

# Holiday Hazards

The last thing you, as a pet owner, want to do on a holiday is take your pet to an animal emergency hospital with an injury, poisoning or even an upset stomach. So where do we need to pay special attention to prevent a holiday pet disaster?

## *Holiday Food*

- \* There will be a lot of spicy, unusual and especially tasty food around the house. 60% of pet owners feed their pet from the holiday table and even include the cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie!
- \* It is only natural to want to share this great stuff with our pets. However, be careful!
- \* Many pets are rushed to the veterinary emergency clinic during holiday season with bones in their stomachs and severe upset stomachs caused by spicy food. Fatty foods, like meat trimmings, poultry skin and gravy can cause severe stomach upset and pancreatitis, a sometimes life-threatening disease of the pancreas. Even well cooked, baked, or stewed bones are taboo.
- \* The best rule is to keep Fido's diet as stable as possible during holiday seasons. Be sure that your pets can't get into the trash after dinner is over.
- \* If you think your pet may have ingested chocolate call your veterinarian, or if after hours, call the APCC's 24 hour emergency hotline, 800/548-2423 (a fee is involved).
- \* Other food taboos are eggnog, alcohol, nuts, spicy sauces and dressings.

## *Holiday Precautions*

- \* Christmas lights – chewing on these can cause electrocution.
- \* Decorative plants – many toxic; e.g. Holly, Mistletoe and Poinsettia
- \* Pets love to unwrap Christmas gifts - especially those that contain leather goods, food and other goodies. Cats love strings and tinsel but these can cause serious damage if ingested.
- \* Turkey bones, plastic food wrap and tinsel can cause choking.

- \* Think about putting dogs in kennels (crates) and cats in a safe room during parties.
- \* For a party with only a few guests, introduce protective dogs outside, then have guests “bond” with them a little before the gathering. This will help decrease aggression or fear reactions with visitors
- \* Make sure that all candles are securely anchored and out of reach of inquiring noses and wagging tails.
- \* Remember, heavy trafficking of family and friends can bring stress to our pets. Open doors and gates can lead to a missing pet so make sure they're wearing an ID tag and a microchip. Also make sure your pet has a dry, comfortable place to sleep if he or she must be outdoors.

## *Cold Weather*

- \* Hypothermia in pets left outside for any length of time can suffer from cold stress, frostbite and hypothermia if exposed to temperatures below about 35 degrees.
- \* Don't let your pet get into antifreeze! 78% of all poisoning cases for dogs and cats occur when they consume antifreeze! 90% of antifreeze is used in October, November and December.
- \* Remember fire place safety! Keep a protective screen over your fireplace opening.
- \* Some tree extenders contain nitrites/nitrates which can cause oral and gastrointestinal burns. Also don't decorate the tree with foodstuffs, such as cranberry, popcorn or chocolate. Many pets find this hard to resist.
- \* Cats love to crawl under a nice warm automobile hood and that can mean disaster. On a cold morning it's a good idea to knock on your hood before starting the car.

### **Emergency Numbers to Call after hours:**

<b>Animal Care Center, Rohnert Park</b>	<b>584-4343</b>
<b>PetCare, Santa Rosa</b>	<b>579-5900</b>