



McMASTER & HEAP
VETERINARY PRACTICE

CHRISTMAS TIPS TO KEEP YOUR PETS SAFE OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

'Tis the season to be jolly! In the spirit of the coming festive season the staff at McMaster and Heap Veterinary Practice wish to give you some helpful tips on how to keep your pets safe and happy over this busy time.

Festive foods:

Many festive foods can be harmful and toxic to cats & dogs – here are some of the major ones that pop up every year at Christmas time!



Grapes and Raisins - Some types of grapes and raisins have been shown to cause kidney failure in dogs when eaten in toxic quantities. So think before offering your pet some tasty Christmas cake or yummy 'treats' off the fruit platters.

Onions - Pieces of raw onion, onion powder, or even cooked onion can cause damage to red blood cells, which could result in hemolytic anemia.

Garlic - fresh and powdered forms of garlic are more potent than onions. These also cause damage to red blood cells. Cats are much more sensitive as they have more fragile red blood cells.

Xylitol - Xylitol is a sugar alternative that is used in many commercial 'sugar-free' candies, gum, and other food items. Xylitol has been shown to cause severe hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and liver damage in dogs and can be fatal. Xylitol keeps popping up in unexpected places – the newest one is peanut butter, so be sure to read the label carefully.

Macadamia Nuts - dangerous to dogs when eaten can result in weakness, depression, vomiting, incoordination, and tremors. In most cases, dogs developed clinical signs within the first twelve hours after eating the macadamia nuts.

Chocolate - Contains Theobromine and caffeine which can cause increased heart rate, tremors, and excitation, depending on the type and the quantity ingested potentially death when ingested at a toxic dose. Other effects seen with chocolate overdose are vomiting, diarrhea, increased thirst, increased urination, and lethargy. Dark chocolate is the most serious as it contains the most theobromine, then milk chocolate, while white chocolate doesn't contain any, but still not healthy for your dog to have.

Cooked bones – These easily splinter and the bone shards can cause choking or get stuck in your dog's gums or stomach resulting in emergency surgery. Discourage your dog from foraging in your bins and try to secure all of the lids.



Christmas Decorations

Christmas decorations are not for pets to play with.

- Keep your pet away from plants, many of which are poisonous, especially lilies which are extremely toxic for cats and results in acute kidney failure.
- Keep electrical wires and batteries out of your pets reach. Chewing electrical cables can cause electric shock or burns to the mouth.
- Be careful if you are using tinsel on your tree. If eaten, the tinsel can block your pets intestines – we saw several of these last Christmas!



Don't forget about your RABBITS

Flystrike is a serious condition in rabbits. It occurs mostly in the summer months and we see a lot of cases over the holiday season as people get really busy and forget to regularly check on their pets.

Flystrike is extremely distressing and it is also potentially fatal. It is caused by flies that are attracted to damp fur, urine, faeces and the odour of the rabbit's scent. The flies will land on the rabbit normally around the rabbits rear end and lay their eggs. Within a very short time of 2 hours the eggs will hatch into maggots which start to feed on the rabbits skin. This process happens very quickly and is not always caught in time.

Check your rabbit twice a day and if you find a maggot on your rabbit take it to us immediately.



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