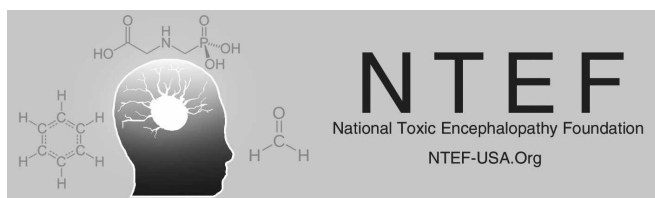


*THE ULTIMATE PET OWNERS GUIDE
FOR A SAFER & HEALTHIER HOLIDAY
SEASON, SOCIAL EVENTS OR
SAFETY/HEALTH IN GENERAL.*



PROVIDED BY:



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Pets are very intuitive to their owner's emotions and stress. With any type of social activity preparations, pets will notice the disruption in the home. When making plans for parties, barbecues, holiday celebrations, make sure that you incorporate how to handle your pets.

Remember pets can get stressed so keep an eye on them so that changes in personality can be addressed immediately. Keep giving them attention while you prepare for the holidays or any other social function at the home. Remember they are creatures of habit. Try to keep to the pet's routine as much as possible. If you are having a party that conflicts with their normal feeding time, your pet is the priority and move their routine to an earlier time, rather than waiting until after the party.

If your pet tends to be hyper, look into boarding them for the day of the celebration. As they will have the tendency to try to escape with all the activity of people coming into the home.

If that's not an option, have them confined to a room that they are familiar with and have 'noise' in the room, to mute the activity in the home.

If you chose to have them involved in the festivities, make sure that their identification tags are up to date and keep an eye that they aren't getting into mischief.

Under no condition should you keep your pets outside or in the garage when entertaining especially during extreme heat or cold weather.

Fireworks are not only for the 4th of July. New Years Eve fireworks display can stress out a pet and the same precautions you take on the 4th, should also be practiced this evening. The confetti and streamers from New Years Eve poppers can be ingested by pets.

FOODS TO AVOID:

Most pets are food beggars and don't think that the holidays should be any different than any other meal. Guests need to be reminded not to give them anything, no matter how 'pathetic' they look at them for food.

Pet's digestive systems are different than ours and we need to remember they aren't furry little humans.

A lot of holiday foods contain a large amount of fat, such as turkey and chicken skins, red meats, pies, cheeses, gravies, which can cause inflammation and potentially impact their pancreas, salty and high sugar content. The temptation of the cooked bones in the garbage pail need to be removed from them as soon as

possible. Cooked bones can splinter and cause damage as they move thru their digestive tract.

Rising bread dough will expand from the heat in the pet's stomach. Which converts into ethanol and warrants immediate vet attention.

While most holiday candies have nuts in them, anything with Macadamia nuts is an urgent medical situation. Tremors, muscle weakness and vomiting will occur. Almonds and walnuts can possibly present problems also.

No amount of any alcohol-based drink is acceptable. Even non-alcoholic eggnog is to be avoided, as dogs are lactose intolerant. Juices, soda, tea and coffee should not be offered.

Candy is to be removed from within their reach or in covered dishes. Nor should there be any candy that is wrapped as a gift under the tree or hanging in the stockings be accessible to them. Dogs are extremely sensitive to chocolate from the methylxanthines (specifically caffeine and theobromine) in it. The darker/bitter the chocolate the higher content of these chemicals. **ANY chocolate ingestion requires an immediate call to either your vet or animal poison control center 855-213-6680.** Be cognizant of the following symptoms, vomiting, diarrhea, rapid breathing, elevating temperature, seizures, muscle rigidity, increased heart rate, extreme thirst, excess energy, panting, shaking. This is not the time to take a 'wait and see' approach, without a vet's approval.

Remember that pets love shiny items, so candy that is wrapped in silver, gold foil is irresistible to them.

Xylitol is primarily found in products labeled as 'sugar free'. This alternative is highly toxic and immediate emergency vet attention is warranted for dogs. This can cause a rapid drop in blood pressure, seizures and in some cases sudden death. After treatment there is still the risk of life-threatening liver failure.

