

Holiday Hazards

Keeping Your Home Safe for Your Pet During the Holiday Season



During the busy holiday season, there are so many things to remember; and many times ensuring the house is safe for your family pet can fall to the wayside. Simple things like a change in schedule, decorations or even a Christmas tree can cause dangers for your pets.

Did you know that just the change in environment, with the added decorations and slight change in schedule with all the holiday parties, can cause GI upset in your pet or at the very least additional anxiety? While we can't always help the go-go mentality this time of year, we can do several things to make sure that we are taking care of our pets. First, make sure that they are getting plenty of exercise! If you can't get them to the park or for a nice long walk, then think about adding daycare once a week for the holiday season. The added exercise helps dogs to expend some of that additional anxiousness via physical activity. It also helps get them good and tired for those evenings you have other activities planned for the family. Second, maintain as much of your pets' standard schedule as you can to help keep them even-keeled. If you can't make it home to feed the cat at their normal time, maybe a neighbor can help out. Pets react to even the slightest change in their routine.

Many plants that we bring into the house for the holidays can pose a risk for our pets. While the Christmas tree is not a hazard in and of itself, the water being accessible to your pet may pose a hazard. Many trees have been grown with pesticides or fertilizers, which can leach into the water. In addition, more tree farms will spraypaint the trees to help them maintain that lovely green color, which can also leach into the water. The poinsettia is a tradition in our household, but did you know that the sap of the poinsettia plant is mildly toxic to both cats and dogs? In addition, my favorite holiday plants, mistletoe and holly, have a much higher toxicity level for pets. Be sure to contact your veterinarian immediately if your cat or dog ingests them.

Paw-tastic gift ideas this holiday season

Pets are a big part of many of our lives, so it only makes sense to keep them in mind during the gift giving season as well. How do you know what to give a family pet for the holidays? Well, we here at Tabby & Jack's can help paw you in the right direction with lots of hypoallergenic treats and chews, great toys for all sizes and ages, and even some great gift ideas for the pet lover in your family as well.

Treats are always an easy gift idea for pets. Try to stick with healthier options and avoid extremely fatty new treats that your pet may not be prepared to digest. Natural chews and bones are great to give your pet for a special treat, while also maintaining their health and cleaning their teeth. Stay away from rawhides, especially those sourced outside the USA.

Toys are one of the easiest gift options for the holidays. I tend to treat my pets with toys that I wouldn't normally spend the money on. My older dog loves plush toys, but tends to tear them apart in minutes. Knowing this, I give her one each Christmas with the knowledge that it won't last long. It is the one time of the year I pick something out for her and let her get her enjoyment out of it any way she likes. The Christmas trend that we at Tabby & Jack's have seen in previous years is that most pet owners will get a holiday toy for their pets' stockings, so we stock up on toys of all sizes that are just right for your pet's stocking stuffer.

There are so many options out there for pet gifts; keep in mind the size of the pet when choosing your gift. And remember, your pet does not care how much you spent, just that they get remembered this season.

For specific pet gift ideas, check out our specials page at tabbyandjacks.com! Or stop in and peruse our many options in person. Our staff is ready to help you pick out that purrrrfect gift!

Mandy Penisten has been in the pet industry since 2004; working in doggie daycare, boarding, training and retail. Her love of pets and working with their owners to promote happy and healthy pet families has been her driving force for the past eight years. She is currently the general manager at Tabby & Jack's Pet Supplies and Holistic Grooming in Madison and Fitchburg, and is owned by two rescue dogs, Sally and Shayna.