

Choosing Safe Cat Toys and Presents

String and toys with glued-on decorations and removable parts are not recommended for cats.

While a ball of string might seem like a harmless toy for your cat, many feline health practitioners say it is a serious health hazard.

Cats' tongues are covered with sharp, backward-facing barbs that can make it difficult to spit out the string. If the string gets stuck in your cat's mouth, the cat or kitten might continue to swallow the string, which can cause internal blockage and intestinal injuries.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) recommends avoiding small balls, yarn, ribbon, tassels, rubber bands and bells as cat toys. Toys should also be checked for glued-on decorations or trim. Stay away from cat toys that have shiny bits of metal that pets could swallow. When choosing cat toys, avoid any that might be a choking hazard, such as toys with small parts or that have pieces that could become dislodged during play. Also, make sure the toys are non-toxic.

So what types of toys are good for pet cats? The HSUS and Dumb Friends League recommend:

Round, plastic shower curtain rings that can be batted around, hidden or carried
Soft, stuffed animals. For some cats, the stuffed animal should be small enough to carry around. For cats that prefer to wrestle with the toy, the stuffed animal should be about the same size as the cat, according to the HSUS.
Plastic balls with or without bells inside
Ping-Pong balls
Plastic, practice golf balls with holes
Catnip-filled soft toys

These toys will allow your cat to have fun and stay safe.