As a side note, sometimes vets prescribe small doses of children's elixirs, which also can contain xylitol in them. There is now sugar free peanut butter so be sure to check the labels for this. **No amount of xylitol is safe for dogs.**

If you plan to decorate your tree with popcorn, candy canes, ginger bread people, cranberry strands, homemade treats, these will provide the ultimate temptation and should be reconsidered.

While some berries (blue, raspberry or strawberries), bananas, peeled and cored apples are fine in small quantities, other fruits are problematic, especially grapes, raisins and currants (related to grapes).

With the holidays people tend to get more 'creative' with their food and the following are of concern: Garlic, onions, cherries (pits), mushrooms, tomatoes (stems, leaves), rhubarb leaves, potatoes (Solanine is the greenish area on the skin, either raw or cooked), moldy foods.

The temptation of food on the table, might be more easily achieved by tugging on the tablecloth.

Remind your guests to keep their pocketbooks closed, especially if they carry gum, medicine or mints in them.

PLANTS:

Holly, mistletoe, ivy and poinsettia plants are poisonous to pets. Make sure they are kept in places your pet can't reach. The poinsettia has a sap that seeps out when the leaves are opened.

The most dangerous plants to cats are lilies, including Stargazer, Day, Asian, Glory, Rubrum, Tiger lilies, Daffodil, Crocus, Amaryllis, Hibiscus should be avoided. If you think your cat has brushed or rubbed up against the flowers and has pollen on them, bath immediately. If you suspect that your cat has nibbled no matter how much of a Lily, get the cat to the vet immediately, its vital for their survival.

Ingestion by your pets can have symptoms that range from moderate to severe toxicity, tremors, seizures, coma, and death. With all the beautiful artificial arrangements available now, it's worth the investment for the future health of your pets.

CANDLES:

Nothing adds more to the holiday season than candles, whether on the dining table or as decorations on the fireplace mantle, windows or end tables. Fires are a main concern and the flickering of the lights are fascinating to pets. Cats can knock them off the shelves, windows, a dog's tail can swipe them off of lower areas. Purchase LED candles, so that you will have no fire safety concerns with them. They come in all shapes, sizes, colors, some appearing as 'dripping/melting', that fulfills the intended purpose and removes worrying about fires.

AIR FRESHENERS/FRAGRANCES:

Pets have a more highly developed sense of smell and the products we might find appealing, can be an irritant to them. The chemicals that make up that 'aroma' that invokes 'holiday' memories, is made from synthetic chemicals, with

known health hazards to the endocrine system, respiratory system, ocular and dermatological to humans. That pine scent is made up of terpenes that cause major inhalant allergies to humans, some pets have allergies also. If the pine needles are problematic to a pet, the oils/resins that make up that scent should also be avoided.

If you must have a holiday 'ambiance', make your own. It's as simple as mixing orange and lemon peels, cinnamon, cloves, vanilla extract/beans or pumpkin spice in boiling water and let it simmer on your stove. Add whatever smells you enjoy and create your own family holiday ambiance, while keeping the air healthier for every one at your home.

CHRISTMAS TREES, LIGHTS, ORNAMENTS:

Snow globes often contain a liquid that has an antifreeze like ingredient, which is toxic to pets. Clean up all the liquid if the globe should break, as ingestion of the liquid increases the possibility of death, as the liquid has a sweet taste that pets find irresistible.

Pine cones while used primarily for centerpieces, have sharp protrusions and the tough nature of pine cones can injure your pet's gums and cause problems within the intestinal tract.

Bear in mind, that pets can have allergies also and your live tree can affect them, just like it can humans.

Whether your tree is artificial or live, the needles are both sharp that can irritate their mouths and gums, indigestible and can puncture the pet's intestines. Live trees have a propensity to shed their needles and can also become embedded in their paws. Artificial trees can have small pieces breaking off that can be swallowed and trapped in their digestive tracts or choking them.

