



TEN WAYS TO TAKE PERFECT HOLIDAY PET PICTURES

by Megan Winter, Vetstreet

According to a recent American Veterinary Medical Association survey, six out of ten pet owners consider their pets family members, and when it comes time for holiday cards, of course we want the entire family included.

From refrigerator-worthy postcard greetings to frame-worthy family portraits, getting great pet photos can be tricky. To help, we compiled some tried-and-true tips from photographers and other experts.

Tips for Taking Great Holiday Pictures:

1. **Get your pet familiar with the camera.**

Because cats and dogs are wary of new devices and the sounds they make, Mary Bloom (staff photographer for the Westminster Kennel Club) recommends pointing the lens away from your pet and clicking the shutter to get him comfortable with the camera and its noises. You can even treat your pet every time your camera makes a noise. Pairing the sound with a reward helps him associate the camera with a positive experience which will make for a better photo.

2. **Be mindful of lighting.**

No one wants her pet to have red or yellow eyes in photos. To avoid this, Jamie Pflughoeft, owner of Cowbelly Pet Photography in Seattle, recommends skipping the flash if possible. "Flash-produced pet photos look terrible," Pflughoeft says. "If you don't have manual controls on your camera, take the photos in natural light outside during the day, so you avoid the dreaded yellow-green glare in your pet's eyes." A flash can also frighten your pet, so if you must use one, choose one that can be pointed toward the ceiling rather than straight ahead.

3. **Minimize distractions.**

Don't photograph him in a place he'll be distracted by people or other animals because that can affect the photo. You should also limit props to what is necessary (if anything at all) and let him check them out beforehand.

4. **Let your pet be himself.**

Instead of putting him in a prolonged sit, capture his personality. Let him play; after all, an active pet is a happy pet. Plus, he may get a little of his restlessness out of the way early in the session, which means less chasing and more snapping for you. (Hint: playing with him beforehand wouldn't ➔

("Ten Ways to Take Perfect Holiday Pet Pictures" cont.)

hurt either!)

5. **Get on your pet's level.**

You may need to get creative to make sure you capture the best moment. For Kate Lacey this means stooping, kneeling or even lying down. "For truly engaging photos, I keep my camera at or below eye level to an animal," she says. "Lie on the floor if you have to!"

6. **Use the proper attention-getter.**

For this one, you have to use what you already know about your pet. If calling his name makes him come toward you or squeaking a toy makes him hyper, you probably shouldn't use those things to get his attention during a photo session. Some alternatives may be snapping your fingers or holding a treat next to the lens of your camera.

7. **Keep sessions short and comfortable.**

Requiring him to sit for extended periods of time or posing in uncomfortable positions will quickly irritate him. Joel Riner (a commercial photographer from Quicksilver Studios in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho) recommends catching him in a place he likes — lying on the sofa, sitting at the window or curled up by the fire. To get a great image, let him pose naturally and allow him to move around. You could even catch him during a nap. Just don't force it.

8. **Be patient.**

This one goes hand in hand with keeping your session comfortable and short. Pets are like kids: they lose attention and get bored quickly. Don't be discouraged if you don't get

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("Ten Ways to Take Perfect Holiday Pet Pictures" cont.)

the shot you're looking for on the first try. Take a break. Try again. It'll happen and sometimes the best photos are of candid moments, not posed ones.

9. Get in the photo.

Pets are most at ease when they are with the people they love. So whether it's a selfie or you have someone else take the shot, get in the photo and love on your pet. That's sure to make everyone smile!

10. Don't forget the final touches.

Once you've captured that perfect shot, use an online editing program such as Photoshop Express Editor to fine-tune your favorite pic. It's free and allows you to crop, adjust exposure and sharpen images. Once you're ready to print, drop your photo into a template from minted.com or tinyprints.com and get those stamps ready.

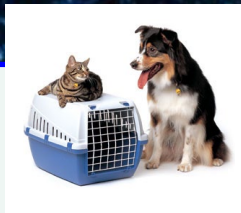
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Preparing For Holiday Travel

— TripsWithPets.com

With the holiday season fast approaching, many families are planning their travels and bringing along Fido and Fluffy to stay with them at pet friendly hotels. Be sure to plan ahead and take all the necessary precautions to ensure that your that your pets' travels during the holidays is a happy and safe one.

