



Holiday Safety for Pets

The Holidays are a fun festive time for everyone in your family to enjoy, including the members with four legs. It is important though to keep your pet's safety in mind while decorating, cooking, baking, hosting parties, and traveling this holiday season.

🌲 **Plant Hazards** - Mistletoe, holly, Christmas trees, and poinsettia plants are all very popular around the holidays and they all pose a toxic risk to your pets. Keep all plants in areas that cannot be reached by your dog or cat.

🌲 **Christmas trees** - Aside from being mildly toxic if ingested, Christmas trees also pose other threats to your furry companion. Tree water can contain chemical additives or bacterial growth. Ornaments, tinsel, and wired lights can be dangerous if ingested or broken. Cats may try to climb on or hide in trees and they may even knock the tree over. Make sure your Christmas tree has a secure base, or even secure the tree to the wall if possible. Baby gates and playpens can be used around the base of trees.

🌲 **Lights/Cords** - Twinkling lights around the house create a glow of festive spirit, but they are potentially harmful to pets. For pets that enjoy chewing wires, place protective coverings on all cords or use a pet-safe, bitter spray on cords to prevent chewing.

🌲 **Candles** - Whether you are lighting a menorah or filling your home with scented candles, make sure you do not leave any candles unattended. Curious paws and happy wagging tails could knock them over, potentially burning your pet or starting a fire.

🌲 **Food** - Keep all holiday feasts and treats out of reach of your pets. Many holiday dishes include ingredients that are toxic to dogs and cats, such as gravy, sauces, dressing, meat/poultry fat or skin, and desserts. Make sure to secure all trash cans to prevent your pets from seeking out food scraps. *You can still safely give treats to your pets during the holidays. Rather than feeding them table scraps of rich food, feed them treats made specifically for dogs/cats or raw veggies like carrots or broccoli, cooked unseasoned and skinless white meat turkey, or plain pumpkin (not the seasoned pie filling).*

🌲 **Provide a Safe Space** - Hosting family over the holidays can be fun and exciting, but it can also be stressful to our pets. If your pet is not a social butterfly, be sure to provide a quiet, comforting space away from the hustle and bustle, so they can decompress and relax.

🌲 **Secure the Exits** - If you are having company over, be sure to keep pets away from the doors, as they may escape with more traffic coming in and out of the house. Make sure your guests are aware of escape artists, so they know to look for them before opening doors.

🌲 **Traveling** - If you are flying with your pet, many airlines require health certificates that can be obtained through a visit with your veterinarian. Required vaccines can be boosted at this time. **Do your research beforehand to figure out what your airline specifically requires.** When traveling by car, keeping cats in secure carriers and using harnesses/seatbelts for dogs provides the most safety for your pet in the event of an accident. Traveling can be stressful to your pet, especially if they are not used to venturing very far from their home. Talk to your veterinarian about medications that can be given to ease anxiety in your pet for the ride to and from their destination. Some pets also get nauseous or sick in the car - talk to your veterinarian about pet-safe motion sickness medications.

