



Your Community Newsletter  
from  
Santa Barbara County Animal Services

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## Holiday Safety

*Keep Your Pet Healthy This Holiday Season*

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The holiday season is upon us and most pet parents plan to include their furry family members in the festivities. Let's look at some Holiday Safety Tips from our friends at the ASPCA.

### Be Careful with Seasonal Plants and Decorations

- **Oh, Christmas Tree:** Securely anchor your Christmas tree so it doesn't tip and fall, causing possible injury to your pet. This will also prevent the tree water—which may contain fertilizers that can cause stomach upset—from spilling. Stagnant tree water is a breeding ground for bacteria, and your pet could end up with nausea or diarrhea should they drink it.
- **Avoid Mistletoe & Holly:** Holly, when ingested, can cause pets to suffer nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Mistletoe can cause gastrointestinal upset and cardiovascular problems. And many varieties of lilies can cause kidney failure in

cats if ingested. Opt for just-as-jolly artificial plants made from silk or plastic, or choose a pet-safe bouquet. Pet safe flowers include: African Violets, Christmas Cactus, Phalaenopsis Orchid, Gerber Daisies, Sunflowers and Marigolds.

- **Tinsel-less Town:** Kitties love this sparkly, light-catching "toy" that's easy to bat around and carry in their mouths. But a nibble can lead to a swallow, which can lead to an obstructed digestive tract, severe vomiting, dehydration and possible surgery. It's best to brighten your boughs with something other than tinsel.
- **That Holiday Glow:** Don't leave lighted candles unattended. Pets may burn themselves or cause a fire if they knock candles over. Be sure to use appropriate candle holders, placed on a stable surface. And if you leave the room, put the candle out!
- **Wired Up:** Keep wires, batteries and glass or plastic ornaments out of paws' reach. A wire can deliver a potentially lethal electrical shock and a punctured battery can cause burns to the mouth and esophagus, while shards of breakable ornaments can damage your pet's mouth and digestive tract.

### **Avoid Holiday Food Dangers**

- **Skip the Sweets:** By now you know not to feed your pets chocolate and anything sweetened with xylitol, but do you know the lengths to which an enterprising pet will go to chomp on something yummy? Make sure to keep your pets away from the table and unattended plates of food, and be sure to secure the lids on garbage cans.
- **Leave the Leftovers:** Fatty, spicy and no-no human foods, as well as bones, should not be fed to your furry friends. Pets can join the festivities in other fun ways that won't lead to costly medical bills.
- **Careful with Cocktails:** If your celebration includes adult holiday beverages, be sure to place your unattended alcoholic drinks where pets cannot get to them. If ingested, your pet could become weak, ill and may even go into a coma, possibly resulting in death from respiratory failure.
- **Selecting Special Treats:** Looking to stuff your pet's stockings? Stick with chew toys that are basically indestructible, Kongs that can be stuffed with healthy foods or chew treats that are designed to be safely digestible. Long, stringy things are a feline's dream, but the most risky toys for cats involve ribbon, yarn and loose little parts that can get stuck in the intestines, often necessitating surgery. Surprise kitty with a new ball that's too big to swallow, a stuffed catnip toy or the interactive cat dancer.

**If you need emergency pet care during the holidays,  
please visit your local veterinarian or emergency pet clinic.**

**Santa Maria, Pets ER, 805.250.5600**  
**Santa Barbara, VCA Care Specialty & Emergency Animal Hospital, 805.899.2273**  
**Santa Barbara, Advanced Veterinary Specialists, 805.729.4460**  
**Arroyo Grande, Central Coast Pet Hospital and Emergency, 805.489.6573**



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