For many, holiday travel means staying at a pet friendly hotel. It's important to make sure that you and your pet are prepared. Following some simple tips will help to ensure that your hotel stay with your pet is an enjoyable one.

1. It's recommended to book a room on the ground floor and by an exit. This will make it much easier for you to take your pet out for bathroom breaks.
2. Make sure to always clean up after your pet as well.
3. Be sure to exercise your pet...this means walks. Ask hotel personnel about the best places to walk your pet.
4. Treat the hotel room with respect...this means covering any furniture and beds that your pet may be allowed on.
5. If traveling with a cat, place their litter boxes in the bathroom. This will make clean-up much easier.
6. It's recommended to not leave your pet unattended in your hotel room. Even the best behaved pets can bark and become destructive when in new surroundings. If you must leave your pet alone, be sure that it's for a very short time. Alert the front desk that your pet is alone in the room and try putting on the TV or a radio to make your

pet more comfortable. If you pet travels with a crate or kennel, place them in it when leaving the room. In addition, place a note on the hotel door indicating that your pet is in the room.

7. Don't leave any pests behind. Before leaving home be sure to give your pet a good cleaning and de-flea and de-tick them. This means a good flea and tick bath along with utilizing preventative flea and tick control. Leaving behind a stinky smell, or worse, fleas or ticks is the kind of thing that makes accommodations change their pet friendly policy. In addition, if a deposit is required, these types of things could very well prevent you from getting it back.

8. Accidents happen! Even pets that have never had an "accident" indoors may do so under stress. B ring along a disinfectant as well as a rag in the event that you have to clean up after your pet. Not doing so could also cause a loss of deposit.

9. To ensure that you're welcomed back, keep your pet on a leash and avoid taking them into dining areas.

Following some common sense rules will help ensure that your pet has a happy and safe trip.

About TripsWithPets.com: TripsWithPets.com is the #1 online resource for pet travel. It was named BEST pet travel site by Consumer Reports! TripsWithPets.com offers resources to ensure pets are welcome, happy and safe when traveling. The website features a directory of pet friendly hotels and accommodations across the U.S. and Canada, airline & car rental pet policies, dog friendly beaches, search by route, pet travel tips, pet travel supplies, along with other pet travel resources.





Seven Dangerous Gifts To Never Give Your Pets

by Laura Cross, Vetstreet

Your family and friends probably aren't the only ones who will be getting something special from you this holiday season — we bet you'll be giving your pet a gift, too. But whether it's an extra yummy treat or an awesome new toy, it's important to make sure that the presents you give your cat or dog are actually safe for him to enjoy.

A trip to the veterinary emergency room during the holidays is a surefire way to ruin your festivities, so we're sharing seven dangerous gifts you shouldn't give your dog or cat.

Turkey, Chicken and Other Meat Bones

Of all the gifts your dog could get this year, leftover turkey and chicken bones seem like they would be pretty high on his wish list. But no amount of begging is worth the risk of giving him a meat bone. Any bones, including turkey, chicken, pork and fish bones — whether they're raw or cooked — can shatter or splinter in your dog's intestinal tract or cause intestinal blockage (or worse). Plus, bones and bone fragments can be choking hazards.

Dangerous Toys

If a toy is specifically made for pets, it must be safe, right? Unfortunately, that's not always the case. Cat owners shouldn't give their cats toys that have string, ribbon or yarn, since these can get stuck in the intestines if accidentally swallowed. And before giving your cat a toy mouse, make sure any glued-on eyes or noses are removed.

Dog owners should think twice about giving their pups balls that are too small, toys with string or ribbon, or toys stuffed with beads or beans. It's better to be safe than sorry: If a toy seems like it could be dangerous, keep it away from your pet.

Your Rich or Fatty Leftovers

After a big holiday meal, you may feel like your pup deserves to indulge a little, too. Before you feed him your leftovers, consider this: too much rich holiday fare could lead to pancreatitis, a potentially life-threatening disease often characterized by vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea and fever. If that's not bad enough, some of the items on your plate could contain like garlic, onions and raisins.

