



# Community Veterinary Services Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

December 2018

### Special points of interest:

- Thinking about getting your family a puppy for Christmas?
- Maybe hold off on feeding table scraps this holiday season.
- However, there are some foods you can share with your pet!
- Stop your cat from destroying your Christmas tree.

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## How to Reduce Stress in your Pets During the Holidays

by: Alexis Tentler and Kim Simpson

Whether traveling with your pet, boarding your pet, or having family over, all of these situations can be a source of stress for your pet during the holiday season. There are many ways to help your pet cope with any anxiety these situations may cause.

When traveling with your pet, taking short car rides prior to the big trip may help them get used to being in the car. You can also use pheromones, a type of chemical communication normally produced by the animal, to reduce their anxiety towards the car. If your pet travels in a carrier, you can get the carrier out a few days before the trip to let your pet become accustomed to it. Offering food and other treats while in the carrier is an easy way to get your pet adjusted to being in the carrier.

When boarding your pet, providing an article of clothing or towel with your scent on it may reduce anxiety while they are away from home. Pheromones may be used during this time to help reduce stress and make your pet more at



ease in a new environment. A trial boarding stay overnight or for 1-2 days may be beneficial in determining what is best for your pet's emotional wellbeing while you are away from home.

If you have family and friends over for the holidays, pheromones can be helpful as well. There are specific pheromones for dogs and cats that come in diffusers, collars, wipes or sprays. These are available at your veterinarian's office or local pet stores. It is also important to have a safe space where your pet can escape to. This can be a crate or separate room that your guests have limited access to.

If pheromones or these tips are not enough to help your pet cope with anxiety during the holidays, talk to your veterinarian. They can prescribe an anti-anxiety medication to better help your pet. These medications are safe to use and work well in conjunction with pheromones.

## Is a Puppy a Good Christmas Gift?

by: Heath Belk and Katie Garrett

Is a puppy a good Christmas gift? The answer to that question is complicated. There are thousands of sweet puppies and kittens in America's shelters that would love the opportunity to bring joy and happiness to someone special in your life on Christmas morning. However, adopting a new pet requires a lot of preparation and even more commitment. As many pets are adopted around Christmas, an

astonishing number are surrendered a few weeks after the holidays as new owners realize there is more to pets than cuddles and kisses.

In the event that you decide to brighten a new pet's life with adoption here are a few things to remember: New puppies or kittens should not interact with other adult or young animals until they've been seen by a veterinarian and vaccinations have been

started. Proper socialization with other people and animals can prove to be incredibly beneficial later in life. A quality and consistent diet is very important to the development of your new pet! Your new pet is going to need lots of love but make sure you are meeting their basic needs too!



## Bad VS Good Toys for Christmas by: Christina Weiss and James Yates

### BAD TOYS

#### Tennis balls

Pets should not be allowed to chew on tennis balls for prolonged periods of time or while they are not directly supervised. The fuzz covering the tennis ball is abrasive to the tooth and can wear away tooth enamel, dentin, and can become severe enough to cause pulp exposure<sup>1</sup>. Consider replacing the tennis ball with a smooth rubber ball.

#### Deer antlers



All chew toys should have some flexibility; deer antlers provide no flexibility when chewed on by pets which can result in a

tooth fracture<sup>2</sup>. The tooth that is often-times fractured as a result is the fourth premolar, which is an important tooth for mastication. A fractured tooth can be very painful and will require either an extraction or a root canal procedure, so it is best to prevent these accidents.



### GOOD TOYS

#### Dining Stations

Dog Dining Stations such as elevated bowls and electric feeders not only make great gifts, but can be healthy! Elevated bowls allow pets to eat/drink in a more natural position, and electric feeders give your pet a regulated amount of food which can reduce obesity.

#### Food Dispensing and Puzzle Toys

Food dispensing and puzzle toys are both mentally stimulating and can reduce stress. Chewing is a normal behavior in dogs and these toys can help to satisfy that need especially in small puppies. Pre-stuffing with dog food and even freezing the food in the toy can increase the amount of time your dog and cat interacts with the toy. Frozen Kong's are great for teething puppies. [www.kongcompany.com/recipes/](http://www.kongcompany.com/recipes/)

#### Coats

Sweaters won't cut the chill of a winter breeze. Giving your dog a field coat can drastically increase warmth during those chilly January walks.

Resources: Ray Jr, Joel D., and Diana L. Eubanks. "Dental homecare: teaching your clients to care for their pet's teeth." *Journal of veterinary dentistry* 26.1 (2009): 57-60.

Logan, Ellen I. "Dietary influences on periodontal health in dogs and cats." *Veterinary Clinics: Small Animal Practice* 36.6 (2006): 1385-1401.

