

Fall Safety Tips:

The fall season brings new dangers for household pets, so careful attention to a few details can keep your pet safe from unwanted danger. Pets are mobile creatures that tend to get into trouble if they are left to fend for themselves for too long. The best advice is to keep a close eye on your pet's behavior, so you can prevent dangerous situations.

Danger Issue One: Bees and Wasps

During the autumn season, bees and wasps begin to lose the main source of their sustenance. Flowers and pollen producing plants begin to die off and bees and wasps are left wanting. These pesky insects will often create new nests in piles of leaves that may be collecting around the yard. So, be sure to keep your yard raked from large leaf piles. In addition, bees and wasps become a bit desperate and will steadily congregate around trash cans, pop cans, and food of any kind. Be sure to keep these items securely bagged and lidded, so bees and wasps don't create an additional problem for you or your pets. Rest assured in the fact that insect bites are not typically life-threatening to most pets, but they can be an unnecessary evil.

Danger Issue Two: Fireplaces

With the cooler temperature trends that accompany autumn, you might decide to create a fire in your indoor or outdoor fireplace. When doing so, be sure to keep all of the fire and smoldering ashes, including sparks, protected with a screen. Pets can be curious creatures who like to sniff around fireplaces and could be harmed if unprotected from the fire. In addition, pets will smell any food that you might be cooking in an outdoor fireplace or firepit, so be cautious and keep these areas protected from your pet.

Danger Issue Three: Heaters

Indoor electric heaters have become a popular way to warm indoor spaces because they can be more cost efficient than large gas bills. Many of the modern heaters have an automatic shut-off if they get knocked over or become too hot. However, some of the older models do not have these added features. Safety is always a top priority when it comes to your pets. If you use an electric heater, be sure to monitor it on a regular basis. Do not leave it on while you are gone or while you are sleeping. These heaters have been known to start large fires, so the safety of your pet must come first.

Halloween Safety Tips:

Attention, companion animal caretakers! The ASPCA would like to point out these common-sense cautions that'll help keep your pets safe and stress-free this time of year. If you do suspect your pet has ingested a potentially dangerous substance, please call

DeLand Animal Hospital (386) 734-1802 or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435.

1. No tricks, no treats: That bowlful of candy is for trick-or-treaters, not for Scruffy and Fluffy.

- Chocolate in all forms—especially dark or baking chocolate—can be very dangerous for dogs and cats. Symptoms of significant chocolate ingestion may include vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, increased thirst, urination and heart rate—and even seizures.

- Candies containing the artificial sweetener xylitol can be poisonous to dogs. Even small amounts of xylitol sweetener can cause a sudden drop in blood sugar, which leads to depression, lack of coordination and seizures. In cases of significantly low blood sugar, liver failure has been known to occur.

- Ingesting tin foil and cellophane candy wrappers can pose a choking hazard or cause intestinal blockage.

2. Popular Halloween plants such as pumpkins and decorative corn are considered to be relatively nontoxic, yet they can produce gastrointestinal upset should pets ingest them. Intestinal blockage could even occur if large pieces are swallowed.

3. Keep wires and cords from electric lights and other decorations out of reach of your pets. If chewed, your pet could experience damage to his mouth from shards of glass or plastic, or receive a possibly life-threatening electrical shock.

4. A carved pumpkin certainly is festive, but do exercise extreme caution if you choose to add a candle. Pets can easily knock a lit pumpkin over and cause a fire. Curious kittens especially run the risk of getting burned or singed by candle flames.

5. Dress-up can be a big mess-up for some pets. Please don't put your dog or cat in a costume UNLESS you know he or she loves it (yup, a few pets are real hams!). For pets who prefer their "birthday suits," however, wearing a costume can cause undue stress.

6. If you do dress up your pet, make sure the costume isn't annoying or unsafe. It should not constrict the animal's movement or hearing, or impede his ability to breathe, bark or meow. Also try on costumes before the big night. If your pet seems distressed, allergic or shows abnormal behavior, consider letting him go au naturale or donning a festive bandana.

7. Take a closer look at your pet's costume and make sure it does not have small, dangling or easily chewed-off pieces that he could choke on. Also, ill-fitting outfits can get twisted on external objects or your pet, leading to injury.

8. All but the most social dogs and cats should be kept in a separate room away from the front door during peak trick-or-treat visiting hours. Too many strangers can be scary and stressful for pets.

9. When opening the door for trick-or-treaters, take care that your cat or dog doesn't dart outside.

10. IDs, please! Always make sure your dog or cat has proper identification. If for any reason your pet escapes and becomes lost, a collar and tags and/or a microchip can increase the chances that he or she will be returned to you.

Any questions or concerns, please call **DeLand Animal Hospital (386) 734-1802**

