

Easter Tips to Keep Pets Safe

Cat parents urged to be on the lookout for household hazards that come with the holiday.

Posted: April 11, 2009, 3 a.m. EDT

Lilies are beautiful and decorative, but are poisonous to cats and can cause kidney failure if ingested. Animal-welfare organizations say that as tempting as it might be for people to give a loved one a new pet on Easter, such a gift is not usually a good idea.

The reason, according to groups such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA), is that animals require large amounts of attention to make sure they grow up healthy. After the novelty of a kitten or puppy wears off, the daily responsibility of feeding, cleaning, exercising and giving attention to the animal sets in, and if the new owner is not prepared, often the animal gets dumped or taken to a shelter.

For pets already in the home, several hazards found during the Easter season can pose a risk. However, by following some easy safety tips, they can be avoided. Instead of buying a new pet for a child as a holiday gift, it's best to give a stuffed animal instead. That way there are no consequences if children become bored with the daily chores. For those adamant about getting a live animal, remember that it is a lifetime commitment and not a seasonal trend, according to spcaLA. Easter lilies are bright and decorative but are also poisonous to pets and can cause kidney failure. Keep all Easter lilies in a spot where pets cannot access them. Another option would be to purchase more pet-friendly plants, such as Easter orchids or daisies, suggests spcaLA President Madeline Bernstein. Easter brings high amounts of sweets to the household, especially chocolate. Chocolate can make animals seriously ill and possibly kill them. All candy, especially chocolate, should be kept away from cats and dogs. While plastic Easter grass makes gift baskets look inviting, it can be highly dangerous to animals. If ingested, the plastic grass can cause a serious intestinal blockage that may require surgery. Safer alternatives include straw, tissue paper or newspaper shredding.