If you must give your pet a taste of your holiday dinner, make sure the portion is small and doesn't contain any toxic or rich ingredients.

Tinsel, Garland and Other Holiday Decor

It's shiny, it's crinkly and your cat probably loves to play with it, but tinsel isn't safe to give your pet. If your kitty ↗

(*"Seven Dangerous Gifts To Never Give Your Pets" cont.*)

accidentally swallows this popular holiday decoration, it could harm his intestines and require surgery for removal. The same goes for garland and other long, stringy holiday decor. Keep it out of reach of your pet or better yet, don't decorate with it at all.

Chocolate

Go ahead and keep all that gelt you won spinning the dreidel for yourself — chocolate can be poisonous for pets. Chocolate contains two toxic ingredients: caffeine and theobromine. In general, the more bitter the chocolate, the more dangerous it is for your animal.

Signs of chocolate poisoning include vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, panting and seizures.

Holiday Outfits That Don't Fit

Santa hats and reindeer ears are certainly adorable on pets, but you should make sure the outfit isn't too big or too small. It also shouldn't have any loose bells, strings or other potentially harmful items. And you should make sure your pet doesn't mind wearing clothes — pawing at or shaking off the outfit is a sign your pet isn't a fan.

Sugar-Free Baked Goods or Candy

One of the best things about the holidays is when a neighbor drops off a plate of delicious sweets and baked goods. You may be tempted to share a bite of your sugar snowman cookie with your pet, but there's a chance it could contain xylitol, a sugar substitute that's toxic to dogs and possibly cats, too. ☐

At-Home Pet Dangers to Beware Over the Winter Holidays

— VetStreet

When hanging decorations for the winter holidays, be sure to place them out of reach of curious paws.

Winter can be a magical time of year for family, friends and furry companions, alike. To help keep everyone happy and safe, consider which holiday traditions might be potential hazards for your pet and take proper precautions — before the season begins.

Deck the Halls

Jingling bells and other holiday decorations can offer a host of new toys for pets to play with or explore, which may put them in danger. Dr. Karen Todd, a New Jersey veterinarian experienced in emergency medicine, cautions, "Pets are curious and observant. They can find things you may not even notice." Therefore, decorate with safety in mind:

- Place ornaments higher on the tree, away from playful cats or dogs.
- Move surface decorations that pose a choking hazard out of reach. Bite-sized adornments, such as dreidels or nativity scene pieces, may cause severe internal injury if ingested.

- Tie back or tape down electrical cords, so animals who love to chew won't nibble and get a jolt. Loose cords can also tangle around a pet, posing a risk of strangulation or possibly capsizing heavy decorations,

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("At-Home Pet Dangers..." cont.)

such as a Christmas tree.

- Keep open flames inaccessible. Open chimney fires, menorahs and other flame sources can burn animals or cause a house fire if disturbed.

Chestnuts Roasting

During holiday feasting, pets should not participate in the gluttony. Feeding a pet scraps can cause serious stomach and intestinal upset from overfeeding, or more severe illnesses if the foods are toxic to animals. Pets hanging around the kitchen should be kept away from any alcohol, chocolate, macadamia nuts or raisins that may have been left out. For a more comprehensive list of toxic foods and poisonous houseplants, visit the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Animal Poison Control Center's website.

Owners can dole out dog biscuits and other healthy treats, such as carrots and green beans. That way, pets can enjoy the gastronomic aspect of the holidays without their health being put at risk. Even wholesome pet snacks can be unhealthy if given too often, so avoid overindulging a pet's appetite for treats.

Home for the Holidays

There are few silent nights with holiday guests constantly coming and going. Although many pets enjoy the added attention and activity, the noise associated with gatherings can make some animals anxious. "Pets tend to become accustomed to a certain routine. Any disruption can be stressful for some pets," Dr. Todd explains.

For that reason, give your pet a quiet area where it's possible for him to take a nap or hide safely. A pet's natural curiosity may draw him out when he is ready to participate in the festivities. And make sure you brief any guests on the rules for your pet, including his diet (no table scraps!) and habits. Let guests know that it is okay to show the pet attention, but that it should be on the pet's terms. Also, visiting children should be supervised when handling an animal.

Let It Snow!

