One of our readers mentioned that she would like to see some information about pet safety as we move toward holidays and cold weather. Since this is YOUR publication, here’s the response. I hope it helps those of us who love our furry little, and big, friends! Bob

Holiday Safety Tips [from ASPCA]

The holiday season is upon us, and many pet parents plan to include their furry companions in the festivities. As you gear up for the holidays, it is important to try to keep your pet's eating and exercise habits as close to their normal routine as possible. Also, please be sure to steer pets clear of the following unhealthy treats, toxic plants and dangerous decorations.

Be Careful with Seasonal Plants and Decorations

- Oh, Christmas Tree: Securely anchor your Christmas tree so it doesn't tip and fall, causing possible injury to your pet. This will also prevent the tree water—which may contain fertilizers that can cause stomach upset—from spilling. Stagnant tree water is a breeding ground for bacteria, and your pet could end up with nausea or diarrhea should he imbibe.

- Avoid Mistletoe & Holly: Holly, when ingested, can cause pets to suffer nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Mistletoe can cause gastrointestinal upset and cardiovascular problems. And many varieties of lilies can cause kidney failure in cats if ingested. Opt for just-as-jolly artificial plants made from silk or plastic, or choose a pet-safe bouquet.

- Tinsel-less Town: Kitties love this sparkly, light-catching "toy" that's easy to bat around and carry in their mouths. But a nibble can lead to a swallow, which can lead to an obstructed digestive tract, severe vomiting, dehydration and possible surgery. It's best to brighten your boughs with something other than tinsel.

- That Holiday Glow: Don't leave lighted candles unattended. Pets may burn themselves or cause a fire if they knock candles over. Be sure to use appropriate candle holders, placed on a stable surface. And if you leave the room, put the candle out!
• Wired Up: Keep wires, batteries and glass or plastic ornaments out of paws' reach. A wire can deliver a potentially lethal electrical shock and a punctured battery can cause burns to the mouth and esophagus, while shards of breakable ornaments can damage your pet's mouth and digestive tract.

Avoid Holiday Food Dangers

• Skip the Sweets: By now you know not to feed your pets chocolate and anything sweetened with xylitol, but do you know the lengths to which an enterprising pet will go to chomp on something yummy? Make sure to keep your pets away from the table and unattended plates of food, and be sure to secure the lids on garbage cans.

• Leave the Leftovers: Fatty, spicy and no-no human foods, as well as bones, should not be fed to your furry friends. Pets can join the festivities in other fun ways that won't lead to costly medical bills.

• Careful with Cocktails: If your celebration includes adult holiday beverages, be sure to place your unattended alcoholic drinks where pets cannot get to them. If ingested, your pet could become weak, ill and may even go into a coma, possibly resulting in death from respiratory failure.

• Selecting Special Treats: Looking to stuff your pet's stockings? Stick with chew toys that are basically indestructible, Kongs that can be stuffed with healthy foods or chew treats that are designed to be safely digestible. Long, stringy things are a feline's dream, but the most risky toys for cats involve ribbon, yarn and loose little parts that can get stuck in the intestines, often necessitating surgery. Surprise kitty with a new ball that's too big to swallow, a stuffed catnip toy or the interactive cat dancer.

Please visit our People Foods to Avoid Feeding Your Pets page for more information.

Plan a Pet-Safe Holiday Gathering

• House Rules: If your animal-loving guests would like to give your pets a little extra attention and exercise while you're busy tending to the party, ask them to feel free to start a nice play or petting session.

• Put the Meds Away: Make sure all of your medications are locked behind secure doors, and be sure to tell your guests to keep their meds zipped up and packed away, too.

• A Room of Their Own: Give your pet his own quiet space to retreat to—complete with fresh water and a place to snuggle. Shy pups and cats might want to hide out under a piece of furniture, in their carrying case or in a separate room away from the hubbub.

• New Year's Noise: As you count down to the new year, please keep in mind that strings of thrown confetti can get lodged in a cat's intestines, if ingested, perhaps necessitating surgery. Noisy poppers can terrify pets and cause possible damage to
sensitive ears. And remember that many pets are also scared of fireworks, so be sure to secure them in a safe, escape-proof area as midnight approaches.


And from AVMF

Holiday Pet Safety

December abounds with holiday celebrations, but nothing can spoil good cheer like an emergency trip to the veterinary clinic. These tips can help keep your winter holiday season from becoming not-so-happy – for your pet and for you.

Plan in Advance

Make sure you know how to get to your 24/7 emergency veterinary clinic before there’s an emergency. Talk with your veterinarian in advance to find out where you would need to take your pet, and plan your travel route so you’re not trying to find your way when stressed. Always keep these numbers posted in an easy-to-find location in case of emergencies:

- Your veterinarian’s clinic phone number
- 24/7 emergency veterinary clinic (if different)
- ASPCA Poison Control Hotline: 1-888-426-4435 (A fee may apply.)

