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## ‘Tis the Season: Keep Pets Safe & Jolly This Holiday

*Dr. Roberta Westbrook, Chief Veterinarian at the Houston SPCA shares some mindful tips this holiday season to help keep pets safe and avoid an emergency visit to the veterinarian.*

**Dr. Westbrook SOT & B-roll:** [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/alki3ob82eagy75/AAA05knI7q\\_gj4fDBfajcEJ1a?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/alki3ob82eagy75/AAA05knI7q_gj4fDBfajcEJ1a?dl=0)

- 🐾 **Deck the Halls:** Holiday items found in homes that can harm your pets include lighted candles, chocolate, alcohol, tinsel and ribbon, xylitol (in some peanut butter), mistletoe and poinsettias.
- 🐾 **Fatty Feasts:** *Just say no* to giving pets the fatty skin on meat as it can cause painful inflammation called pancreatitis and sharing dinner bones can lead to emergency surgery. *Safely share:* plain green beans and other veggies, pumpkin puree, turkey or chicken breast and pet-friendly treats.
- 🐾 **Cats Will Be Cats:** Christmas trees can be a magnet for curious felines, especially active kittens. Display fragile or glass ornaments elsewhere and secure the tree to the ceiling or wall with a fishing line.
- 🐾 **Not This Water Bowl:** The water a Christmas tree depends on could make your pet sick if there are additives like bleach or loaded with sugar. [A tree skirt around the base](#) of the stand should keep thirsty pets away.
- 🐾 **Stressed Out:** A change in a pet’s routine over the busy holiday can create anxiety. Pets can also pick up on your holiday-related stress, so try to maintain at least part of their daily schedule.
- 🐾 **Party Guests:** Don’t force social interactions between your pets and party guests. If your pet doesn’t want to engage, provide them with a quiet space and a food puzzle like a snuffle mat to prevent boredom.
- 🐾 **Pet-Friendlier Christmas Trees:** When choosing a real tree, consider one with [pliable needles such as a Douglas fir](#) or white pine. Those needles won’t stick in your pet’s paws or become a choking hazard and are easier to vacuum up.
- 🐾 **Road Trippin’:** Walk a high-energy pet right before you take off; travel in a crate or pet car seat; don’t feed a nauseous-prone pet two hours beforehand; take plenty of potty breaks and never leave your pet alone in the car.
- 🐾 **Pets Are Family:** When it’s time to open presents, be sure to include the ones with fur or feathers since some pets enjoy searching for wrapped treats under the tree and participating in all the festive activities.
- 🐾 **Countdown to 2022:** Fireworks and the bevy of New Year’s Eve activities can scare pets and make them a flight risk. Keep them inside after dark and away from the front door if you are hosting a celebration at home. Set up a quiet place for them with comfort items if you plan to ring in the New Year away from home.

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