The weather outside can be frightful, and pet owners who are staving off the cold during the holiday season should be watchful of certain hazards while their pets are enjoying the great outdoors:

- Antifreezes can contain certain chemicals that are highly toxic to animals if swallowed; pets may lick the sweet-tasting chemical from surfaces or during self-grooming. Pet-friendly alternatives (containing propylene glycol) are available.

- Dehydration can still occur during the cold and wet weather. Pet parents should remember to keep their pets properly hydrated with fresh, clean water — especially after outdoor exercise.

- Extreme weather conditions may be hazardous if a pet is exposed for long periods. In addition, cold weather can intensify arthritis discomfort in older and overweight pets.

- Ice can be dangerous for a variety of reasons. Pets can fall through thin ice or slip on icy surfaces. In addition, sharp ice can cut the pads of a pet's feet, so always check and brush off the pads after a pet has spent time outside. ↗

("At-Home Pet Dangers..." cont.)

Do You Hear What I Hear?

Pet owners should be aware of what ASPCA experts are calling the top dangers for pets during the holiday season:

- Antifreeze — Some formulas contain hazardous chemicals that can be poisonous to pets if ingested, either directly or by grooming residue from their paws or coat.

- Christmas tree water — Bacteria in standing water, as well as tree food added to the water, can result in severe gastrointestinal irritation if ingested.

- Confetti and balloons — These colorful decorations pose a choking hazard and may cause internal distress if swallowed.

- Dough — Uncooked dough with yeast will still rise if ingested, which may cause severe bloating, pain, vomiting and other complications.

- Electric cords — Exposed wiring in chewed or worn cords can cause electric shock; decorated trees with string lighting or extension cords may topple if animals become entangled.

- Fatty foods — A diet that is overly rich in fats may result in gastrointestinal irritation or, in severe cases, pancreatitis.

- Holiday plants — Poinsettias generally cause only mild stomach irritation, but other plants (e.g., holly, lilies, mistletoe) are highly toxic and may cause kidney failure or other severe damage.

- Ornaments — Glass ornaments and metal hooks may look like shiny toys to playful pets, but they can cause serious damage if broken or ingested.

- Table scrap bones — Bones from your holiday feast can fracture teeth or cause mouth injuries, intestinal damage or obstruction.

- Tinsel, ribbon and yarn — Never let pets play with decorations that contain string. String can cause severe internal trauma if swallowed, or choking if it becomes tangled around a pet's neck.

Naughty or Nice?

If you're thinking of adopting a new pet during the holidays, you may want to think again. A house full of noise, decorations and guests may not be the ideal conditions for an untrained pet. In addition, the stress of the season may not allow owners to dedicate their time to training a young pet. Waiting until after the start of the new year can allow new pet parents to devote the proper care and training to their newest family member.

As for giving a pet as a gift, it is not always a good idea. Veterinary technician Dana Farbman of the ASPCA says, "Adding a pet to a home should be a family decision. Animals are not inanimate objects" that can be returned after the initial excitement has passed. Everyone in the household should be able and willing to take care of an animal.

If you would like to help bring the joy of a new pet into a family, you can put together an adoption kit as a gift. Staples to include are a leash, collar and food dish. Just be sure that the entire family has first discussed and agreed on the responsibilities of pet ownership. After the holidays have passed and the home is pet-ready, new owners can go together to adopt a puppy or kitten. ☐



Five Ways To Stop Your Dog From Barking!

—<http://petpav.com/>

If your dog barks incessantly, it can drive you and your neighbors crazy! While this a hard habit to break, it can be done. And, of course, the longer your dog has been barking, the longer it will take your pup to change this behavior.

Below are five ways to stop your dog from barking:

1. **Remove the cause or motivation for the barking.**

Your dog gets some kind of reward when he barks even if it is just your reaction to your dog's barking. Otherwise, your pup wouldn't do it! Figure out what your dog gets out of barking. There has to be a reason he is barking and it is important that you don't give your dog the opportunity to continue this behavior.

2. **Teach your dog the "quiet" command.**

The first step of is to teach your dog to bark on command. Give your dog the command to "speak," wait for him to bark two or three times, and then place his favorite treat in front of his nose. When he stops barking to sniff the treat, praise him and give him the treat. Repeat until he starts barking as soon as you say "speak."

