

## Autumn and winter hazards, keeping your pets safe through the cold time of year.

Christmas is a special time of year but it's important not to forget your pets. The following tips will help to keep your pets out of danger during the holiday season and during the autumn and winter months.

### Food and drink

- Alcoholic beverages
- Chocolate (highly toxic to pets)
- Coffee (including grounds, beans and chocolate covered espresso beans)
- Mouldy or spoiled foods
- Onions (including onion powder)
- Salt
- Chicken or turkey bones
- Fatty foods
- Yeast
- Dough
- Fruitcake (contains raisins, sultanas and alcohol all of which can be toxic)
- Grapes

Ingestion of any food that your pet is not used to can cause intestinal inflammation (vomiting and diarrhoea), but those mentioned above are specified toxins that may cause more life threatening conditions in pets.

### Plants

- Lilies found in flower arrangements can be deadly to cats causing acute kidney failure.
- Poinsettias generally have low toxicity but if ingested irritate the mouth and stomach causing mild vomiting or diarrhoea.
- Mistletoe can have a cardiovascular (heart and blood vessels) toxic effect but more commonly mistletoe ingestion causes gastrointestinal upset.
- Holly ingestion can cause vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy and the prickles can cause mouth irritation.

- Yew berries also cause gastrointestinal upset.

#### Hazards around the Christmas tree

- Christmas tree water often contains fertilisers that if ingested cause stomach upsets. Stagnant tree water can have extremely high bacterial content which can cause vomiting, nausea and diarrhoea if ingested.
- Electric cords and flashing tree lights should be covered or hidden safely as chewing could cause your pet to be electrocuted.
- Tinsel or ribbons can get stuck in the intestines and cause an obstruction if ingested.
- Glass ornaments and other tree decorations can cause accidents or even be fatal to your pet especially cats as they find swinging decorations great fun, try using unbreakable decorations or hanging them from higher branches where your pets can't reach them.
- Fallen Christmas tree needles are very sharp and can easily get stuck in your pet's paws or throat, sweep or Hoover needles up regularly or fence off the tree to separate your pet from the tree.
- Fairy lights that flash can scare some pets.
- Anchor your tree well so your pets can't pull it down.

#### Other hazards

- Batteries contain corrosives, if ingested they can cause serious ulceration to your pet's tongue, mouth and intestines.
- Remember loud noises can scare your pet, such as Christmas crackers, party poppers, balloons, fireworks and champagne corks.
- Remove your Christmas wrapping paper and cracker toys from the floor to avoid your pet chewing or swallowing them.
- Antifreeze has a pleasant sweet taste to pets and even as little as a teaspoon can be deadly to cats and dogs. Thoroughly clean up any spills and keep the lid firmly on bottles and store them well out of reach of your pet. If you think your pet has had antifreeze then contact us immediately.
- Ice melting products can be irritating to the mouth and skin, signs of ingestion can be excessive drooling, lethargy and vomiting.
- Medicines and prescription drugs should be stored safely away, one 200mg ibuprofen tablet can cause serious stomach ulcers in a 20kg dog.

- Rat and mouse killers can be lethal to your pet and should be kept well out of the way of curious pets.

Your pet can be in danger with very little warning. Please keep our telephone number in a convenient location and if you suspect your pet has ingested or come in to contact with something poisonous then contact us immediately on 01252 721191 or if out of our opening times contact vets now on 01252 737555.