

HOLIDAY PET TIPS

PUT THE TREE UP AS SOON AFTER PURCHASE AS POSSIBLE. - If you leave it outside a stray or loose dog/cat will likely mark it as theirs and will create problems for you when you bring that scent inside.

SECURE THE TREE – As simple as a wide based stand to complex anchoring if you have a “climber”.

TAPE OR COVER ELECTRICAL CORDS – Every watched the movie Christmas Vacation? Some pets just love to chew on rubber and new items in the household.

FORGET THE TINSEL - Pets eat it and that may result in a surgical emergency for your pet.

SKIP THE ANGEL HAIR DECORATION (spun glass) – It can cause eye and skin irritation and digestive upset.

BONES ARE DANGEROUS (all year) - especially poultry bones which splinter easily. Each year thousands of pets are treated for consumption of splintered bones, causing pain, organ perforation and sometimes death.

REMEMBER IF IT RESEMBLES FOOD YOUR PETS WILL EAT IT. – If it is in a package under the tree they will have and early Christmas and you may have a mess and a vet bill. Our pet’s sense of smell is much better than ours.

SECURE HOT OIL AND GREASE – risk – burns, pancreatitis

PREVENT ACCESS TO Fat scraps, discarded grease, butter, oil – Risk - Pancreatitis, digestive upset, can be lethal.

BEWARE THE CHOCOLATES (especially dark chocolate) – chocolate poisoning can cause death or at a minimum a really big mess.

PETS WILL EAT OR CHEW DECORATIVE PLANTS – vomiting and diarrhea, depression, collapse or even death are possible. The potential for a veterinary visit is high. Poisonous plants include but are not limited to holly berries, Amaryllis - especially the flower, mistletoe (all parts), Christmas cactus is poisonous in large amounts, all parts of the Christmas rose plant, the Jerusalem Cherry berries (especially the green and yellow ones, ivy and some Christmas greens such as balsam and pine. Curiously enough the Poinsettia is not really poisonous. The sap from the leaves can be slightly irritating.

PETS DO NOT MAKE GOOD GIFTS - Instead, give a gift certificate to visit a shelter after the holidays. Then after the hustle and bustle of the holidays, the loved one can select a pet of their choice. Don’t forget that puppies and kittens grow up and a pet is a lifelong commitment and important decision.

REGULAR EXERCISE and ATTENTION is good for you and your pet. A tired pet is better behaved and less stressed when visitors arrive. An ignored pet will find ways to get your attention you may not like. Some extra exercise can be very helpful before guests arrive for a holiday party or visit.


TRAVEL PLANS SHOULD INCLUDE YOUR PET. - If you are planning to take your pet with you when visiting friends and relatives during the holidays, be sure to contact them in advance to find out if your pet is welcome. It may be best for you to board your pet or hire a reputable pet sitter.


In all cases of possible poisoning or injury you should contact your pet’s veterinarian.


Dealing with colder weather – Fall and Winter Tips


SPRING AND SUMMER TIPS


As we move into spring and summer, activities shift outdoors. A few simple tips can help you and your pet enjoy the out of doors and the hotter months of the year.


 **GET A STRIP OR SUMMER CLIP to avoid foxtails** in medium and long coated dogs. As the grass dries foxtails become an issue. For active outdoor dogs a summer clip is a vital step in avoiding veterinary visits to remove foxtails from a variety of inappropriate places.

 **MOW OR WEED-WACK THE GRASS** It will not only lower your fire danger here in the foothills but also decrease (BUT NOT ELIMINATE) the chance that your dog will get a foxtail.


 **ROUTINELY CHECK BETWEEN YOUR DOGS TOES DAILY FOR FOXTAILS and if your dog is long or medium coated you should check their entire body (yes their entire body).** Violent sneezing indicates a foxtail in the nose, gagging indicates foxtails in the tonsils, headshaking is indicative of a foxtail in one or more ears and squinting occurs when a foxtail gets under the dogs eyelid. Swelling and a draining wound indicates a foxtail has penetrated your dogs skin. All of these require a veterinary visit to resolve.

 **FLEAS** are a problem so do remember your flea control products especially when you visit places frequented by rodents, deer and other cats and dogs. They are easier to prevent than to eliminate if you bring them into your home. And they can carry some nasty diseases like the bubonic plague.


 **RATTLESNAKES are out and about now. On hot days 9-11pm is a common time for pets to be bitten. If you have a concrete dog run think about fencing the lower 2-3 feet with a narrow mesh wire barrier that snakes cannot get through. Consider the rattlesnake vaccine and rattlesnake aversion training.**

 **PLAN FOR JULY 4th** The noise associated with July 4th is an issue for some pets. For these animals it is important to meet with your pets veterinarian and discuss possible medication and perhaps even test it prior to this date as the dose varies with the pet.

