

# Common Holiday Hazards

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The holiday season has arrived and with that comes a wide variety of items that can cause problems for pets.

While tinsel is a pretty tree decoration and ribbons and bows are decorative they can also become a great toy for the spunky cats and kittens in the household. Ribbons, bows, and tinsel can be seen as toys or even prey for a cat or kitten to chase, pounce on, chew and even swallow. While chasing and pouncing are not dangerous, chewing and swallowing can become potential deadly problem requiring surgery to be corrected.



Christmas tree lights have their own hazard potential. Chewing on an electrical cord can lead to severe burns of the tongue and mouth as well as respiratory distress. This results in a serious emergency and the animal should be seen by a veterinarian as soon as possible. Christmas tree water can become contaminated with the fertilizers used on the tree which can lead to stomach upset. Also if the water has become stale bacteria can multiply leading to nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea if consumed.



Ornaments help a Christmas tree look very festive, however lights glimmering off the shiny surfaces make them appear as toys to pets. Problems occur if ornaments are ingested whole or if broken pieces are chewed or stepped on leading to bleeding feet or mouths.



Unsweetened baking chocolate has a higher level of a toxin called theobromine than milk chocolate however both can be toxic to dogs. Small dogs do not need to eat a large volume of chocolate to show the effects of toxicity. Signs of overdose include hyper-excitability, nervousness, vomiting and diarrhea. Contact a veterinarian if you feel that your pet is exhibiting signs of toxicity.



Lilies, a popular flower in holiday arrangements, cause acute kidney failure in cats. If you believe that your cat has eaten lilies contact your veterinarian immediately. Mistletoe does have the potential to cause cardiovascular problems, however mistletoe normally only causes gastrointestinal upset. Signs of ingestion of Holly include vomiting, nausea, diarrhea and lethargy. If consumed by animals, Poinsettias can be irritating to the mouth and stomach causing mild vomiting or nausea. Christmas Cactuses also cause mild gastric upset when ingested.



Batteries from toys contain corrosives which can lead to ulcers of the tongue, mouth and the rest of the digestive tract. If you believe that your pet has eaten batteries they should be seen by a veterinarian as soon as possible.

Liquid potpourri can come in contact with animals in several different ways. They can drink from the simmer pots, rub up against the bottles, or literally spill it on themselves. Exposure to certain types of liquid potpourri can lead to severe oral, dermal, and ocular damage. Dry potpourri normally does not cause that type of damage but can cause gastrointestinal foreign body problems and may even contain toxic plant material. If you suspect your pet has come into contact with potpourri contact a veterinarian as soon as possible.





Ice melts are used for reducing ice on sidewalks. When pets walk on the sidewalk they pick up some of the ice melt on their paws. They then lick at their feet causing either dermal or GI irritation. Ingesting smaller amounts of ice melt can result in vomiting, diarrhea and drooling. While ingesting larger amounts of these products can cause depression, tremors, disorientation and seizures. Contact with the pads on the pets feet can cause chemical burns.

Silica gel packets are found in the packaging of a wide range of items. If the beads inside the packets are eaten they can result in mild GI irritation.

So if you think your pet has come into contact with any of these holiday hazards please contact one of the following.

- Cedar Grove Veterinary Services  
1-920-668-6212  
A Cedar Grove Veterinary Services doctor is always on call. If they do not answer please leave a message and they will get back to you as soon as possible.
- Lakeshore Emergency Hospital  
1-262-268-7800  
Lakeshore Emergency Hospital is open 24 hours a day and is located in Port Washington.
- ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center  
1-888-4ANI-HELP  
\* A 65 dollar consultation fee may be applied to your credit card.

For more information feel free to contact Cedar Grove Veterinary Services at 920-668-6212 or email us at [info@cgvet.com](mailto:info@cgvet.com) .