

How Can I Keep My Cat Safe During the Holidays?

CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, offers some common sense measures.

By Jeanne Adlon

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Q: What are some tips for keeping my cats safe during holiday activities?

A: I am asked that question from my clients every year. We all know the holidays are a wonderful season, and there are things you can do to make sure your kitties have a safe and happy Yuletide along with the rest of the family. In fact, with so much going on during this festive time, I will devote two columns to sharing my tips for holiday safety.

Holiday Safety Tips, Part 1: If you have glittery items on the Christmas tree, like tinsel, your cat could make a beeline for it, with bad results. I remember Roscoe, a sweet-natured black-and-white kitty who had an unforeseen endgame with a piece of tinsel. When I arrived to care for him one December evening, he greeted me warmly at the front door, but imagine my surprise as he turned around to reveal a few inches of tinsel hanging out of his rear end! He had obviously swallowed it but was not eliminating it in his litter pan. Afraid that he might lick the tinsel and reswallow it, I very gently removed it from his behind. Fortunately he was a good sport. I also removed the rest of the tinsel from Roscoe's family's Christmas tree, explaining to his startled owners why the tree had been "under-decorated" while they were away.

In addition to tinsel, do not let your cat play with thin ribbons used for decorating gifts, which, if swallowed, could become lodged in their intestines. The same is true of the silk thread that is wrapped around some ornaments. While hanging ornaments on the tree, be careful not to drop the small hooks, which could be real trouble if chewed or swallowed by your kitty. After opening your gifts, used wrapping paper is always a fun treat for cats to play with, but any packing material, such as those small Styrofoam pellets, is definitely not.

Caring for your kitties over the holidays is mostly a matter of using your common sense and keeping an eye on them. Remember to have plenty of cat treats on hand so they can safely join in the fun. Tune in next week for Holiday Safety Tips, Part 2.