Once your dog can reliably bark on command, teach him the "quiet" command. In a calm environment with no distractions, tell him to "speak." When he starts barking, say "quiet" and stick a treat in front of his nose. Praise him for being quiet and give him the treat.

3. **Ignore the barking.**

Ignore your dog's barking for as long as it takes him to stop; don't give him any attention when he's barking. Your reaction only rewards your dog for being noisy. Don't talk to him, don't touch him, and don't even look at him. When your dog finally quiets down, even to take a breath, reward him with a toy.

4. **When your dog starts barking, ask him to do something that immediately stops the barking.**

When your dog starts barking, ask him to do something that's incompatible with barking. Try to teach your dog to react to barking with something that inhibits him from barking, such as lying down in his bed is a great way to stop the behavior. Even sitting will make your dog focus and stop barking.

5. **Exercise, exercise, exercise!**

Make sure your dog is getting enough physical and mental exercise every day. A tired dog is a good dog and one who is less likely to bark from boredom or frustration. Depending on your dog's age, it might take a lot of walks as well as playing with some interactive toys to keep him or her quiet.

With time and patience, your dog will stop barking if you can find the cause and/or teach him not to with rewards and discipline. Never yell at your dog to be quiet as it is counterproductive. Be consistent and use the same training method every time your dog barks inappropriately. □

DO DOGS UNDERSTAND TIME?

—<http://petpav.com/>

Our dogs are very smart, evolved pets and we think of them as almost human. After all, they know when they are going to be fed, taken on their walk and when you return home each day. It seems easy to conclude that dogs have an accurate sense of time. But do our beloved pups really know what time it is or is there something else that helps them track time.

Dogs understand time in terms of events and training.

We, humans, use episodic memory in order to understand and recall past events and think about future ones. But, dogs don't perceive time this way. Dogs are capable of being trained based on past events and taught to anticipate future events based on past experiences. Dogs can distinguish how much time has passed since something has occurred; time for another meal since my food bowl has been empty for a few hours. But, of course, hunger can come into play here too.

Dogs pick up on our social cues to understand time.

Dogs tend to pick up on our body language to know when they are going to be fed or taken on a walk. When you look toward the front door or look to a certain closet where your dog's leash is hanging, your dog knows that's time for a walk. When you open the fridge in the morning or a certain cabinet, your dog probably senses that it's time to eat! In this way, our dogs can sense time in our certain habits and what we do before we feed, walk and/or play with them.

Biology comes into play with dogs' sense of time.

All animals have a circadian rhythm. Humans, dogs, and other animals have these rhythms. An animal's circadian rhythm is governed by its genes, but these cycles are also very dependent on light and dark. They can also be influenced by changes in temperature or by social factors, like regularly scheduled mealtimes. Your dog's circadian rhythm probably plays a big role in when your dog thinks it's time to go for a walk, sleep, or eat. This

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Whatever you give a woman, she's going to multiply. If you give her sperm, she'll give you a baby. If you give her a house, she'll give you a home. If you give her groceries, she'll give you a meal. If you give her a smile, she'll give you her heart. She multiplies and enlarges what is given to her. So..if you give her any crap, you will receive a ton of shit.





("Do Dogs Understand Time?" cont.)

internal clock is also thought to contribute to your dog's sense of time.

Dogs generally understand the passage of time when alone.

There is research evidence that dogs understand the concept of time based on changes in their behavior when left alone by their owners for different lengths of time. Studies show that dogs are actually more affectionate toward their owners if they've been separated for longer periods of time. As the amount of time away increases, so does the dogs' excitement. This isn't a big surprise to most dog owners; most dogs get super excited and are more affectionate after you have been away for even a couple days. It's easy to think that dogs can also differentiate between different spans of time.

Dogs can use their sense of smell to give them a sense of time.

It's also thought that dogs could use their sense of smell to determine time. Your scent is strongest right after you leave the house, but begins to fade throughout the day. Some researchers believe dogs may use your fading scent to figure out when it's getting close to the time you usually come home. Dogs do, therefore, have a general sense of time. The more the dog is clued in to your behavior and routine, the more likely your dog will sense time even more acutely. ☐

Kitten-Proofing Your Home For The Holidays

by Dr. Marty Becker DVM

Don't let your kitten get burned this holiday season. Make sure you set up a fire screen so he can't get into the fireplace and consider replacing tea lights and tapers with flameless candles.

