



# Keep the *Holiday Season* Fun & Safe for Your Dog



## *Holiday* foods can be harmful

- Many holiday foods can be harmful to canines, causing symptoms as mild as an upset stomach or as severe as vomiting and diarrhea. Avoid giving your dog fatty or spicy foods, bread dough, fresh herbs, alcohol beverages, caffeine and sweets of all kinds—especially those with chocolate or sweeteners.

### **Particularly dangerous are cooked poultry bones.**

- Cooked bones easily splinter, and the bone shards can cause choking, get stuck in your dog's gums or possibly damage his intestines. Instead, treat your dog to "dog bones" specifically designed for him to chew. Ask your veterinarian for suggestions.
- Discourage your dog from foraging in the garbage—secure lids on all bins.
  - It's natural that you'd want to share holiday treats with your dog. While a little taste of turkey or sweet potatoes can make your dog happy, don't overdo it—too much of a good thing can make him sick.

## *Decorations* are not playthings

- Keep your pet away from holiday plants, many of which are poisonous, such as holly, mistletoe, poinsettias and amaryllis (a type of lily). Also be sure all potpourri is out of your pet's reach.
- Snow globes can contain antifreeze, which is toxic to dogs. Whether in the garage or in a snow globe, keep antifreeze products away from your happy, tail-wagging dog. If there is an antifreeze spill, keep your dog out of the room while you clean up the liquid. Dilute the spot with water and floor cleaner to ensure your dog does not lick the area later.
- Keep electrical wires and batteries out of your pet's reach. Chewing or biting anything electrical can cause him shock or burns.
- Don't leave lighted candles unattended. A lit candle knocked over by a swinging tail can burn your pet or cause a fire.

## *Christmas trees* can be hazardous

- Anchor the tree to the ceiling or wall to prevent it from tipping over.
- Hang non-breakable ornaments near the bottom of the tree.
- Avoid putting tinsel on your tree. If ingested, tinsel can twist in your dog's intestines and be deadly.

- Don't let your dog drink the Christmas tree water. The water may contain preservative chemicals, which can trigger severe indigestion in dogs. Stagnant plain water can breed bacteria and cause nausea or diarrhea.
- Regularly sweep up fallen pine needles, as they can puncture holes in a dog's intestines if ingested.

## *Help* your dog feel safe and relaxed

- Most dogs get very excited when guests arrive. To help your dog be calmer, exercise him prior to the festivities. After 30 minutes of walking or playtime, your dog will more likely be relaxed or want to nap.
- As a general rule, don't allow the family dog to greet unfamiliar guests since unusual activities and commotion can cause him extra stress.
- Give your dog a break from the hubbub by putting him in his crate or in a quiet room with his doggie bed. Allow him to rejoin the festivities after guests have arrived.
- Pets stressed by unfamiliar events typically pant more, so keep your dog's water bowl filled with fresh water.

## *Pets* like presents too!

- Help your dog stay busy and out of the holiday trimmings by giving him fun, safe gifts.
- The Buster Cube® and Kong® are virtually indestructible puzzle toys that reward your dog with treats and keep him well entertained.

## **A final note:**

### **Please don't give a pet as a surprise gift!**

A cute puppy might seem like the perfect gift choice, but many of these holiday presents end up at animal shelters. Owning a dog takes a genuine commitment of time and responsibility, and adoptive owners must be ready to participate in training and other activities. If someone you know seriously wants a dog, consider giving a lead and collar, or a dog training certificate from Bark Busters along with a note saying a dog of the recipient's choice comes with it. This helps ensure the lucky person gets just the right pet to bring into the family.

