

# **Second Chances:** *Pet Holiday Hazards*

## **What to Give (or *not* give) your Pet for the Holidays**

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The Holidays bring fun, family and festivities but they also introduce a few extra hazards for pets. Indeed Bubba's belly would be better served without rich, spicy, or chocolate-laden foods as pet's digestive systems differs from the human species with less capacity to handle holiday fare. It makes you happy to feed them special treats but the post-treat tummy aches last significantly longer than the time it takes them to swallow a bon-bon.

### *Edibles "NoNo" List*

Topping the "NoNo" list are: chocolate, raisins, onions, and other rich foods, so those platters of fudge, fruit bread, and the like are best kept out of reach as well (and yes the popcorn on a string may have to go too). Of course, don't forget about our pets' powerful "sniffers" and remember that wrapped boxes of chocolate and other treats won't last long under the tree once you step out for some Caroling and sleigh-riding, or meeting friends for an adult beverage or two.

Other Holiday edibles that are bad for pet tummies, are packaged peanuts. There have been many cases reported of dogs feasting on them. Keep them out of the reach of pets whose stomachs override their sensibilities (and their taste buds...).

### *No tree-toppling, light-chewing, ornament-eating!*

Another Holiday hazard, for those with a particularly energetic and adventurous kitten and puppy, is Christmas tree climbing. Tree toppling can lead to injuries for pets and innocent bystanders. Prevent such calamities by securing your tree to the ceiling or wall with sturdy fishing line or the like. And then there are the tree ornaments... make sure those within reach of your pets are non-breakable plastic or wooden ornaments and not glass. Also, do not leave tree lights plugged in while curious pets are unattended, light-chewing delivers unhealthy results.

### *House plants can poison pets*

Don't forget the Holiday plants that are poisonous and dangerous to your pets, and enticing particularly to cats—such as poinsettia, mistletoe, and amaryllis plants. Either keep them out of the house or make sure they are out of reach of your cats (good luck with that...).

### *The best gifts are love, cuddles, and togetherness*

The foremost best gifts and treats you can give your pets during the Holidays are extra attention, extra outdoor playtime, and extra hugs. These are paws-down their favorite things, and are health promoting rather than life endangering. Such activities are what you both most need during the hectic Holiday season so, once again, pets save the day.

With this list of precautions don't lose focus on what really counts right now, being together, love, cuddles, and warmth. If you could use more of this delightfulness during the Holidays there are bundles of furry packages offering this at the Second Chance Shelter, just waiting to brighten your Holidays. Enhance this Season of Giving and of Light with those in need.