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THE 12 HAZARDS OF THE HOLIDAYS



1) Ethylene Glycol

This common toxin can cause acute renal failure with as small an amount consumed as 4.2mL/kg in dogs and 1.5mL/kg in cats. Usually the first signs seen are lethargy, wobbliness, increased drinking and increased urination. If emergency treatment is not instituted this toxin is usually fatal.

2) Chocolate

Seen more frequently during holidays, symptoms can be variable depending on the “purity of the chocolate”. Symptoms include increased thirst, vomiting, restlessness, increased heart rate or arrhythmia and can progress to seizures.

3) Prescription drugs

With the hustle and bustle of the holidays added to visiting family and friends, ingestion of our human medications can be a real hazard. Dogs and cats do not react the same way as people do. Consulting with your veterinarian or Poison Control can be a life saver.

4) Poinsettia

Commonly thought to be “the” toxin of holidays the plant rarely causes more than gastric upset. Having said that, it is best to keep these ornamental plants out or reach (or out of the house) to avoid vomiting and diarrhea in your pet.

5) Raisins/Grapes

Because the mechanism of toxicity is not known, we do not know how much is too much. This “treat” can cause renal failure and even death.

6) Mistletoe

A rather infrequent toxin because of rarity and expense, mistletoe can cause vomiting, diarrhea, fluid loss and even death has been reported.

7) Macadamia nuts

Although the chemical causing the toxin has not yet been identified this ingestion can cause depression, inability to use the hind limbs or stand, in coordination and vomiting. Fortunately, this toxicity is usually self limiting but unpleasant during the episode.

8) Bulbs

A Christmas time favorite, the amaryllis bulb can cause vomiting and diarrhea in dogs and cats. Again not a pleasant Christmas morning surprise!

9) Road Salt

Rarely is this seen as an acute oral ingestion but road salt can cause significant discomfort on the pads of dogs. Combine this with a small cut and that can become quite painful.

10) Foreign bodies

Toys, ribbons, ornaments – is it any wonder that the occurrence of these accidents increases at Christmas time. Just like you would with a baby in the house – pet proof your Christmas and avoid your veterinarians office this season.



11) Table scraps/change in diet

Sure everyone likes a bit of turkey but allowing your pets to ingest bones or letting Grandma feed the dog the left-overs could end up with a trip to the veterinarian. Try to avoid changes in your pets diet as much as possible.

12) Hypothermia

Although this winter has not been too cold yet, hypothermia can and does affect our furry friends. Cats are especially prone to this and more so over the busy holiday season when they may choose to stay outdoors to avoid the hustle and bustle inside.