Live Christmas tree needles have fir oil in them and call the vet to determine what to do.

The water in the tree's reservoir needs to be made as inaccessible as possible. As the chemicals in the water that are used to preserve the tree are toxic to cats and dogs. Some people will add aspirin to 'preserve' the tree, which can compromise their health severely. The water can also contain flame-retardants, fertilizers and pesticides. Stagnant water can harbor bacteria.

Artificial snow or flocking can be ingested and cause stomach irritation or toxicity depending on how much was eaten.

Cut a piece of screen mesh to cover the reservoir to prevent any type of access from your pet, and then cover that with the tree skirt.

Some people will use a child's playpen to both keep the dog away from the water, presents, along with catching the falling needles. Place under the skirt of the tree, bubble wrap or aluminum foil that will distract some pets.

You can try to balance on the lower branches of the tree a small can with coins in it, which will startle them.

Trees will be the ultimate item to investigate for both cats and dogs. If possible bring the tree in a day or so earlier to allow the pets to get used to it prior to decorating. Sometimes using picture-hanging wire to secure the tree against the wall to prevent tipping or falling can prevent accidents.

Lights are very attractive to pets; try not to put lights on the lower branches of your tree or at the edge of the branches. Instead place the lights inside of the tree where there is less access for them. Even the smallest lights can heat up and burn your pet if chewed and possibly swallowed.

Some pets especially dogs are chewers and the electrical cords can cause burns, shock or electrocute them, try to keep them out of reach. You can try to put an anti-chew liquid as a deterrent. Tape or cover the cords to prevent chewing, when not at home unplug the lights. You can try using a 2 or 3 inch wide PVC tube that will allow the plug to pass thru that can contain the wires.

Some lights are battery operated and if chewed can burn both the mouth and esophagus.

Ornaments are the ultimate toys in a pet's mind, especially glass ones that reflect light from the tree lights. They are easily broken and if chewed can create a serious medical condition or get lodged in their paws.

Ornaments made out of Styrofoam can present a choking hazard.

Try to keep the glass ornaments on the upper branches to keep them out of reach and make sure that they are securely wired to prevent falling off. Especially those with a bell that mimic pet toys.

Ornaments that aren't breakable should be placed at the bottom in the event your pet gets their paws on them

The hooks that ornaments hang from can catch on the pet's ears or be eaten when chewing on an ornament that they acquired. You might want to look into using twist ties in lieu of metal hooks.

WRAPPING PAPER, TINSEL, RIBBONS:

While tinsel is a holiday staple, is a pet's 'dream toy' along with being a major health hazard to them, the same with 'Angel Hair', which is basically spun glass. Both can cause choking, intestinal blockage or other health concerns. As it both dangles, falls easily from the tree and is readily accessible to them.

Cats think the 'shiny' strands are a toy or something to eat. As it hangs from the tree and can be toyed with, easy to carry around and swallowed, if swallowed do not attempt to pull it out, have it checked out by a vet.

Wrapped presents under a tree are another source of 'fun' for pets. Ribbons while nice to use for wrapping, cause intestinal problems that warrant vet attention. If you wrap your pet's present, don't use ribbon on it, nor use ribbon as a holiday decoration on their collars etc., which can be ingested or caught on something.

Don't let them open packages for humans. If you buy toys for them, make sure that there are no small pieces, wrappings that can get lodged in their throats.

If you keep open presents under the tree, make sure anything with small pieces is removed from their vicinity.

WEATHER:

If left outside during a party or family gathering, pets can suffer from cold stress, frostbite and hypothermia from being exposed to temperatures below 35 degrees for any given time. Rock salt can be an irritant both on their skin and internally. In the fall, the potential for antifreeze being on roads and driveways increases, this warrants attention to their paws. If you don't want to wash their paws every time they come inside, purchase a pair of booties to protect them from all chemicals and elements. Same with heat in the summer time, keep them in a shaded area, with an adequate supply of cool, fresh water.

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