

Holiday Decorations and Foods

The Christmas tree, with objects that dangle and twist, is usually too much temptation for most pets. To prevent a tree from toppling over, anchor it in a heavy bucket of sand and tie it down to the legs of nearby furniture. Better yet, close off decorated rooms when pets are unattended.

It is also recommended that ornaments and trimmings be selected and hung with care. Shatterproof decorations are wise. If swallowed, tinsel, angel hair, ornament hangers, small pieces of fabric, plastic, metal, and wood can all be fatal to pets. To discourage dangerous electric cord chewing, try placing hot pepper sauce or Bitter Apple (available in pet stores) directly on the cord.

Holiday greenery such as mistletoe, holly and bittersweet should be kept well out of reach of pets. In fact, though the entire mistletoe plant is toxic, one should be aware that just one or two of the berries can even cause death in not only pets but small children. The leaves of the poinsettia plants can cause digestive problems



and its milky sap can cause skin and eye irritation. When ingested, pine needles can also make a pet very sick.

Remember that many holiday foods are high in fat and milk and can cause vomiting and diarrhea in dogs and cats. Chocolate can be toxic to dogs because it contains theobromine to which they are particularly sensitive. No animal should ever be given alcohol.

As a final word for a safe and happy holiday season, please don't give an animal as a gift. Having a companion means daily responsibility for its entire life (10-20 years). Bringing the pet into the family after the holidays has its advantages, particularly if the family will be doing a lot of entertaining or traveling. A surrogate gift such as a pet toy or a framed photo can enhance that anticipation.



Fostering a sentiment of kindness to animals

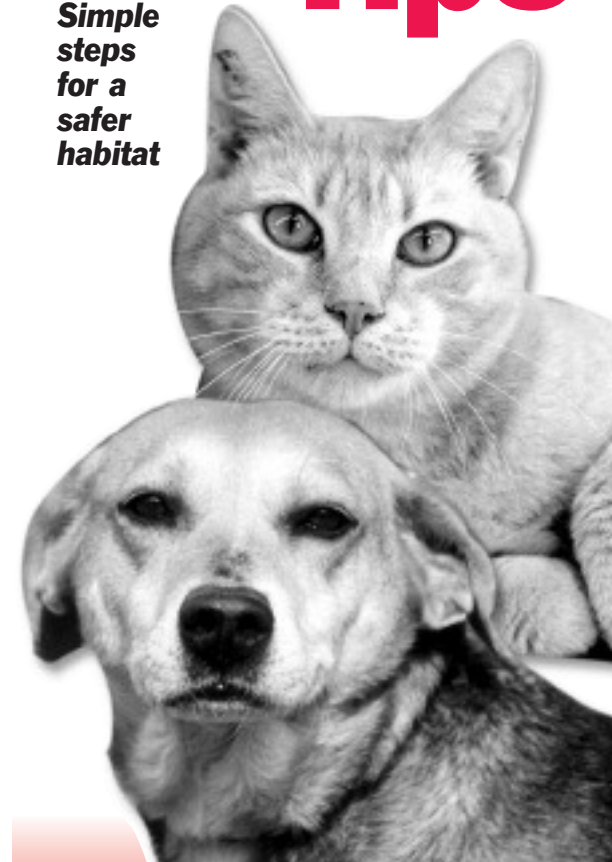
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Winter Pet Care Tips

**Simple
steps
for a
safer
habitat**



Simple Steps... ...Happier Holidays

Pet companions should be made aware of winter's dangers which include: harsh weather, leaked antifreeze, road salt, and certain Christmas tree ornaments and holiday foods.

The following are steps you can take in order to ensure that holiday festivities are not marred by disaster.

Cold Weather

Most dogs and cats are better off indoors except when taken out for exercise. The most important reason to keep a pet inside is for the animal's own safety.

One of the hazards a pet may face in the winter is exposure to extreme cold. A pet's feet, ears, and other areas of the body that are not covered by much hair get cold and can become frostbitten. Signs of frostbite include skin that is pale and cool to the touch and

decreased sensation in the effected area. After thawing, there may be pain and the skin may look like it was burned. If frostbite is suspected,



gently thaw the area with warm water, then take your pet to the veterinarian.

During the cold weather, it is a good idea to knock on your car's hood or sound the horn before starting the engine as cats permitted to run free can climb up inside the engine seeking warmth.

Ideally, dogs should live indoors, as a part of the family. However, if a dog must live outdoors, adequate preparation for the cold months is essential. Be aware that large, long-haired dogs fare better outside during the

winter than others.

In order to be effective, a doghouse must meet a certain criteria. The entire structure should be a few inches off the ground to prevent dampness. The outside should be waterproof and draft-free with an entrance being sheltered from the wind. The inside should be just large enough that the dog can lie down and have a little head room when sitting – but no larger than that because the dog's body heat will help keep the house warm. Fresh hay or straw can be put down and changed periodically to provide additional comfort.



Hazardous Substances

Ethylene glycol, the major ingredient in antifreeze, attracts both

dogs and cats because of its sweet taste. But it is extremely poisonous: a tablespoon can kill a cat and a half a cup can be fatal to a 25-pound dog. The Illinois Animal Poison Control Information Center says that pets that drink antifreeze may act drunk, stagger and be depressed, sometimes within 30 minutes of ingestion. This may last 6 to 12 hours at which time the animal may even appear to be better. Within two days, however, a fatal dose will cause prolonged vomiting, severe kidney pain, ulcers in the mouth and excruciating death from kidney failure. If your pet should swallow antifreeze, call your veterinarian at once.

Rock salt is another substance to be wary of in winter. As it is abrasive, it may cut into the animal's paw and the salt can become imbedded in the wound, causing intense pain. Pets may proceed to lick their paws and burn their mouths. Dogs may eat rock salt which will cause vomiting. When bringing in a pet from the outside during an icy-cold day, check his feet. Remove ice balls between the animal's toes and wipe his feet with a damp towel, especially after walking on heavily salted pavement.