

Keep the Holidays Joyful & Your Pets Safe

Fort Myers, Florida, 11/16/2009—Don't let joy turn to tragedy by overlooking potential holiday hazards for pets. It is best to keep your pet's routine as close to normal as possible during this festive season and take the following precautions recommended by Lee County Domestic Animal Services and animal welfare organizations.

Decorations

Christmas ornaments, tinsel and other holiday décor can cause diarrhea, digestive tract obstructions, or even death if ingested. So keep breakables and other dangerous articles out of pets' reach. Serious burns and fire hazards can occur from candles that are knocked over or from electrical cords and lights that pets may chew.

Candy & Other People Food

They may love to have some of your dinner from *Thanksgiving* or *Christmas Day* but human seasonings are not good for pets nor are rich fatty foods. Ingestion of excessive fatty foods can cause severe vomiting and diarrhea. Ham, steak, or poultry bones should never be given to pets as they may lead to perforations or obstructions of the intestines. Likewise, never allow pets to consume alcoholic beverages even in small quantities.

Toys & Other Gifts

Take inventory of what's under your tree and in your stocking. These items could be dangerous to your pet if left where inquisitive little creatures explore. Choose your pet's toys wisely too and make sure they are basically indestructible to avoid any choking hazards.

Plants

Holly and mistletoe are only a couple of the seasonal plants that are toxic to pets. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and even heart and kidney problems can result when pets eat these toxic plants.

Loud noises

The holidays provide a lot of excitement for humans but a great deal of danger for our pets. As you party through the holidays and ring in the *New Year* remember that loud noises can frighten pets and confetti can cause intestinal injuries if ingested by your pet. Setting off fireworks as we ring in the *New Year* is also potentially hazardous to pets. It is best to keep pets inside where they will feel safe.

Strangers

If numerous people visit your home during the holidays, keep pets secluded if they are nervous or frightened around strangers.

By taking a few precautions and making pets a part of our holiday plans all pet owners and their pets can have a safe and healthy year in 2010.

For information about Lee County Domestic Animal Services' programs, lost pets or pets for adoption, please visit the website at www.LeeLostPets.com or call (239) 533-7387 (LEE-PETS).