

Holiday Safety Tips for Pet Owners

While celebrating with friends and family during the busy holiday season, it can be all too easy to be distracted from potential hazards to your pet's health and safety. To prevent any mishaps, it's important to be aware of these dangers for your pet. CareCredit has these suggestions.

Holiday Decorations

- Make sure your Christmas tree and ornaments are well-secured so that your curious (or climbing) pet doesn't get hurt.
- To prevent burns and electrical shock, keep cords from lights and other decorations out of your pet's reach.
- Avoid decorating with these items, as your pet may become entangled, or chew and swallow them:
 - Tinsel
 - Yarn
 - Candles

Wrapping Paper and Ribbons

- Don't let your pet chew on wrapping paper, especially foil paper. It can cause an intestinal obstruction.
- Ribbons and strings can be choking hazards, especially for puppies and kittens. If swallowed, they can get tangled up in your pet's intestinal tract.

Holiday Foods

The following foods can be toxic or unsafe for pets:

- Cocoa and chocolate
- Grapes, raisins and currants
- Any products with the sweetener xylitol
- Alcohol
- Bread dough
- Rich or spicy foods

- Meat scraps and bones

Holiday Plants

Some popular holiday plants can be poisonous or may cause intestinal problems should your pet ingest them.

- Poinsettia sap can cause gastrointestinal upset and be irritating to the mouth of dogs and cats.
- Some species of mistletoe are toxic if eaten and can cause liver failure or seizures.
- All parts of plants belonging to the lily family, including peace and Christmas lilies, are highly poisonous to cats.

Holiday Air Travel

Here are some tips if you're planning a plane trip with your pet:

- Before your flight, complete all of your pet's required health paperwork and make sure your pet carrier complies with the airline's regulations. A soft-sided carrier cannot be used if your pet is traveling underneath the main cabin. In this case, an airline approved hard-sided crate must be used.
- Schedule a visit to your veterinarian shortly before the trip.
- On the day you fly, don't feed your pet, since traveling on an empty stomach can help reduce nausea.
- Confirm with your airline that your cat or small dog can stay in the cabin with you. Larger dogs must fly in the plane's cargo area, which can be hard on the animal, so ask your vet about things you can do to make it easier on your pet.

If you have more questions about air travel with your pet...or other concerns over keeping your pet safe and healthy during the holidays, give us a call. 252-9499.