<https://www.techsmartlife.com/9-christmas-gift-ideas-for-your-doggy/>

<https://topdogtips.com/christmas-presents-for-dogs/>

## Say, No to Table Scraps! by: Courtney Gifford and Elissa Eyrich

Holidays are here, food is everywhere! It's hard on our waistlines, but can be life threatening to dogs. During the holidays, there's an abundance of fatty, seasoned food. Dogs give us begging eyes and it's so VERY tempting for us (and our guests), to give them a succulent morsel from our table. STOP; not only can they gain weight, it can actually be life threatening! "Abrupt changes in diet or feeding little scraps of food, particularly when they're not used to getting those types of food, can really create a lot of problems for the gastrointestinal tract." One potentially seri-

*"Abrupt changes in diet or feeding little scraps of food, particularly when they're not used to getting those types of food, can really create a lot of problems for the gastrointestinal tract."*

ous, painful result: pancreatitis. Pancreatitis is when digestive enzymes over produce and the pancreas tries to digest itself, which leads to necrotic pancreatic tissues and blood vessels. Concerned? Signs to look for: they will become inappetent and lethargic with episodes of vomiting and diarrhea which cause dehydration. So, no table scraps!

## Dangerous Decorations by: Blair Bennett and Erin Close

Cats and kittens are naturally curious and intrigued by anything new in their household. Artificial or live trees can pose as a hazard for cats. Injuries can occur from cats climbing trees leading to them falling or the tree falling on them. To prevent this, use a heavy base or secure your tree to the wall. When using a live tree, it is important to know that plant fertilizers used for a potted tree or fertilizer water additives can be toxic to cats. Signs of these toxicities can be but are not limited to hypersalivation, vomiting, diarrhea, and seizures. Tinsel can appear as a cat toy

and can be very hazardous if swallowed since it can cause intestinal blockages. Holiday lights can cause electrocution if your cat (or dog) chews on the wires. To prevent this, it is important to keep lights off when you are not around or to supervise your pets, or keep wires covered and out of reach. Some imported snow globes contain antifreeze (ethylene glycol). As little as a tablespoon for a cat or two tablespoons for a dog can be fatal. Antifreeze is metabolized by the body in the kidneys, resulting in highly poisonous metabolites; causing severe, acute kidney failure. Early signs of toxicity occur 30

minutes- 12 hours after ingestion and include acting uncoordinated, drooling, vomiting, seizing, and lethargy. While these signs may improve in 8-12 hours, crystals (calcium oxalate) are developing in the kidneys. Within 12-24 hours after ingestion for cats (36-72 hours post ingestion for dogs) severe lethargy, vomiting, seizures, drooling, and inappetence may be observed. It is important to keep snow globes in locations where pets can't access them. If your pet does come into contact with a broken snow globe, take them to your veterinarian as soon as possible.

# Haunting Holiday Houseplants by: Kelsie Penny and Paige Anderson

As the holiday season nears, it is important to understand that certain plants used for decoration during the season can be toxic to our beloved pets. Most animals will avoid these plants, but it is not uncommon for animals to attempt to eat leaves or stems from some of these. Here is a list of plants to avoid/keep out of reach of your four-legged family members:



**Amaryllis (Belladonna/Saint Joseph Lily):** This plant contains Lycorine and other noxious substances. In both dogs and cats, it can cause gastrointestinal upset, lethargy, and tremors. The bulb of the plant is

considered the most toxic portion.

**Holly:** This plant contains saponins, which are chemicals known as glycosides. Consumption of the berries of this plant can cause decreased appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, and lethargy.

**Pine:** Pine trees and cones need to be considered this holiday season. The needles and cones can cause gastrointestinal signs and lethargy if ingested. Another important thing to consider is that in real Christmas trees, the standing water that is used to nourish the tree can harbor bacteria and mold which can cause pets to become extremely sick with only a few sips.



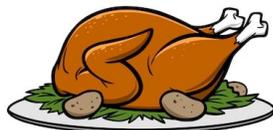
**Mistletoe:** Although, this plant is the symbol of love this holiday season, it is not a gesture of love for your pets. This plant contains oxalbumin and pharatoxin viscumin, both toxic our pets. Not only would ingestion of leaves or berries cause severe gastrointestinal signs, but it can also cause cardiovascular like low blood pressure and heart rate and neurological signs like collapse as well.



**Poinsettia:** We all know of the classic poinsettia during the holiday season. Although there are not many reports of toxicity, it can cause irritation to the mouth and vomiting due to the latex-like sap on all portions of the plant.

# Foods You Might Not Want to Give Your Dog

**by: Jonathan Webber**



The holiday season is upon us and since our pets are part of our families they will be included in all the festivities. As we all get ready to celebrate it is important to remember to try and keep your pets eating habits as close to normal as you can. Your furry companions will be around all the food and snacks that we ingest this season, whether it be Uncle Bob trying to feed your baby the chicken off his plate or your pets eating all the crumbs and left overs the kids left under the table. Let's keep in mind which foods can be dangerous and which ones are safe to our pets lives and steer clear of some of the following:

**Turkey Skin/High Fat foods**

Foods that are high in fat can be extremely hazardous to your dog's health. Turkey skin is a good example, the skin holds any marinades, spices, butter and oils in it which can be difficult to digest. Other High

fat foods can lead to pancreatitis. Symptoms could include- vomiting, abdominal pain, ad lethargy.