Food

Keep people food away from pets. If you want to share holiday treats with your pets, make or buy treats formulated just for them. The following people foods are especially hazardous for pets:

- **Chocolate** is an essential part of the holidays for many people, but it is toxic to dogs and cats. Although the toxicity can vary based on the type of chocolate, the size of your pet, and the amount they ate, it’s safer to consider all chocolate off limits for pets.

- **Other sweets and baked goods** also should be kept out of reach. Not only are they often too rich for pets; an artificial sweetener often found in baked goods, candy and chewing gum, xylitol, has been linked to liver failure and death in dogs.

- **Turkey and turkey skin** – sometimes even in small amounts – can cause a life-threatening condition in pets known as pancreatitis.

- **Table scraps** – including gravy and meat fat – also should be kept away from pets. Many foods that are healthy for people are poisonous to pets, including onions, raisins and grapes. During the holidays, when our own diets tend toward extra-rich foods, table scraps can be especially fattening and hard for animals to digest and can cause pancreatitis.

- **Yeast dough** can cause problems for pets, including painful gas and potentially dangerous bloating.
Quick action can save lives. If you believe your pet has been poisoned or eaten something it shouldn’t have, call your veterinarian or local veterinary emergency clinic immediately. You may also want to call the ASPCA Poison Control Hotline: 1-888-426-4435. Signs of pet distress include: sudden changes in behavior, depression, pain, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Decorating

Greenery, lights and Christmas trees can make the holidays festive, but they also pose risky temptations for our pets.

- **Christmas trees** can tip over if pets climb on them or try to play with the lights and ornaments. Consider tying your tree to the ceiling or a doorframe using fishing line to secure it.
- **Water additives for Christmas trees** can be hazardous to your pets. Do not add aspirin, sugar, or anything to the water for your tree if you have pets in the house.
- **Ornaments** can cause hazards for pets. Broken ornaments can cause injuries, and ingested ornaments can cause intestinal blockage or even toxicity. Keep any homemade ornaments, particularly those made from salt-dough or other food-based materials, out of reach of pets.
- **Tinsel and other holiday decorations** also can be tempting for pets to eat. Consuming them can cause intestinal blockages, sometimes requiring surgery. Breakable ornaments or decorations can cause injuries.
- **Electric lights** can cause burns when a curious pet chews the cords.
- **Flowers and festive plants** can result in an emergency veterinary visit if your pet gets hold of them. Amaryllis, mistletoe, balsam, pine, cedar, and holly are among the common holiday plants that can be dangerous and even poisonous to pets who decide to eat them. Poinsettias can be troublesome as well. The ASPCA offers lists of plants that are toxic to dogs and cats.
- **Candles** are attractive to pets as well as people. Never leave a pet alone in an area with a lit candle; it could result in a fire.
- **Potpourris** should be kept out of reach of inquisitive pets. Liquid potpourris pose risks because they contain essential oils and cationic detergents that can severely damage your pet’s mouth, eyes and skin. Solid potpourris could cause problems if eaten.

Hosting Parties and Visitors

Visitors can upset pets, as can the noise and excitement of holiday parties. Even pets that aren’t normally shy may become nervous in the hubbub that can accompany a holiday gathering. The following tips will reduce emotional stress on your pet and protect your guests from possible injury.

- **All pets** should have access to a comfortable, quiet place inside if they want to retreat. Make sure your pet has a room or crate somewhere away from the commotion, where your guests won’t follow, that it can go to anytime it wants to get away.
- **Inform your guests** ahead of time that you have pets or if other guests may be bringing pets to your house. Guests with allergies or compromised immune systems (due to pregnancy, disease, or medications/ treatments that suppress the immune system) need to be aware of the pets
(especially exotic pets) in your home so they can take any needed precautions to protect themselves.

- **Guests with pets?** If guests ask to bring their own pets and you don’t know how the pets will get along, you should either politely decline their request or plan to spend some time acclimating the pets to each other, supervising their interactions, monitoring for signs of a problem, and taking action to avoid injuries to pets or people.

- **Pets that are nervous around visitors** should be put it in another room or a crate with a favorite toy. If your pet is particularly upset by houseguests, talk to your veterinarian about possible solutions to this common problem.

- **Exotic pets** make some people uncomfortable and may themselves be more easily stressed by gatherings. Keep exotic pets safely away from the hubbub of the holidays.

- **Watch the exits.** Even if your pets are comfortable around guests, make sure you watch them closely, especially when people are entering or leaving your home. While you’re welcoming hungry guests and collecting coats, a four-legged family member may make a break for it out the door and become lost.

