



BE THANKFUL FOR HEALTHY PETS

AVMA's Thanksgiving tips for pet owners

(SCHAUMBURG, Ill.) November 14, 2013—The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) provides top tips that will leave pet owners thankful they don't have to make a trip to the animal "ER" this holiday season.

"This is the time of year that many veterinary hospitals report a significant increase in emergency calls particularly those relating to digestive tract disturbances resulting from exposure to foods pets simply should not have received." says Dr. Clark K. Fobian, president of the AVMA. "Thanksgiving is a special holiday that brings together family and friends, but it is also one that can carry some hazards for our pets. Overindulging in the family feast can be unhealthy for humans, but fatty and bony table scraps, like the turkey neck or skin or other dietary indiscretions can lead to severe and sometimes even deadly digestive track conditions."

The AVMA's top tips for keeping pets healthy on Thanksgiving are:

- Keep the Thanksgiving feast on the table—not under it. Table scraps may seem like a fun way to include your pet in the holiday, but there are a number of hazards to feeding your pets from your plate. Many foods healthy for you are poisonous to pets, including onions, garlic, raisins and grapes. There are many healthy treats available for dogs and cats, so don't feed them table scraps. Instead, make or buy a treat that is made just for them. Make sure the pet treat is not a part of any ongoing recall.
- Put the trash away where your pets can't find it. A turkey carcass sitting out on the carving table or left in an open trash container or one that's easily opened could prove deadly if the family pet eats it. What your pet thinks is a tasty treat can cause a condition called pancreatitis, which is extremely dangerous and can cause death fairly quickly. Dispose of turkey carcasses in a covered, tightly secured container (or a trash can behind a closed, locked door) along with anything used to wrap or tie the meat and any bones left on plates.
- No pie or other desserts for your pooch. It can't be said often enough, chocolate is poisonous to pets, and the darker it is the more deadly it is. It's an important reminder, because many dogs find it tempting, and will sniff it out and eat it if they find it, including extremely dangerous baker's chocolate. Also, an artificial sweetener called Xylitol has also been shown to be deadly if consumed by dogs. Xylitol is a common sweetener used in baked goods and chewing gums.
- Quick action can save lives. If you believe your pet has been poisoned or eaten something it shouldn't have, call your veterinarian or local veterinary emergency clinic immediately.
- Visitors can upset your pets. Some pets are shy or excitable around new people, and Thanksgiving often means many new people will be visiting. If you know your dog or cat is overwhelmed when people visit your home, put them in another room or a crate with a favorite toy. If your pet is particularly upset by houseguests, talk to your veterinarian about possible solutions to this common problem.
- • Watch the exits. If your pets are comfortable around guests, make sure you watch them closely, especially when your guests are entering or leaving your home. While you're welcoming hungry guests and collecting coats, a four-legged family member may make a break for it out the door and become lost. It's also a good idea to make sure your pet has proper identification, particularly microchip identification with up-to-date, registered information, so that if they do sneak out, they'll be returned to you.
- Watch your pets around festive decorations. Special holiday displays or candles are attractive to pets as well as people. Never leave a pet alone in an area with a lit candle; it could result in a fire. Don't forget that some flowers and festive plants can be hazardous if swallowed by your pet. Pine cones and needles can cause an intestinal blockage or even perforate the animal's intestine.