I love the fall and winter holidays! The food, the decorations, the gathering of family. I just think there's no happier time of year. And if you've added a kitten to your family recently, you're likely find there's no more entertaining time of year. Kittens are always on the move, eager to investigate everything around them. Watching them stalk the wild shoelace or rise straight up into the air when startled by the twitch of your toes beneath a blanket is guaranteed to give you a healthy belly laugh.

But, the holidays can also be a dangerous time for kittens — not to mention for your holiday decor. Kittens can get into trouble when their curiosity leads them to steal food not meant for them, bat at candle flames, tug on twinkly tinsel or climb the Christmas tree. I'm here to share some tips to help ensure that you and your kitten have a safe and breakage-free holiday season.

Fire Hazards

Since ancient times, we've relied on fire to protect us from things that go bump in the night, and it's just natural that flames flicker merrily at this time of year. From Thanksgiving through New Year's, we brighten our homes with candles, luminarias, menorahs, Christmas tree lights and Yule logs.

It's normal for inquisitive kittens to be attracted by dancing flames and dangling electrical cords. But, they can easily singe their whiskers and tails, suffer burns if they get too close to an open flame, or sink those little teeth into an electrical cord.

To protect your kitten, consider replacing tapers and tea lights with flameless candles, at least until he's a mature cat who has left his rambunctious ways behind him. Set up a fire screen so he can't get to the fireplace, and place tough plastic covers over electrical cords so he can't chew them. If that's not an option, wrap cords tightly and position them so they don't dangle enticingly.

Treating your kitten to a few bites of turkey or roast beef is okay, but giving her too much rich holiday fare could lead to pancreatitis.

Foil Food Theft

No self-respecting kitten is going to pass up a chance to help you eat your roast beast. It's okay to give him a bite or two of turkey or beef (remember, his stomach is a lot smaller than yours), but to protect your prize poultry from kitten predation, keep it, and all other fixings, well out of your kitten's reach until you're ready to serve dinner. And while a nibble of meat won't hurt your feline, overindulgence in rich, fatty foods such as dressing and gravy can lead to a life-threatening case of pancreatitis.

That string you used to wrap the roast or ham? Your kitten will love chewing on and swallowing it, but it's the kind of thing that can become what we veterinarians call a "linear foreign body," and it's bad news. If your cat swallows it, he can suffer a partial or complete intestinal obstruction.

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("Kitten-Proofing Your Home..." cont.)

Trust me, you don't want your holidays disrupted by emergency kitten surgery, so don't leave that string hanging around.

If your kitten has a penchant for climbing, you might be want to decorate your Christmas tree with soft or plastic ornaments that won't break.

Decor Damage Control

Tinsel and ribbon are also potential linear foreign bodies that kittens find attractive. Skip them when you're decorating your tree and packages.

Speaking of trees, it's a good idea to anchor it to the ceiling with fishing line. If your kitten decides to try climbing the Christmas tree, the line will keep your furry marauder from knocking it over. You may also want to decorate it with soft or plastic ornaments that won't break — at least until your kitten outgrows the crazy stage. Even better, place the tree inside a playpen or exercise pen to help keep your kitten away from it.

That potpourri that gives your home a wonderful holiday scent? It's coated with highly toxic essential oils. Some cats like to nibble on the scented stuff, but ingesting it can cause severe chemical burns to their mouth and esophagus. A safer way to get that holiday smell is to simmer cinnamon sticks, cloves and orange peel on your stove.

Greenery Guidelines

You've probably heard for years that poinsettias are toxic to pets, but they actually cause little harm. The holiday plants you need to worry about are amaryllis, lilies, holly and mistletoe. If your kitten eats them, they can cause abdominal pain, mild to severe vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, kidney failure and even death, depending on which plant and how much of it he eats. Keep them out of your home or use artificial arrangements.

With a little forethought, it's easy to keep your kitten out of trouble during the holidays. ☐

("Ten Best and Worst Holiday Foods..." cont.)

