

# Enjoy Celebrating Christmas with your Pets

Christmas time is a time of memories and traditions. By following safety tips for pets at Christmas, you can include your pet in Christmas plans. Plan safe Christmas activities for your pet and create some new Christmas memories that include your furry (or not so furry) friends.

## **Safety Tips**

**Foods to avoid:** Pets should never be given chocolate, which can be toxic in cats and dogs. Other foods that should not be given to pets include: Grapes, raisins, garlic, onions, macadamia nuts, broccoli and caffeine containing foods or drinks and avocado.

**Christmas decorations:** can cause major problems for curious pets. Shiny and bright, tinsel can lead to obstruction and lead to surgery. Avoid using tinsel for decorating if pets have access to it. Even if placed high on a tree, curious cats and dogs may jump or stand up to get to it, resulting in a toppled tree and terrified or injured pet. Place Christmas bulbs high on the tree where pets cannot easily reach them. Do not place any presents that contain food under your tree and leave pets unattended.

**Excited children:** can unintentionally upset a pet at Christmas. Dogs and cats can bite and/or scratch when scared by loud, active children or aggravated by kids pulling their tails, ears and ect. If young Christmas guests are old enough to understand and follow directions, explain the rules for the handling your pets. If pets are not comfortable around strangers and noise, keep them in a separate room away from the commotion. Give them a favorite toy and/ or snack to keep them content.

**Plants:** There are many types of plants that are toxic to cats and dogs. Avoid placing these plants where a cat or dog can get their paws on them. Mistletoe, Buckeye plant, Azalea, lilies, Aloe plants, Cyclamen, Daisies, Gladiolus, Poinsettia, Christmas rose and American Holly. These are just a few of the plants dangerous to pets. When bringing a new plant into the home with pets, always check to see if it is toxic to your pet. Check online, or with your local vet.

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