**Cooked Bones**

Cooked turkey and ham bones are NOT safe for dogs. They can splinter in the dog's digestive tract, this could cause an expensive trip to the emergency doctor or something worse. Dispose of bones carefully so that your furry companion is not tempted to eat them.



**Onions and Garlic**

Onions and garlic contain sulfides, which are toxic to dogs, and can lead to anemia. Onions are more toxic than garlic and cooking them does not reduce their toxicity.

**Alcohol**

Although some of our dogs do love the taste of beer, this doesn't mean it's safe for them. Any alcohol especially ones with hops in beer, is toxic and can cause death

in some dogs occasionally.



**Candy**

While the sugar in candy isn't the best for dogs, the sweetener xylitol that is sometimes used can actually lead to liver failure and possibly death.

Other Examples of What Not to Feed Sage, Chocolate, Grapes, Raisins, Nuts, Nutmeg, and Tobacco



References: <https://www.hillspet.com/dog-care/nutrition-feeding/holiday-foods-to-avoid-feeding-your-dog>

## COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

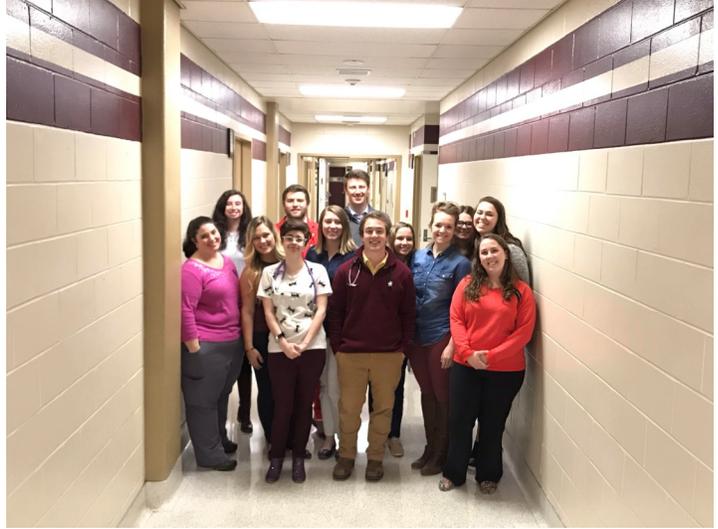
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## “Cat-Proofing” Your Christmas Tree

by: Chase Waldrip

Christmas trees are a staple of the holiday celebration, but they can be a source of frustration for cat-owning households. Cats are infamous for knocking trees over, shattering ornaments, and getting hurt or sick around the tree. While a “cat-proof” Christmas tree may seem like an impossible idea, we have several suggestions that may help keep your tree and your furry friend safe this Christmas!

### Undesirable Surface

Place unpleasant textures like aluminum foil, pine cones, or double-sided tape underneath the tree on the tree skirt. This will discourage your cat from walking under the tree (and possibly climbing).

### That’s Not Your Water Bowl

If your tree is real, cover the water source with a tree skirt, aluminum foil, or plastic wrap to prevent unwanted ingestion.

### Keep Your Ornaments High

Avoid putting your ornaments low on the tree (especially breakable ones!). This will help make them less tantalizing. Only place sturdy ornaments on lower branches. Shocking!

Cats tend to chew on electrical cords. Keep your pet safe by covering electrical cords with plastic or cardboard tubes and unplug them when your tree is not in use.



### Poisonous Plants

Avoid holly, mistletoe, and poinsettias this season. While festive, these are all potentially toxic to cats.

### Tinsel?

Tinsel is another alluring temptation for cats. This holiday decoration can cause

severe (potentially fatal) problems in your cat’s gastrointestinal system if consumed.

### That Tree is Fake

If your cat has a history of eating things they should not, elect to display a fake tree this holiday season. This will deter your pet from eating fallen needles or other tree components.

### “Stinky” Tree

Repellent smells like citronella, apple bitter, hot sauce, camphor, or Vicks can be sprayed on and around your tree to dissuade your furry friend.

### Secure Your Tree

Invest in a strong base for your tree or secure it to the ceiling with strong fishing line to keep your tree from tipping over during kitty mischief.

### Distract Your Cat

Buy your cat an early Christmas present, like a carpeted cat-condo or new toy, that only comes out while the tree is displayed. This will help distract your pet away from your Christmas tree.

References: <https://www.petcarerx.com/article/a-cat-proof-christmas-tree-it-is-possible/1417>; [https://www.petmd.com/cat/seasonal/evr\\_ct\\_cats\\_and\\_christmas\\_trees](https://www.petmd.com/cat/seasonal/evr_ct_cats_and_christmas_trees)