The **HEAT** of the day can be detrimental to your pet's health. Dogs and cats have a higher internal temperature than humans and they do not sweat except on the bottom of their feet. They get rid of excess heat primarily by panting. They can overheat very quickly. Avoid heat exhaustion or heat stroke in your pet by following these simple tips:


 **LEAVE YOUR DOG AT HOME, NOT IN THE CAR.** More dogs die of heat exhaustion in parked cars than in any other situation. The car gets too hot--even if you leave your dog for only a short time. The temperature in a car can rise to 120 degrees within a matter of ten minutes, even if the car is parked in the shade. Also, don't transport your dog in the back of an open bed truck, it quickly becomes a frying pan in the heat!


 **EXERCISE IN THE COOLER TIMES OF DAY.** People love running/walking with their dogs and often think that a dog has no problem handling the heat. This is not true.


 **HYDRATE/WRAP YOUR DOG.** Always carry dog-dedicated water and a foldable water bowl on walks and hikes. Wrapping a cool pad or wet bandana around your dog's neck before heading outside can help them stay cooler and avoid heat exhaustion.

 **ALWAYS HAVE FRESH COOL WATER FOR YOUR PET.** Ice cubes in the water dish can help keep water cool.


 **CLEAN WATER DISHES TO PREVENT ALGAE GROWTH** Algae can be poisonous to your pet.


 **DO NOT MUZZLE YOUR DOG** when walking or exercising, it prevents their ability to cool by panting.

 **AVOID HOT PAVEMENT,** which can burn the pads of your dog's paws, if you can't stand it barefoot neither should your dog.

 **USE SUNSCREEN ON YOUR PET** Pink skinned dogs and cats are at higher risk of skin cancer so consider keeping them in out of the sun in midday and using waterproof sunscreen on hairless areas and

thin haired areas like ears and the bridge of the nose. Some cats are allergic to mosquitoes and can get an allergic rash on the bridge of their nose.

 **BEWARE OF HUMIDITY** Humidity interferes with a dog's and cat's ability to rid themselves of excess body heat.

 **KNOW THE SIGNS OF HEAT STROKE.** If your pet is acting confused or is unconscious, they may be suffering from heat stroke and need the immediate care of a veterinarian. And, if your pet is not able to lap up water on its own, do not pour water into their mouth as this can go into their lungs and have detrimental results.

FALL & WINTER COLD WEATHER PET TIPS

Even though the Sierra foothills are not Alaska it can get pretty cold here and present some challenges for your pet. We offer these tips to help keep your pets safe when the thermometer drops below 32 degrees F. INVITE THEM INSIDE – even if it is just to the garage or an insulated shed.

STAY WITH THEM WHEN THEY GO OUTSIDE FOR A BATHROOM BREAK

REMEMBER TO BANG ON THE CAR HOOD BEFORE YOU START IT UP – cats sit on warm engines

BREAK OR REMOVE ICE FROM OUTSIDE WATER DISHES IN THE MORNING

PROVIDE A WARM REFUGE EVEN FOR OUTDOOR PETS – insulated dog house or protected area.

Hypothermia can occur even if the temperature does not fall below zero especially if your pet is wet and it is windy.

SHORT COATED BREEDS AND SMALL DOGS WILL BENEFIT FROM A DOG SWEATER

ICE IS A HAZARD FOR ELDERLY PETS & ARTHRITIC PETS – and us its slippery

BEWARE OF ANTIFREEZE AND DE-ICING PRODUCTS – they kill pets it only takes a few licks

FOR SNOW OUTINGS CLIP FOOT HAIR OR CONSIDER BOOTIES – check feet often

INCREASE FOOD INTAKE FOR OUTDOOR PETS – Cold weather increases metabolism for warmth

NO-STICK COOKING SPRAY CAN PREVENT ICE BUILD UP BETWEEN TOES

PREVENT DIRECT ACCESS TO PORTABLE HEATERS

BEFORE UTILIZING A SHED OR GARAGE AS A REFUGE MAKE SURE TO CHECK FOR HAZARDS such as containers of antifreeze, rat or mouse poison and other chemicals

BEWARE OF FROZEN PONDS FOR OBVIOUS REASONS

DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PET ALONE IN A CAR IN VERY COLD WEATHER. It acts like an ice box and they can freeze to death.

REMEMBER VERY YOUNG AND OLD PETS DO NOT TOLERATE THE COLD AS WELL, limit their time outside.

PROVIDE INSULATION FROM COLD FLOORS, like concrete and tile. Use a blanket or elevated bed.

Check this links for more pet tips in cold weather.

<http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/cliented/cold.aspx>