

## Holiday and Seasonal Hazards

**While holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hannukah and New Year's Day can bring us much celebration and joy, they can also offer some potential hazards to our pets. Here is a partial list of things which are potentially dangerous to your pet:**

courtesy of the American Dog Trainers Network

### **Aluminum Foil**

When ingested, aluminum foil can cut a dog's intestines, causing internal bleeding, and in some cases, even death.

### **Anti-Freeze**

If ingested, anti-freeze (ethylene glycol) is often lethal -- even in very small quantities. Because many dogs like its sweet taste, there are an enormous number of animal fatalities each year from animals drinking anti-freeze. Poisoning from anti-freeze is considered a serious medical emergency which must be treated by a qualified veterinarian IMMEDIATELY.

### **Chocolate**

Chocolate contains an element which is toxic to dogs, called Theobromine. Even an ounce or two of chocolate can be lethal to a small dog (10 lbs. or less). Larger quantities of chocolate can poison or even kill a medium or large dog. Dark and unsweetened baking chocolates are especially dangerous. Symptoms of chocolate poisoning include: vomiting, diarrhea, tremors, hyperactivity and seizures. During many holidays, chocolate is often accessible to curious dogs, and in some cases, people unwittingly poison their dogs by offering them chocolate as a treat.

### **Electrocution**

Christmas tree lights and electrical cords can be fatal if chewed on by a dog. Whenever possible, keep electrical cords out of reach.

### **Hypothermia**

When a dog's internal temperature drops below 96 degrees F (by being exposed to cold weather for long periods, or getting both wet and cold), there is a serious risk to the dog's safety. Small and short-haired dogs should wear sweaters when taken for walks during cold winter weather. Any sign that a dog is very cold -- such as shivering -- should signal the owner to bring the dog indoors immediately.

### **Ice-Melting Chemicals and Salt**

Ice-melting chemicals and salt placed across sidewalks and roads can cause severe burning to your dog's footpads. Whenever possible, avoid walking your dog through these substances, and wash off his footpads when you return home. There are also products available such as Musher's Secret which can be applied to your dog's footpads prior to going outside, that may help reduce the pain that is often caused by road salt and chemicals.

### **Poisonous Plants**

Dogs can become extremely ill or even die from eating poisonous plants. Keep all unknown types of plants and any plants suspected of being poisonous out of reach of your pet, and/or spray with Bitter Apple (for plants). [See below for a partial list of poisonous plants.]

#### **Poisonous Plants -- Partial List**

Amaryllis -- bulbs  
Calla Lily  
Christmas Berry -- Berries  
Christmas Tree -- Needles, Tree Water  
English Ivy  
Holly Berries (English and American)  
Hydrangea -- Flower Buds  
Juniper -- Needles, Stems and Berries  
Mistletoe Berries  
Pine Needles  
Star Of Bethlehem

Note: Veterinary treatment should be immediate if poisoning is suspected.

### **Plastic Food Wrap**

Plastic food wrap can cause choking or intestinal obstruction. Some dogs will eat the plastic wrapping when there are food remnants left coating its surface.

### **Tinsel and Other Christmas Tree Ornaments**

When ingested by a dog, tinsel may cause obstruction of the intestines, and the tinsel's sharp edges can even cut the intestines. Symptoms may include: decreased appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, listless and weight loss. Treatment usually requires surgery.