

## **Thanksgiving Safety Tips**

'Tis the season for friends, family and holiday feasts—but also for possible distress for our animal companions. Pets won't be so thankful if they munch on undercooked turkey or a pet-unfriendly floral arrangement, or if they stumble upon an unattended alcoholic drink.

Check out the following tips from ASPCA experts for a fulfilling Thanksgiving that your pets can enjoy, too.

### **Talkin' Turkey**

If you decide to feed your pet a little nibble of turkey, make sure it's boneless and well-cooked. Don't offer her raw or undercooked turkey, which may contain salmonella bacteria.

### **Sage Advice**

Sage can make your Thanksgiving stuffing taste delish, but it and many other herbs contain essential oils and resins that can cause gastrointestinal upset and central nervous system depression to pets if eaten in large quantities. Cats are especially sensitive to the effects of certain essential oils.

### **No Bread Dough**

Don't spoil your pet's holiday by giving him raw bread dough. According to ASPCA experts, when raw bread dough is ingested, an animal's body heat causes the dough to rise in his stomach. As it expands, the pet may experience vomiting, severe abdominal pain and bloating, which could become a life-threatening emergency, requiring surgery.

### **Don't Let Them Eat Cake**

If you're baking up Thanksgiving cakes, be sure your pets keep their noses out of the batter, especially if it includes raw eggs—they could contain salmonella bacteria that may lead to food poisoning.

### **Too Much of a Good Thing**

A few small boneless pieces of cooked turkey, a taste of mashed potato or even a lick of pumpkin pie shouldn't pose a problem. However, don't allow your pets to overindulge, as they could wind up with a case of stomach upset, diarrhea or even worse—an inflammatory condition of the pancreas known as pancreatitis. In fact, it's best keep pets on their regular diets during the holidays.

### **A Feast Fit for a Kong**

While the humans are chowing down, give your cat and dog their own little feast. Offer them Nylabones or made-for-pet chew bones. Or stuff their usual dinner—perhaps with a few added tidbits of turkey, vegetables (try sweet potato or green beans) and dribbles of gravy—inside a Kong toy. They'll be happily occupied for awhile, working hard to extract their dinner from the toy.

## Autumn Safety Tips

Ah, fall—there’s nothing like crisp, cool air, the first months of school and luscious foliage to get you excited for the changing seasons. Your pet, too, is probably welcoming the break from hot, sticky weather. But pet parents, beware—fall is also a time of lurking dangers for our furry friends. From household poisons to cold weather hazards, the season is a minefield! Here are some tips to keep your pet snug and healthy during the autumn months.

- The use of rodenticides increases in the fall as rodents seek shelter from the cooler temperatures by attempting to move indoors. Rodenticides are highly toxic to pets—if ingested, the results could be fatal. If you must use these products, do so with extreme caution and put them in places inaccessible to your pets.
- It’s back-to-school time, and those of you with young children know that means stocking up on fun items like glue sticks, pencils and magic markers. These items are considered “low toxicity” to pets, which means they’re unlikely to cause serious problems unless large amounts are ingested. However, since gastrointestinal upset and blockages certainly are possible, be sure your children keep their school supplies out of paw’s reach.
- Training tip: If you and your pooch haven’t been active outdoors in a while because of the summer heat, do some remedial recall training. Dogs, like people, get rusty on their skills if they aren’t using them.
- Fall and spring are mushroom seasons. While 99% of mushrooms have little or no toxicity, the 1% that are highly toxic (PDF) can cause life-threatening problems in pets. Unfortunately, most of the highly toxic mushrooms are difficult to distinguish from the nontoxic ones, so the best way to keep pets from ingesting poisonous mushrooms is to keep them away from areas where any mushrooms are growing. Contact your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center immediately if you witness your pet eating a wild mushroom.
- In order to generate body heat, pets who exercise heavily outdoors, or who live outdoors, should be given more food during colder seasons. Make sure horses and other outdoor animals have access to clean, fresh water that is not frozen.
- Autumn is the season when snakes who are preparing for hibernation may be particularly “grumpy,” increasing the possibility of severe bites to those unlucky pups who find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. Pet owners should know what kinds of venomous snakes may be in their environment—and where these snakes are most likely to be found—so they can keep pets out of those areas.
- Many people choose fall as the time to change their car’s engine coolant. Ethylene glycol-based coolants are highly toxic, so spills should be cleaned up immediately. Consider switching to propylene glycol-based coolants—though they aren’t completely nontoxic, they are much less toxic than other engine coolants.