can cause stomach upset, and irritation and blistering of the mouth in dogs and cats. However, be most careful with lilies, which can cause lethal kidney failure in cats.

TABLE SCRAPS

Many of us eat a lot during the holidays and feel the need to allow our pets to indulge too. It's fine to give our furry friends some lean meat, but don't give them the fatty trimmings or you'll end up cleaning up after a sick pet or visiting your veterinarian with a pet that has pancreatitis.

ANTIFREEZE

Holiday visitors that are driving long distances may have cars that boil over with antifreeze. It is very sweet and only takes a lick or two to cause kidney failure.

PRESCRIPTIONS

Overnight visitors may also bring medications and prescriptions. Make sure they are not left on a bed stand or counter where your pets may get a hold of them.

Travel Safely With Your Pets

MEDICATIONS

Dogs may get motion sickness or just plain anxiety. If they get motion sickness, there are medications (Cerenia & Dramamine) that may prevent them from feeling sick.

If dogs or cats become anxious, sedatives may be an option. Some sedatives are safer than others. Acepromazine is commonly dispensed for both dogs and cats that have anxiety while traveling. However, this medication can drop blood pressure and cause excessively long sedation, and therefore, may not be a good option for older animals or those with heart or other health problems. Benadryl is a safer option for most dogs and cats. It is often better to keep dogs alert and not overly sedated when they are traveling in cargo. Try these medications at home prior to travel.

AIR TRAVEL

Make sure your pets are up to date on vaccinations and then get a health certificate. When making a reservation for your pet with your airline provider, ask what type of documentation is necessary. Often a health certificate is needed. If their weight is above the on-board weight restriction, then the health certificate may need to state that your pet can withstand only certain temperatures that they may be subject to while in cargo. Also, make sure the health certificate is within the appropriate date range prior to the dates of travel. For example, some airlines require that the health certificate be written within 10 days of travel.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Check with the consulate of the country to which you are traveling and your veterinarian as far in advance as possible for any additional restrictions. Your pet may need certain vaccines, a microchip or other medications prior to travel.

Happy Holidays!

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