

It's the most wonderful time of the year until your pet becomes sick and you have to rush to a veterinarian. Before you deck the halls, make sure your home is safe for your four-legged friends.



### **Holiday Tinsel and Ornaments**

Tinsel, while not toxic, is very attractive to pets, particularly cats. The problem with tinsel is that once it's consumed,

it can cause serious injury to your pet. If not caught in time, this foreign body ingestion could actually be fatal as it twists and bunches inside your pet's intestines. Immediate veterinary care is required.

### **Holiday Lighting and Candles**

Got a pet that likes to chew? Electrical shock may occur when a pet chomps down on an electrical cord, causing tongue lacerations and possible death. Consider using LED candles instead of actual flames and place them in a hard-to-reach spot so that your pets can not access them.

### **Gift Wrap Ribbon**

You may be tempted to fashion your pet with a decorative ribbon "collar" but beware that this could become a choking hazard.

### **Food Hazards**

Festive events often mean edible treats — and lots of them. Unfortunately, some of the most popular holiday goodies, such as chocolate, bones and nuts, can be extremely toxic or fatal to pets. Artificial sweeteners are also toxic so make

sure your furry friends don't taste your holiday baked-goods.

If you'd like to make pet-friendly treats, log onto our website at

[www.spokanecounty.org/SCRAPS](http://www.spokanecounty.org/SCRAPS). We have recipes that are good and good for them.

### **Toxic Holiday Plants**

They may be pretty, but some holiday plants are poisonous—even deadly.

- Christmas tree **pine needles** can produce oral irritation, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, trembling and posterior weakness.
- **Holly**, commonly found during the Christmas season, can cause intense vomiting, diarrhea and depression.
- **Mistletoe**, another Christmas plant, can cause significant vomiting and diarrhea, difficulty breathing, collapse, erratic behavior, hallucinations and death when ingested.
- **Poinsettias** can cause irritation to the mouth and stomach and sometimes vomiting.

### **A Full House**

If you are expecting visitors for the holidays, remember to give your pet some time and space to get used to the hustle and bustle.

### **The Best Gift**

Don't forget to get your pet licensed and microchipped! The holidays won't be very merry for you or your pet if they are lost out in the cold.