



## Holiday Pet Safety for Cats and Dogs

*'Tis the season for Christmas trees, festive lights and other fun decorations for your snooping pets to get into. Overly excited dogs, anxious from guests and all the activity, can get injured or poisoned by holiday decorations, while cats can get hurt if they climb the Christmas tree or eat toxic holiday foods. Don't let your nosy pups and curious kitties crash the holiday party! Here are a few tips to keep your pets safe and your decorations intact.*

### Holiday Safety Tips for DOGS:

#### 1. Exercise your dog before the guests arrive.

This time of year friends and family visit from all over. Whether or not your dog has met them before, it is still disruptive to their typical routine and makes them more anxious or energetic than usual. They may overcompensate by fussing with the holiday decorations or attempting to eat some bad-for-them holiday foods. You can avoid this by taking your dog for a nice long walk or for a run in the dog park before your guests arrive. Your dog is less likely to jump or act out if he/she is completely wiped out from all that exercise.

#### 2. Keep the tree from falling over.

With all the fun and excitement, wagging tails are inevitable. After all, your pet is having a great time too! Unfortunately, that may lead to broken ornaments, or worse, a knocked over Christmas tree. To keep your ornaments safe, place the most fragile, delicate ones at the top of the tree and place the sturdier ones at the bottom. If your dog has a particularly strong tail and/or strong interest in the Christmas tree, you can put a pen or baby gate around it. This will also keep your dog away from drinking the Christmas tree water.

#### 3. Be careful around the fireplace.

There's nothing like enjoying a cup of hot cocoa and gingerbread cookies while snuggling with your pooch by the fire. But, be cautious. Although it is natural and instinctual for an animal to stay away, the fireplace can be a dangerous location for dogs wearing festive clothing like scarfs, sweaters or jackets. A stray piece of fabric can quickly ignite. Instead, avoid dressing your dog in holiday gear and be sure to use a screen on the fireplace. And, never leave your dog alone with a fire in the fireplace or in a room with a lit candle.

#### 4. Keep poinsettias out of reach.

These holiday flowers can upset doggy tummies if eaten. Also keep holiday chocolates in candy bowls up high and out of reach. Chocolate is toxic to dogs. And, tinsel, a very popular Christmas decoration, is dangerous for dogs. If eaten it can wreak havoc on their intestines.



## 5. The same rules apply over the holidays as they do all year.

With all the delicious home cooked meals, your dog is sure to beg for some goodies. After all, we all know how irresistible that fresh turkey, ham, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy and sweet treats are for us. However, giving your dog too many table scraps can make him/her very ill and some foods are downright toxic. Keep the holiday handouts at bay and instead offer a special dog treat or toy during the big meal so they can have an enjoyable holiday treat too.



## Holiday safety tips for CATS:

### 1. Avoid gift wrapping dangers.

There's no denying that cats love boxes, string and paper that makes a crinkly sound. But, if ingested, those holiday gift wrappings and ribbons can pose real dangers to intestines or cause strangulation. Although attractive to cats, the adhesive and glues on gifts can be toxic. Glitter and confetti can be harmful to your pet if swallowed, not to mention uncomfortable if it sticks to their fur and paws.

### 2. Be extremely careful with your Christmas Tree.

Cats are very curious and the Christmas Tree is something so new and different that it simply becomes unavoidable to them. Start by placing your tree in a very sturdy stand and attach the tree to a window or wall. Some cat parents even hang their tree from the ceiling! If you put up a real tree, it is important to know that evergreen needles are toxic to cats and can cause stomach and mouth irritations. For that matter, the plastic and wiring on artificial trees can pose problems as well. Be sure to keep your cat from chewing branches or eating tree needles. Electrical cords and lights

are tempting. Cats can get electrocuted by chewing on lights and cords. Always unplug your lights when you are not home and be sure to always use pet-proof extension cords (which can be purchased at most pet stores and hardware stores). For extra precaution you could spray the tree and cords with an anti-chew spray or similar product.

### 3. Beware of fragile ornaments and decorations.

Whether on the tree or decorating your home, ornaments and decorations are enticing to cats. Keep glass and fragile ornaments high on the tree and deep on the branches. The shiny objects can be intriguing. Keep sturdy, dull colored ornaments towards the bottom of the tree. Instead of using sharp, metal ornament hooks, go for ties or ribbons. Hooks can get imbedded in your pet's mouth or paws and cause serious harm. Avoid hanging fragile or glass decorations around your home. Plastic or cloth decorations are equally as festive and much safer.

The holidays are a wonderful time of year and should be a safe and special time for all members of your family – that includes your beloved pets! By following these safety tips, you're sure to have a happy, healthy holiday season.

## Additional resources (click on links for more info)

<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/holiday-safety-tips>

[https://www.akc.org/public\\_education/holiday\\_safety.cfm](https://www.akc.org/public_education/holiday_safety.cfm)

<http://www.vcahospitals.com/main/pet-health-information/article/animal-health/household-hazards-holiday-safety-tips-for-cat-owners/282>