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Seven tips to help you and your pets safely enjoy the holidays

Holidays can be extremely fun for humans, but often are a dreadful experience for pets. Help keep your pets safe by following these seven tips for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Thanksgiving

Don't be a turkey on "Turkey Day". Holiday treats, such as rich, fatty scraps, bones from pork and poultry, alcoholic beverages, chocolate and other sweets and candies can be harmful or toxic to pets.

These foods have been linked to pancreatitis in pets. Signs and symptoms of an inflamed pancreas include vomiting and abdominal pain, and severe pancreatitis requires emergency medical care and treatment.

Christmas

O Christmas Tree. Below it. In it. On top of it. Around it. You name it and the Christmas Tree poses the possibility of harm to your pets. Pine tree water can be poisonous,

so it's best to use an enclosed tree stand. If that's not possible, be sure to cover open tree stand bases. The tree should be secure to the wall with strong wire or twine because a toppling tree can cause serious injuries to dogs and cats.

Decorations can be dangerous.

Tinsel entices canines and felines alike. Glass ornaments look like shiny fetch balls. Ornaments and hooks, twinkling lights, electrical wiring - they all pose significant danger to pets by ingestion or contact. When no one's around to supervise, unplug lights and any electrical decorations a pet has access to. Cover or tack down electrical cords.

Common holiday pet poisons include plants.

Holiday plants that are poisonous to pets include the berries of the mistletoe, holly, hibiscus, Christmas roses and the poinsettia. Keep these out of your pet's reach.

Sugar free doesn't guarantee a happy ending. Xylitol, a sugar substitute, causes a dog's blood sugar to drop quickly. This poisoning can be treated, but causes liver failure if not treated properly.

Macadamia nuts aren't all they're cracked up to be.

Dogs experience severe weakness in their back legs, appearing paralyzed, after ingesting macadamia nuts. Dogs usually recover from this condition within three days.

Pets and bread dough don't mix well.

When bread dough is ingested it continues to rise, causing an intestinal blockage.

Following these helpful hints will help keep pets out of danger, while still enjoying the food, fun and festivities that accompany the holidays.