

Keeping Your Pet Safe From Holiday Hazards

Be sure to make this holiday season safe and enjoyable for everyone in your family by observing the following pet safety tips:

- If you have a live Christmas tree, keep the water stand covered. Pine sap mixed with water makes a poisonous drink for your pet. The smell of a live or artificial tree may cause your pet to urine-mark it. It may help to bring the tree into an isolated indoor room for a day or so, so that it smells more like "home."
- Pick up any ornament hooks, tinsel or ribbon that fall on the floor. Your pet could experience serious internal injuries if he ingests any of these items.
- If you have a cat that is tempted to play with the ornaments on your tree, decorate the bottom third of the tree with non-breakable, plastic or wooden ornaments, or decorate only the top two-thirds of your tree.
- Don't feed your pet rich, fatty or spicy people food. Instead, add a teaspoon of white meat or broth from holiday dinner to your pet's food. Keep holiday treats and candies out of your pet's reach. Additionally, remember wrapped gifts under your tree that may be food items. People food, especially in excess, can make your pet sick. Chocolate, onions, raisins and alcohol can be fatal to dogs!
- Secure Christmas trees to a wall or ceiling hook with sturdy fishing line. This will help prevent the tree from toppling over should your pet jump on it or accidentally knock it over.
- If you have indoor holiday lights, be sure they don't hang so low that your pet could become entangled in them. Remember to unplug the lights when you're not home to supervise your pet.
- If you have a bird, make sure she is safely in her cage if you're lighting any candles. Additionally, lit candles should be kept out of any pet's reach, perhaps high on a counter or table.
- Poinsettias, mistletoe berries and some other popular holiday plants, if ingested, can cause serious stomach upset for pets. Check with your veterinarian or local poison control center to find out what holiday plants and flowers you need to keep out of your pet's reach.