- **Identification tags and microchips** reunite families. Make sure your pet has proper identification with your current contact information – particularly a microchip with up-to-date, registered information. That way, if they do sneak out, they’re more likely to be returned to you. If your pet isn’t already microchipped, talk to your veterinarian about the benefits of this simple procedure.

- **Clear the food** from your table, counters and serving areas when you are done using them – and make sure the trash gets put where your pet can’t reach it. A turkey or chicken carcass or other large quantities of meat sitting out on the carving table, or left in a trash container that is easily opened, could be deadly to your family pet. Dispose of carcasses and bones – and anything used to wrap or tie the meat, such as strings, bags and packaging – in a covered, tightly secured trash bag placed in a closed trash container outdoors (or behind a closed, locked door).

- **Trash** also should be cleared away where pets can’t reach it – especially sparkly ribbon and other packaging or decorative items that could be tempting for your pet to play with or consume.

**When You Leave the House**

- **Unplug decorations** while you’re not around. Cats, dogs and other pets are often tempted to chew electrical cords.

- **Take out the trash** to make sure your pets can’t get to it, especially if it contains any food or food scraps.

**Holiday Travel**

Whether you take your pets with you or leave them behind, take these precautions to safeguard them whenever you’re traveling. Learn more about traveling with pets.
• **Interstate and international travel** regulations require any pet you bring with you to have a health certificate from your veterinarian – **even if you are traveling by car**. Learn the requirements for any states you will visit or pass through, and schedule an appointment with your veterinarian to get the needed certificate within the timeframes required by those states. **Even Santa's reindeer need to get health certificates** for their annual flight around the world.

• **Pets in vehicles** should always be safely restrained and should never be left alone in the car in any weather. **Proper restraint** means using a secure harness or a carrier, placed in a location clear of airbags. Never transport your pet in the bed of a truck.

• **If you’re traveling by air** and considering bringing your pet with you, talk with your veterinarian first. Air travel can put some pets at risk, especially short-nosed dogs. Your veterinarian is the best person to advise you regarding your own pet’s ability to travel.

• **Pack for your pet** as well as yourself if you’re going to travel together. In addition to your pet’s food and medications, this includes bringing copies of their medical records, information to help identify your pet if it becomes lost, first aid supplies, and other items. Refer to our [Traveling with Your Pet FAQs](https://avma.org) for a more complete list.

• **Boarding your dog** while you travel? Talk with your veterinarian to find out how best to protect your pet from [canine flu](https://avma.org) and other contagious diseases, and to make sure your pet is up-to-date on vaccines.

[![HAPPY HOLIDAYS](https://avma.org)](https://avma.org)
10 Tips for a Safe Thanksgiving

1. Whether you’re hosting guests or travelling, check that your pet is wearing a collar and tag with your current contact information.

2. Update your pet’s microchip. If your pet isn’t microchipped, call your local shelter or veterinarian to make an appointment today!

3. If you’re leaving town without your pet, use a good pet sitter or boarding facility. Don’t leave pets alone for days – water bowls can spill and accidents can happen.

4. Explain to guests to be careful at doors. If your pet is a door dasher, keep him in another room while guests are coming in and out.

5. Make sure your pet gets his regular exercise and playtime whether with you or a pet sitter.

6. Keep toys and treats at hand when hosting guests to distract pets and reward good behavior.

7. Supervise all interactions between pets and kids for everyone’s safety.

8. If you’re hosting Thanksgiving guests, remind them not to feed your pet table scraps.

9. Have a counter-surfing pet? Ask a reliable guest to keep your pet occupied in another room during the cooking.

10. After the meal, remove all trash and bones immediately. Curious pets can cause themselves serious harm chewing on sharp bones!

For more information, check out Petfinder
FOR THOSE WITH LIVESTOCK, A FEW WEBSITES THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST:

http://extension.colostate.edu//severe-cold-weather-rangeland-and-livestock-considerations/

https://sam.extension.colostate.edu/LivestockManagementintheMountains2017.pdf

http://www.prep4agthreats.org/Natural-Disasters/winter-storms-pets-and-livestock

https://www.southernstates.com/articles/preparing-livestock-farm-for-winter.aspx

So, as we go into the holidays, remember that they are to be a time of peace, gathering, and rest, not stress and rush. If you start to feel stressed or worried, or notice these indications in someone else, please get help, help someone else, and whether you find joy in family, social groups, church, the outdoors, or simply quiet time, be good to yourself and others. We hope you have a holiday season filled with joy.  Bob and the TOD Team

This is your publication: if you have information that may be included here for the benefit of your fellow proctors, please send it to Bob Chaffee at Training and Organizational Development at this email address:

bob.chaffee@colostate.edu