

Walker Veterinary Hospital

Melanie S. Walker, D.V.M.

38111 US 290

Waller, TX 77484

Telephone (936)931-2244



Holiday Safety Tips for Your Pets

The holidays are a wonderful time to celebrate with family and loved ones, but it can be a stressful and dangerous time for your family pet. Now that the holidays are just around the corner, remember the following tips to help keep your pet safe. Don't spoil the holiday season with an unnecessary medical emergency.

- Cover your tree stand tightly with skirting. The water from the tree base can cause mouth sores, vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of appetite. Christmas tree preservatives contain sugar and fertilizer. The sugar will attract the pet, and the fertilizer can cause vomiting.
- Pets and candles just don't mix. Keep all candles out of reach.
- Hang breakables, tinsel, and other tempting decorations well out of paw's reach. Tinsel, ribbon, and ornaments are especially dangerous to pets if chewed and swallowed.
- Place holiday plants out of pets reach. Some seasonal plants can be poisonous, including mistletoe, holly berries, and poinsettias. Depending on the variety of plant, the signs can range from vomiting and diarrhea, to heart arrhythmias, difficulty breathing, seizures or coma.
- Watch out for electrical cords. Pets, especially puppies, often try to chew them and may get badly burned, shocked or electrocuted. Make sure your strands of lights, loose wires, and extension cords are out of reach.
- Metal ornament hooks can get caught in curious mouths. Use ribbon or yarn instead of hooks to hang your ornaments.
- A Christmas tree should stand on a flat, wide base. You may also want to anchor the tree with fishing line tied to a draper rod, a ceiling or a wall hook. Cats often see trees as excellent climbing posts. Whether your tree is live or artificial, both kinds of needles are indigestible. Christmas trees (firs, cedars, pines) contain volatile oils that can cause vomiting and diarrhea.
- Refrain from using edible ornaments on your tree. They can pose a temptation for some pets.
- Keep your pets away from holiday treats, especially chocolate. Theobromine and caffeine, active ingredients found in chocolate are toxins and can be fatal. Your Christmas meal can cause pancreatitis in your pet.
- If you plan to entertain, provide a "safe haven" to which your pets can retreat when they get overly excited or nervous and there is possibility of escape.
- If you are going away from home for the holidays, make sure your pet enclosures are secure, your pets are wearing proper identification and are microchipped, and arrangements have been made for their care. If boarding your pets, be sure all requirements are met for your facility of choice prior to the boarding time. Remember, the stricter the boarding requirements are, the safer your pet will be!

And always remember to not give a pet as a gift to someone that is not expecting this responsibility.