

# Tips for Holiday Safety

Don't let your vacation time be spent in the Pet Clinic unnecessarily. Avoid the following  
***“Holiday Hazards”***

## **RIBBONS & TINSEL**

These are of special interest to playful cats and birds who see these materials as toys (or prey) to be chewed or swallowed, leading to a “linear foreign bodies” that can become stuck in the GI tract, leading to need for surgery.

## **ORNAMENTS**

Pets are naturally attracted to things that glitter, sparkle, shine and blink. Be sure you keep your pets away from any lights or decorations. A solid bite to a wire or light bulb can pose a risk of burns, electrocution, cuts and puncture wounds. Some ornaments contain lead, zinc or other toxins that when ingested in even small amounts can lead to rapid toxicity and death in some pets.

## **ELECTRIC LIGHT CORDS**

These are tempting to cats, rabbits, ferrets and teething puppies. If a pet bites through an electrical cord, it could result in burns or electrocution.

## **PINE NEEDLES**

Check around holiday trees frequently. Ingested pine needles can puncture your pet's intestines.

## **CHRISTMAS TREE**

Make sure your tree is well secured. If you have a cat or an active dog, anchor the top of the tree to the wall, using a cord or rope. Preservatives used in the water in a live tree stand can cause gastric upsets, so be sure it is inaccessible or not used.

## **POINSETTIA**

Consuming parts to this plant leads to irritation to the mouth and stomach of mammals.

## **MISTLETOE**

Ingestion of some mistletoes produce stomach upset while others may lead to severe liver damage and seizures. Keep mistletoe away from pets and children.

## **CANDLES**

Lighted candles should never be left unattended and that is even more important if left with an unsupervised pet. An exuberant tail or a swat of a paw can turn candles and hot wax into an instant disaster. Secure candles away from curious pets. Some candles can produce fumes harmful to birds if not well-ventilated.

## **COOKING**

Keep pets out of the kitchen during the meal preparation. This will help minimize the risk of a pet getting burned from spillage or the hot stove.

## **DIETARY INDISCRETION**

Sudden rich diet changes commonly upset a pet's stomach. Vomiting, diarrhea and other gastrointestinal problems such as gastric stasis in rabbits and pancreatitis in dogs are not uncommon. These conditions are serious and may require hospitalization.

## **CHOCOLATE**

Baking chocolate carries a higher concentration of toxic theobromine than milk chocolate, but even normal milk chocolate can be dangerous to your pet if ingested. Signs of chocolate poisoning include hyperactivity, nervousness, vomiting, diarrhea and death.

## **BONES**

If chewed, small bones or bone chips can lodge in the throat, stomach, and intestinal tract often requiring surgery.

## **ESCAPE**

With everyone coming and going, watch out for open doors and sneaky pets. Make sure your pets have updated collars and tags on in case of escape. Microchipping dogs and cats will also help if they escape.

## **STRESS**

Pets can get stressed pretty easily, and the holidays can make it worse by exposing them to sights, sounds, and people that they are not accustomed to. Consider leaving your pet caged in a quiet and secure area of your home until festivities wind down.