

Christmas Pet Tips



As the holidays near and our homes fill with fun and excitement, it is important to remember that many potential hazards face our furry friends. Some of the hazards are more dangerous than others and some more obvious than others.

Electrocution Risks

- Many a curious kitties and the occasional puppy find the electric cords to be fascinating toys. The problem that can occur is when their sharp claws or teeth pierce into the wires. Electrocution may only cause minor burns to the tissues of the mouth and paws. However, it may cause more serious conditions in the lungs (fluid accumulation) or abnormal rhythms in the heart. A few ways to help prevent electric shock from occurring are to remove all tags from cords, try to prevent dangling of cords and if necessary be sure that pets are well supervised while around light cords and extension cords.

Ingestion Dangers

- The holidays usually see the arrival of foreign body ingestion. Tinsel is among the culprits of which to be mindful. This, along with other types of stringy toys, ribbons and decorations can cause blockage in the throat, stomach and intestine. This can cause vomiting, diarrhea, inappetance and lethargy. If you observe these symptoms in your cat or dog, a visit to your veterinarian is strongly advised. Unfortunately with string-type foreign bodies, a part of the string will lodge in one spot. The rest of the string moves through the intestines and can act like a saw and actually cut through the wall of the intestines. The best method of prevention is to keep all potentially hazardous objects out of reach. If your pet should be one of the lucky ones that "passes" the string please remember that pulling at the offending object as it moves out of your pet can cause much damage. Just cut it carefully and monitor closely. Unfortunately, not all pets are so lucky and require intensive medical and surgical intervention.

Food Follies

- Then there is the holiday food itself. Oh how tempting it all is.... chocolates, turkey, bones, fat..... It is best to stick with your pet's usual diet to prevent the upset that comes from dietary change. All bones, cooked or not, can potentially cause inflammation in the stomach and intestines and may splinter and cause perforation. High fat intakes can wreak havoc on the pancreas - the organ that is responsible for the production of digestive enzymes. Pancreatic inflammation (pancreatitis) can cause severe illness in animals and expensive hospital bills.
- Last but not least heavenly chocolate that surrounds us during the holidays, often mistaken by dogs for a good treat. Chocolate contains theobromine and caffeine. Different types of chocolate contain different amounts each - theobromine is the predominant toxic component with caffeine usually in much lower concentration. The concentration of theobromine is present in increasing concentration in chocolate as follows: white, milk, dark (sweet), semi-sweet chips, baker's (unsweetened), cocoa beans, cocoa powder. If your pet ingests chocolate - contact your veterinarian immediately. Chocolate can not only cause GI upset but has more serious effects on the nervous system (can lead to tremors or seizures) and may cause an increase in heart rate. Vomiting may be induced and activated charcoal may be given to bind the toxin. Intravenous fluids may also be necessary to increase urination to prevent the reabsorption of caffeine from the bladder.

Toxic Plants

- For a complete list on toxic plants please click on the following link.
http://www.aspca.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pro_apcc_toxicplants

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!