Mashed Potatoes

It's usually okay to give your animal a small portion of mashed potatoes as long as it doesn't contain any butter, garlic, cheese, sour cream, bacon drippings or other rich toppings. Better to save all those yummy fixings for yourself (and your guests).

Carrots

Though your delectable glazed carrots are not a good choice for cats and dogs, cooked carrots without any added sugar or salt are safe to give animals. It's also usually safe to give dogs raw carrots, but they can be a choking hazard for cats.

Gravy

It may be a delicious sauce for your turkey and mashed potatoes, but most gravies are too rich for your dog or cat. Instead, you can pour a little low-sodium chicken broth over your pet's food.

Green Beans

The classic holiday casserole topped with crispy fried onions contains too many rich and risky ingredients for pets, but cooked green beans can be a safe, low-calorie treat for both dogs and cats. Raw green beans can also be eaten by dogs but are a choking hazard for cats and should be avoided.

Chocolate

Chocolate can be life threatening for cats and dogs. As a general rule, the darker the chocolate, the riskier it is for your pet. Chocolate contains two ingredients that can be toxic: caffeine and a chemical called theobromine.

Unbaked Bread Dough

It seems harmless, but unbaked bread dough can cause all sorts of trouble for your pet. If ingested, it can expand in the stomach. If the stomach twists cutting off the blood supply, emergency surgery can be required. Plus, the yeast in the dough can produce alcohol, which can lead to and respiratory failure.

Alcohol

Liquid spirits may help you get into the holiday spirit, but it's never a good idea to give alcohol to your pet. Signs of toxicity can include vomiting, diarrhea, decreased coordination, central nervous system depression, difficulty breathing, tremors, coma and death.

Liquid spirits may help you get into the holiday spirit, but it's never a good idea to give to your pet. Signs of toxicity can include: decreased coordination, central nervous system depression, difficulty breathing, tremors, coma and death.

Sugar-Free Candy and Baked Good

Xylitol is an artificial sweetener often found in sugar-free gum, candy and mints. If ingested, it causes a sudden release of insulin in a dog's body, leading to dangerously

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Ten Best and Worst Holiday Foods for Pets



by Laura Cross

With the holiday season comes parties, family gatherings and plenty of opportunities to indulge in delicious holiday fare. And since it is the season of giving, it's hard not to be tempted to share your leftovers with your cat or dog. Although your pet doesn't need the extra calories, there are some human foods that are safe to give your animal in moderation and some that you should never feed him. Before you prepare your next holiday feast, check out the following to make better food choices for your pet. And make sure you talk to your veterinarian before introducing a new food into your pet's diet.

Turkey

It's hard to ignore a pet begging under the table for a morsel of turkey. Luckily for your dog or cat, you can give him a little bit of this holiday staple as long as you remove the skin (too rich and fattening), remove the bones (they can be choking hazards and can splinter and cause digestive tract issues), and avoid raw or undercooked meat (a potential salmonella risk). ➔



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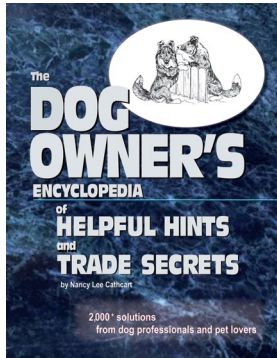
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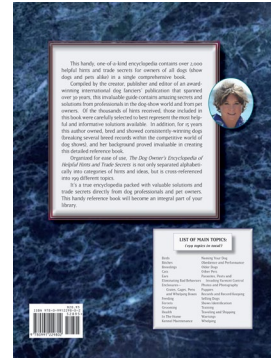
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Nancy Lee

("Ten Best and Worst Holiday Foods..." cont.)

low blood sugar. It can also cause liver damage. Signs of poisoning, such as vomiting and diarrhea, can occur in less than 15 minutes after accidental ingestion. If left untreated, the condition can be fatal. If you suspect your pet has ingested xylitol, seek veterinary care immediately.

Macadamia Nuts

Whether they're in a bowl, in a cookie or covered in chocolate, macadamia nuts should never be given to pets. Signs of poisoning include depression, weakness, vomiting, tremors, lack of coordination and joint stiffness. ☐

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