



“Protect your Pets this Holiday Season!”

The holiday season is almost upon us, which means lots of food, shopping, and family celebrations. This time of the year can be very exciting yet at the same time very stressful not only for you, but for your pets as well. That is why the San Bernardino County Animal Care and Control Program would like to offer pet owners the following tips to help keep their pets safe during the holiday season.

If you plan on having a Christmas tree in your home, here are a few things to remember: avoid using tinsel because your pet may think it's a toy to play with and accidentally swallow and choke on the tiny strings; keep edible foods and gifts away from your tree so that your pet will not be tempted to investigate them; hang small and breakable ornaments out of your pet's reach; refrain from using chemicals in your tree's water, which can be harmful to your pets; do not allow your pet to drink the tree's water which can quickly become dirty and filled with pine needles. Electric window displays and lights are very inviting, not only to you and your neighborhood, but to your curious pets as well. Make sure that all of your electrical connections and outlets are secured and concealed. Tape electrical cords to the walls or floors to ensure that your pet will not chew on them. Holiday plants, such as poinsettias, amaryllis, mistletoe, and holly may add beauty to your home, but they are very poisonous to your pets. Before your family celebrations, make sure that your pets have a safe, quiet area where they can rest. It is best to keep your pet locked up safely in a bedroom where they can escape from all the noise and festivities. After you have had your fill of holiday turkey, ham, chicken, and/or roast beef make sure you throw those bones away – do not give them to your pet! Bones can splinter easily and cause damage to your pet's throat and intestines. Bones can also become lodged in your pet's throat, which may result in your pet not being able to breathe. Avoid feeding your pet chocolate, candy, and cookies, which can be toxic to their health. If you want to give your pet a special treat add water or broth to their dry food or mix in some canned food. Avoid feeding your pet high-fat foods, such as gravy and dressing, which can cause serious stomach upsets. Make sure that your guests know not to feed your pet as well. After your gifts are opened, quickly dispose of all plastic wrappings, ribbons, and bows that can be easily swallowed by curious pets. Perhaps most importantly, **PLEASE** make sure that your pets have proper identification (ID tags, microchips, tattoo, etc.) on at all times because if your pet were to become lost, you would have a much greater chance of finding them.

The San Bernardino County Animal Care & Control Program hopes that these pet tips prove helpful and they want to wish all of you and your pets a happy and safe holiday season. And, remember if you are interested in adopting a pet over the holidays, please visit one of your local animal shelters where there are lots of homeless animals just waiting to find a responsible and loving family to celebrate with. For more information, please call the San Bernardino County Animal Care and Control Program toll free at 1-800-472-5609 or visit their website at www.sbcounty.gov/acc.