



ENJOY YOUR CHRISTMAS AND KEEP YOUR PETS SAFE.

Please take a few minutes to learn about potentially hazardous objects and how you can prevent illness or injury to your pets.

The festive season for most of us means the Christmas decorations come out of the loft and are delicately placed throughout our homes to provide that festive environment we all love. Those same shiny, pretty, fragile objects that we enjoy looking at also catch the attention of our pets. Cats love to climb up the Christmas tree and start batting at the tree ornaments. While some dogs may think all their Christmas' and birthday have come at once with all those baubles!

To keep pets safe during the festive season a few precautions must be taken;



The Christmas tree

The best place to put a Christmas tree is in a room that is off limits to your pets. The entire Christmas tree can be knocked over by a dog running through the room or tugging at the pretty string of lights. A cat climbing up the Christmas tree can cause the entire tree to come crashing down.

Decorations, like tinsel, lights and ornaments, are often too much for a cat or dog to resist. Wooden, plastic and glass decorations can easily be ingested or smashed, either way potentially very dangerous to your pet.

Some pets find the flashing lights of great interest and chewing on these presents a danger of electrical shock, cutting their mouths and ingesting glass.

String

Whether it is used to hang cards, decorations or wrapped around your turkey, String is a serious hazard to pets. We have removed several lengths from the intestines of dogs and cats over the years. Cats love to play with string and dogs particularly love the meaty flavoured variety taken from you turkey.

Ensure you dispose of all string especially those from your meat or turkey immediately after removal and keep out of reach of pets.





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Turkey

Whilst lean turkey may cause nothing more than a tummy upset in some pets the carcass can cause serious problems. Bones from your choice of poultry or indeed meat can become lodged in the mouth throat or tummy. Cooked bones often shatter leaving sharp edges to penetrate through stomach and gut walls. Do not feed bones and if your pet happens to eat a bone contact the surgery

Christmas Dining

Abbey House Veterinary Hospital along with many other veterinary practices throughout the U.K see an increasing amount of gastro-intestinal problems in pets over the Christmas period.

An abundance of food on our dining tables presents a danger not only to our waist lines but to the health of our pets. Fat-laden scraps of food fed to dogs and cats can cause vomiting and diarrhoea but more importantly pancreatitis.

Pancreatitis is an inflammation of the pancreas, causing leakage of digestive enzymes and the pancreas to "digest itself". Pancreatitis is a very painful disease which is difficult to treat and can prove to be fatal. Please avoid feeding your pet scraps of food they are not used to eating.



Chocolate

Chocolate contains Theobromine a chemical very toxic to pets.

Milk and white chocolate tend to contain less Theobromine whereas a very small amount of dark chocolate can be fatal.

One small bar (50g) of milk chocolate can be poisonous to a small dog but less than half a bar of dark chocolate could cause serious problems. Cats are even more sensitive to Theobromine poisoning than dogs!

If your dog happens to steal one or two milk buttons don't panic but please be aware that even a small bar of chocolate can be toxic. If your pet ingests chocolate you must contact the surgery as soon as possible. Speedy treatment can be the difference between life and death.

Antifreeze

Although much less common than it used to be, we still see the occasional case of antifreeze poisoning. The sweet taste of antifreeze attracts dogs and cats to drinking it. Unfortunately it is very toxic and ingestion is often fatal. If you suspect your pet may have swallowed antifreeze please contact the surgery immediately. Clean up any spillages and keep out of reach of pets.



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Grapes and Raisins

A common toxicity in dogs, grapes and raisins can cause severe kidney disease and may even result in death if eaten. There is much individual variation to the sensitivity, so consult the surgery even if a very small number have been consumed.

Sweets and liquorice

Sweets and liquorice tend to have a laxative effect, especially in dogs. Keep your sweet treats away from your pets.

Fireworks and busy homes

Firework displays are becoming increasingly common around Christmas and New Year. Most homes transform at Christmas time with extra guests or visitors, excited children and new objects making their way into the home, some pets can find this really stressful. Make an appointment to see our practice nurse for helpful tips and treatments to keep your pet calm.



Gift wrap & bows

Remember what we said about string?! Bows and gift wrapping can be ingested and cause a blockage requiring surgery. Keep out of reach of pets.

Alcohol

Keep your half empty tins or glasses out of reach as some pets love the taste. Alcohol in pets can result in tragedy, as heart arrhythmias, seizures, tremors and death are a very real possibility in a pet that is untreated after consuming alcohol.

Plants

Festive plants such as Poinsettia, Mistletoe and Holly all look very pretty and bring the festive feel to any home. However, all of these plants are toxic to pets and although small amounts are not usually fatal they tend to cause hypersalivation, vomiting and diarrhoea.



Poinsettia



Mistletoe



Holly

But remember Christmas is a time for fun and enjoyment and by being sensible and taking simple precautions it can be a safe time for our pets as well.

May we take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year