

# Holiday Safety Guide



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The holiday season is a joyous time of the year. To be sure that you and your dog have a happy and safe experience, we've put together this Holiday Safety Guide.

## Food Related Items

**Your dog could get into some serious trouble with many of the holiday foods around at this time of year. Be aware of these food items and be sure to keep them well out of reach.**

1. **Chocolate, coffee, and tea** all contain a harmful substance called xanthine, which causes nervous system and/or urinary system damage and heart muscle stimulation. Chocolate, especially unsweetened baking chocolate and dark chocolate, contains a substance called theobromine that is dangerous for your dog.



Problems from ingesting chocolate range from diarrhea to seizures and death. Be sure to keep all chocolate, including fudge and candy out of your dog's reach.

2. **Alcohol and your dog do not mix.** In fact, alcohol can cause serious intoxication in dogs. Many dogs are attracted to the sweet taste of alcoholic drinks, especially eggnog. Each year, there are hundreds of dogs that die after a single incidence of alcohol consumption. Be sure to clean up the glasses after your holiday parties.





3. **Tobacco products can be fatal to dogs when ingested.** Signs of tobacco poisoning will develop within 15 to 45 minutes and include excitation, salivation, vomiting, and diarrhea. Dogs may also have seizures, collapse and die from heart failure. Be sure to keep cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, nicotine gum, nicotine patches, and ashtrays out of the reach of your dog.



Also, because cigarette butts contain about 25% of the total nicotine of a cigarette, be sure to empty your ashtrays frequently.

4. **Bones from cooked fish, meat, or poultry** can be dangerous if swallowed. Even small cooked bones can splinter causing tearing in your dog's intestinal tract. Be sure to keep cooked bones away from your dog.

5. An excess of **fatty foods, such as gravy or grease**, can cause your dog problems anywhere from an upset stomach to pancreatitis which causes severe pain, vomiting, and dehydration. Pancreatitis is very serious and usually requires hospitalization.

6. **Uncooked bread dough** can expand in your dog's stomach producing gas in her digestive system, causing pain and possible rupture of her stomach or intestines.

7. **Grapes and raisins** can damage your dog's kidneys.



8. **Macadamia nuts** can affect your dog's muscles, digestive system, and nervous system.



9. Meat juices on **plastic or aluminum foil** left out can be very tempting to your dog. If he eats the plastic or foil wrap, it can cause choking or an obstruction in his intestines.

10. If ingested, **meat-soaked strings** from roasts can cause a surgical emergency called a "linear string foreign body" in the intestines.

## TIPS

1. To be safe, put away food immediately, and dog-proof your garbage. Your garbage container contains additional dangers like plastic wrap and bags, 6-pack drink holders that could cause strangulation, fat trimmings, bones, and pieces of ribbon or tinsel.

2. Feed your dog before a party so she will he will not be as likely to beg or steal food.

## Poisonous Plants

Plants can make your home more festive for the holidays with their green leaves and bright red flowers. It's important though to be aware that many of the plants in your home during the holidays can be poisonous to your dog.





1. If ingested, **holly** (leaves and berries) causes stomach upset and can be potentially fatal to both dogs and cats.
2. **Mistletoe** upsets stomachs and can cause heart collapse.
3. **Hibiscus** may cause diarrhea.
4. **Poinsettias** have an irritating sap that can cause blistering in the mouth and stomach upset.

## TIPS

**When you decorate your home for the holidays, place these plants well out of your dog's reach, or use imitation plants.**

## Decorations and Wrappings



1. Be very careful with **candles**. Candles on end tables are well within reach of your dog's tail and can get knocked over in all the excitement and burn your dog or start a fire. Never leave lit candles unattended or within reach of your pet.
2. **Potpourri** contains oils that can be toxic to your dog if eaten.



3. **Snow globes** often contain antifreeze, which is poisonous to dogs.
4. **Ribbons, yarn, and string** can cause an intestinal obstruction in your dog and bunching of the intestine along the length of the string. These conditions require surgery and can be fatal.



5. **Adhesives and glues** can be toxic and are often attractive to dogs.

## Gifts Under The Tree



1. **Batteries** for toys or other gifts can be toxic and cause intestinal obstruction. Be sure to keep them in a safe place until you are ready to use them.
2. **Rawhide Chews or other edible items** wrapped as presents and left under the tree can be very tempting to your dog. Many companies often wrap rawhide chews and other pet gifts in ribbon. Make sure to remove ribbons or ties before you give these gifts to your dog.
3. **Perfumes and after-shaves** contain ethanol (alcohol) and perfumes also contain essential oils which can be very toxic to dogs if swallowed.



