



Holiday Hazards for Pets

The holiday season is a time that extra precautions need to be taken to avoid potential dangers for our pets. These dangers include, but are not limited to the following:

Desiccant Gel Packs

- ◆ They are found in shoeboxes, electronics, medication bottles, and some foods.
- ◆ Ingestion produces mild vomiting and diarrhea.

Christmas Tree Preservative

- ◆ The sugar in the mixture entices pets to drink the liquid.
- ◆ Ingestion rarely causes severe symptoms, but may produce mild vomiting and diarrhea.
- ◆ The signs are more severe when the liquid is contaminated with bacteria or fungi.

Christmas Trees

- ◆ Ingestion of the needles may cause vomiting, loss of appetite, abdominal pain and depression.

Poinsettia

- ◆ Eating large amounts of the plant will cause mild vomiting.
- ◆ Treatment is usually not required.

Holly

- ◆ All parts of the plant are toxic.
- ◆ Eating the plant causes vomiting, diarrhea and depression.

Mistletoe

- ◆ Ingestion of just a few leaves or berries produces a mild upset stomach.
- ◆ Eating a large amount causes more severe vomiting, diarrhea and heart issues.

Lily - Easter lilies, Tiger lilies, Day lilies, Asian lilies, Japanese Snow, and others

- ◆ Chewing on a single leaf can lead to kidney failure.
- ◆ Consider all exposures as potentially life-threatening.

Ethanol

- ◆ Small dogs and cats are more sensitive to ethanol than humans.
- ◆ They are attracted to mixed drinks containing milk, cream, or ice cream.
- ◆ Ethanol is rapidly absorbed and can cause signs within 30-60 minutes after ingestion.
- ◆ Clinical signs include vomiting, ataxia and disorientation.
- ◆ Large amounts lead to coma, seizures and even death.

Chocolate

- ◆ Toxicity causes hyperactivity, increased heart rate, tremors and potential death.
- ◆ The amount of toxin present in chocolate depends on the type.
- The more bitter the chocolate, the more toxic.
- Unsweetened baking chocolate contains 6 times more toxin than milk chocolate.
- White chocolate contains negligible amounts.

Ribbon, Tinsel and String

- ◆ Puppies and kittens are attracted to these items.
- ◆ When swallowed, the body tries to move the string or ribbon through the intestine. The intestine tends to “bunch up” along the linear object. The constant movement of the intestine produces a “sawing” action. This eventually leads to perforation of the bowel.
- ◆ This is a life-threatening condition requiring surgery.

Electrical Cords

- ◆ Puppies and kittens are tempted to play with and chew on electrical cords.
- ◆ When a pet bites through an electrical cord, severe burns to the tongue and mouth may occur.
- ◆ Damage to the area around the heart can also occur causing the pet’s lung to fill with fluid. This leads to difficulty in breathing.
- ◆ These are emergency situations requiring immediate veterinary attention.

Miscellaneous

Some other potentially toxic or dangerous items to keep away from your pets include:

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| ○ Onions | ○ Ornaments |
| ○ Macadamia nuts | ○ Batteries |
| ○ Rising bread dough | ○ Potpourris |
| ○ Grapes and raisins | ○ Medications |
| ○ Tobacco | ○ Anti-freeze |
| ○ Xylitol (found in sugar-free gum) | ○ Ice melting products |
| ○ Bones | ○ Rodent poisons |
| ○ Candles | ○ Stress of having visitors |

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