

ASPCA Offers Holiday Safety Tips

The animal welfare organization recommends ways to keep cats and dogs healthy during the season.

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Keep your cat on its normal diet during the holidays. Leftovers from the dinner table can leave cats with indigestion. With Thanksgiving around the corner, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) reminds cat and dog owners to keep safety in mind when preparing for the festivities of the holidays. The animal welfare organization offers several tips to keep pets safe from potential hazards.

“Many of our winter habits and holiday traditions could pose a potential threat to our companion animals,” said Dr. Steven Hansen, senior vice president of the ASPCA’s Animal Health Services. “As you begin to prepare for a festive season, remember to be wary of activities that can be potentially dangerous to pets.”

Pet owners should remain aware of the following: Keep your pets on their normal diet. Don’t feed your cat or dog holiday leftovers, and keep them away from the party buffet. A change in diet for just one meal can give your pet severe indigestion and diarrhea. Be mindful of your cocktails. Make sure you place adult holiday beverages out of reach of your pets. If ingested by your pet, the alcohol could make the animal very sick and weak. Put sweets out of reach. Several popular holiday treats can be toxic to cats and dogs. Chocolate can be potentially poisonous to animals, with ingestion causing symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, increased thirst and urination, and abnormal heart rate. Candy wrappers may tempt cats to play, but ingesting aluminum foil or cellophane can pose a choking hazard. Use caution with holiday flowers. The plants used in holiday floral arrangements may be toxic to cats and dogs. Lilies — commonly used in holiday bouquets — can cause kidney failure in cats, while mistletoe and holly berries also pose toxic hazards. Be careful with candles. Make sure lighted candles are kept well out of your pet’s reach, as animals can easily knock them over and start a fire. Cats in particular are at risk of burning themselves by candle flames.

For more holiday safety tips, visit the ASPCA website.