

# Holiday Hazards



Photo by Animax

## Put the poinsettia out of harms way

Poinsettia may be a traditional, festive plant but it is poisonous. Watch out for pine needles too—they can be harmful if ingested.

## Tinsel is pretty but not when it's extracted from your pet's stomach

Tinsel can become tangled in pets' intestinal tracts and can be fatal. Tinsel, ornaments, gift ribbons and bows, as well as candles, are also choking hazards. Traditional, glass balls can be very attractive to curious kitties or ball mad dogs, so keep them away from mouths and paws. Make sure Christmas trees are secure and unable to be toppled over. Special attention should be given to cords from twinkly lights too.

## Curb the festive treats

Keep a close watch on just how much holiday treats and off-cuts you're giving your pet. A potential for weight gain aside, all those fatty bits trimmed off the roast can lead to major problems like pancreatitis. Watch the barbeque too—a chop or snag snagged off a hot barbeque can result in nasty burns. Dispose of prawn heads and tails responsibly as well—prawn shells are sharp and can be harmful if ingested. No cooked bones—resist the temptation to dole out the ham bone please.

A lot of your guests won't understand the importance of not slipping your pet a cooked bone or fatty scraps from their plates so tell them beforehand that it's not permitted. Even a small change in diet can cause tummy upsets.

## Batteries not included

Many gifts require batteries, but batteries, if bitten or swallowed, can cause ulceration in your pets' mouths, tongues or gastrointestinal tracts. Keep them out of reach.

## Beat the summer heat

Learn about the signs of heatstroke in pets and let's stay cool. Extra caution should be taken during summer play. Many dogs playing fetch or being your outfielder for a game of backyard cricket, don't know when to stop.

Never leave your pet in a car even for a short period of time. It doesn't have to be a hot day—even on moderate days, waiting in a parked car can be deadly.

Slap on the sunscreen and zinc on your pet too. Sunburn is also something to watch out for. Delicate noses, ears and tummies need extra sun care.

## Keep away those unwanted guests

We're not talking about the visiting relatives from Dapto here. Keep up the flea, tick and heartworm medication to keep everyone parasite free.

Wishing you all a safe and relaxing summer season.

**O**ur summer holidays are a great time to spend catching up with friends and spending more time with our pets. There are some holiday hazards that pet owners should be aware of – and we're not talking about the obvious things like chocolate. Lots of pet owners learn about the dangers of the holiday period and unfortunately these lessons are learned while in a waiting room of an emergency vet.

## Your tree might be fresh but the water can be a hazard

Both cats and dogs may find the Christmas tree water irresistible, so make sure to use pet-friendly tree preservatives in the water. Better yet, use a tree stand designed to prevent pets from accessing the water, which can harbour bad bacteria.

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