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San Diego Humane Society Offers Pet Holiday Safety Tips

Know which foods, decorations and plants may be hazardous can prevent unexpected emergencies.

San Diego — With the bustling holiday season upon us, San Diego Humane Society reminds pet owners to consider their pets' safety when decking the halls. Holiday decorations, seasonal plants and festive treats can sometimes be harmful for pets. To keep everyone safe this holiday season, here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. Sharing holiday goodies with your favorite animal companion could be dangerous. Too much fatty or rich food can lead to digestive problems. Some foods, such as onions, grapes/raisins and chocolate, can be toxic.
2. Instead, indulge your pets with a special pet food or treat in an enrichment toy or game, which can provide hours of entertainment.
3. Ask guests not to share food with your pets. They may mean well, but it is important to remind them of the potential dangers. Prepare sealed snack bags in advance and let your guests use those treats instead of sharing from their plates.
4. Christmas trees can be hazardous, particularly for climbing cats, so make sure your tree is secure, preferably in a corner.
5. Dangling tree ornaments can seem like great toys to cats and dogs. Keep dangerous ornaments such as glass and tinsel (which can be a choking hazard) on high branches, out of the reach of little paws. Chords from lights should be taped down or otherwise secured to prevent pets from chewing on them.
6. Keep an eye on items under the tree, too! Don't let pets drink water from the base of a live tree as it may be stagnant and contain bacteria. Ribbons and bows can be a choking hazard, and any packages filled with edible gifts are likely to be discovered.
7. A number of holiday season plants are toxic or can cause digestive upset to pets if nibbled or eaten, including amaryllis, Christmas cactus, Christmas rose, evergreens, holly, ivy, juniper, lilies, mistletoe and poinsettias. Be sure all plants are kept out of reach of pets.
8. Burning candles should be placed high, out of your pet's way. A dog's tail wag or a cat's curiosity could be devastating. Homes with fireplaces should use screens to avoid accidental burns.
9. Our pets can get stressed with noise and activity. Give your pet a quiet, secure place with a bed and their favorite toys to escape the commotion. Put food, water and a litter box for cats in that space.
10. Holiday distractions may make it easier for pets to escape through open doors. Keep your pets safely indoors and always make sure they're wearing current ID tags, with a phone number, and that their microchip information is up to date. If your pet is not microchipped, San Diego Humane Society offers \$25 microchips at its San Diego, Escondido and Oceanside Campus locations. (During COVID-19, microchipping services are by appointment only. Visit sdhumane.org to make an appointment.)
11. Pets thrive on routine and increased activity during the holiday season can upset that routine. Keep your pet on their regular schedule for feeding and exercise, and be sure they get plenty of love and attention from you!
12. Finally, holiday sweaters may seem irresistible, but if your furry friend does not enjoy dressing up, let them be themselves.



Suggested Tweet: Keep your pets safe during the holidays! @sdhumane offers holiday pet safety tips, including foods and plants to avoid and how to keep their stress levels low. Visit sdhumane.org/holidaysafety.

About San Diego Humane Society

San Diego Humane Society's scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, please visit sdhumane.org.