## Christmas Trees



1. Be sure to place your Christmas tree in a **sturdy stand**, and if you have a very active dog that might knock it over, a good idea is to attach the tree securely to a window or wall with something like fish line.
2. To keep your dog away from the tree, use a **Scat Mat**. If you have one, an X-pen is also a great way to protect your tree and keep your dog safe.
3. Always make sure you supervise your dog when in the room with the tree.
4. **Tinsel** can cause blockages in your dog's stomach and intestine, which often require surgery to remove. If you have a young dog that likes to get into things, it may be best to leave it off the tree altogether.
5. **Angel hair, flocking, and artificial snow** are mildly toxic to your dog and if eaten in larger amounts can also cause a blockage in the intestine.



6. **Chewing on electrical cords**, including cords of Christmas tree lights can cause problems for your dog ranging from burned mouths, to electrical shock, to death by electrocution.

Some larger lights can become quite hot, and can also cause burns. Unplug Christmas lights when you are not there and use dog-proof extension cords.



7. **Pine needles** can be toxic and cause mouth and stomach irritation in your dog. Pine needles can also puncture a hole in your dog's intestines. Even needles and the wire of fake trees can be dangerous.

Be sure your dog is not chewing on branches or eating fallen needles.



8. **Decorating trees with food**, especially with a young dog, is asking for problems. Candy canes and gingerbread people are extremely enticing to your dog. Popcorn and cranberry garlands are beautiful, but can cause an obstruction when eaten, requiring surgery.



9. Dogs have been known to play with **glass ornaments** as if they were tennis balls. This can cause serious oral lacerations. Sharp ornament hooks can also become imbedded in your pet's mouth or esophagus.

Place shiny, small, and glass ornaments that could be swallowed or broken high up on your tree. Larger, less intriguing ornaments should be placed near the bottom.

If your pet ingests glass, broken plastic, staples or other small, sharp objects, call your veterinarian.

10. **Tree preservatives** are often sugar-based (and therefore tasty to dogs) and because the water stands so long, the water in the tree stand often harbors potentially harmful bacteria.

Fertilizers, insecticides, or flame retardants that were used on the tree may also get into the water.

Very important note: **do not add aspirin to your tree's water**. If your dog drinks the aspirin-laced water, his health or even life can be at risk.

Cover the tree stand with a tree skirt or use other means to prevent access to the water.



## Pet Gifts and Treats

1. When selecting holiday gifts for your best friend, be sure they are safe – be aware of small pieces that could come off and be swallowed. Choose healthy holiday treats for your dog and give them in moderation.
2. With all of the festivities, do not forget to relax and spend some quality time with your dog. She'll think that is the best gift of all.
3. Holidays are a time to be joyful and thankful. We hope all of yours are beautiful.

## Tips To Reduce Stress For Your Pet During The Holidays

1. Reduce stress by keeping your dog's feeding and exercise routine on a **consistent schedule**.
2. Extra holiday activity and travel may be stressful to your dog, making him extra thirsty. Dogs typically pant more when they feel stressed. Keep **fresh water available** for him to drink.
3. Holiday guests and other activity can be very stressful and even frightening to many dogs. They can also trigger illness and intestinal upset. Make sure your dog has a **safe place to retreat** in your house like his crate. Also make sure your dog has on his I.D. tags in case he darts out the door when guests come and go.



4. Rescue Remedy is a Bach flower essence that's available in most health food stores. It is a natural stress reliever that can often help both people and animals recover from injury, fright, illness, travel fatigue, chocolate ingestion, and irritation.

Put a few drops in your dog's water bowl. For stressed or injured animals, rub a drop on their ear or put a drop on the towel in their crate or carrier.

Flower essences are free of harmful effects and can be used along with conventional medicines.

## **In Case Of Emergency**

If you suspect that your dog has eaten something toxic, call your veterinarian and/or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center's 24-hour emergency hotline at **1-888-4-ANI-HELP**.

If your dog ingests glass, broken plastic, staples or other small, sharp objects, call your veterinarian.

In the meantime, give your dog supplemental fiber in the form of whole wheat or other high-fiber bread, canned pumpkin or Metamucil. This will help bulk up the stools and help the foreign material pass through your dog's digestive system.