

## Dangerous Decorations

**Keep your cats safety in mind as you decorate your home for the holidays.**

*Stacy N. Hackett*

3. Twinkling lights. Strings of lights hung from windows, doorframes and stair banisters bring a festive glow to your homes interior. The cords for the lights, however, may entice your cat to chew, resulting in electrocution or even death. Conceal cords under rugs, in paper tubes or in cord coverings; consider taping the cords to the floor, if possible Wexler-Mitchell also recommends placing wires in stiff PVC pipes to hide them. If wires must be left exposed, spray them with a deterrent such as Bitter Apple, she says.

4. Festive bows and ribbons. One of the joys of the holidays is giving and receiving gifts. The packages look so pretty sitting under the tree, and the bows and ribbons can prove irresistible to your curious cat. Take caution with holiday wrappings. If your cat ingests ribbon or bows, she can develop a potentially fatal intestinal blockage.

Larger lengths [of ribbon] get trapped and cause the intestines to bunch up, similar to a drawstring in a waistband, Wexler-Mitchell states. Left untreated, [it] leads to intestinal perforation and peritonitis, life-threatening conditions that even with intensive care may not be treatable.

The sharp edges of wire ribbon could also cut your cats mouth if she chews the edges. Use short lengths of ribbon and adhere bows securely to packages. If your cat persists in chewing the bows, remove them altogether.

5. Candles. Menorahs, scented candles and potpourri heaters come out of boxes and into prominent positions throughout the home during the holidays. The flickering flames and delicious scents can often prove tempting to our feline friends, and can result in burnt paws or singed fur. The oils in potpourri heaters can not only burn your cat's skin but also can be toxic if ingested. Keep your cat safe by placing these items out of reach and supervising your pet in rooms that contain them. If possible, light menorah candles only when your cat can be easily observed or contained in another room.

Your cat's health and well-being is a precious gift. Take care of it by avoiding holiday hazards as your decorate your home.