

Dear Four-Legged Friends and their human carers,

words by,



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Receptionist



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Christmas and New Year is fast approaching and myself and the staff at Crickmore Vets are looking forward to taking time out to relax and enjoy the festivities. Myself and my apprentice (Audra) will be taking a well-earned break and enjoying some 'chill' time celebrating and relaxing with family and friends alike!

Being Head of Reception and carrying out my important 'meet and greet' role, chief tester of dog treats and writer of the Christmas newsletter at the Practice is very tiring and I have been catching up on my annual leave and snooze time recently so apologies if I have not seen you all recently.

As the most senior Receptionist and to keep my ever-growing fan club happy I have included, as requested, my Christmas guide with some of the do's and don'ts for all my furry friends and their carers alike to help stay safe.

Below I have listed some of the temptations and some advice for you and to give your human carers.



Cleaning products | In preparation for the festive season often our human carers do a flurry of cleaning.

A number of the products used can be very toxic so it is best to sit and watch the humans from the side lines rather than taking on a more active role! Unfortunately, we have had in the past some very poorly pets who have walked on wet floors that have been cleaned with products which have unfortunately made them very unwell with one cat unfortunately passing away as a result of licking paws after lying and walking over a recently cleaned wet floor and work surface. Dettol for example contains phenolic acid which is particularly toxic to cats. Likewise, a substance known as benzalkonium chloride which again is toxic to animals is found in other cleaning products.

Always get your human carers to carefully read and check the label to see if it is pet friendly. As a precaution and despite furry glares of disgust, shut pets out of rooms when cleaners are being used and make sure any of the floors or surfaces, they have used any of these products on are completely dry before letting us back into the room. Some pets, if they walk on wet surfaces containing these toxic products can get severe skin and paw irritation and burns or worse including in out mouth which when we lick our paws.

Other products you need your carers to be cautious of using are some air fresheners (including plug ins), incense burners including Himalayan Salt purifiers-again get them to carefully read the label to check it is safe for us furry animals.

'Washing liquid pods' are another product for furry friends to avoid. These may look harmless like squishy coloured pillows and very tempting to play with or pick up and carry. Again, these are toxic and can have lethal consequences if we accidentally ingest the contents.

So, remind your human carers to leave them in the lockable containers until they are needed for the mountain of washing.

In preparation for the big Ho Ho and meal with all the trimmings some humans also give their ovens a seasonal clean. Solutions and oven cleaners often contain sodium hydroxide which is a strong alkali and can burn the skin when it comes into direct contact with this (Humans should wear gloves as well when cleaning to avoid this). Sodium hydroxide also can burn the throat so if we get some on our paws remind our human carers to wash it off quickly.

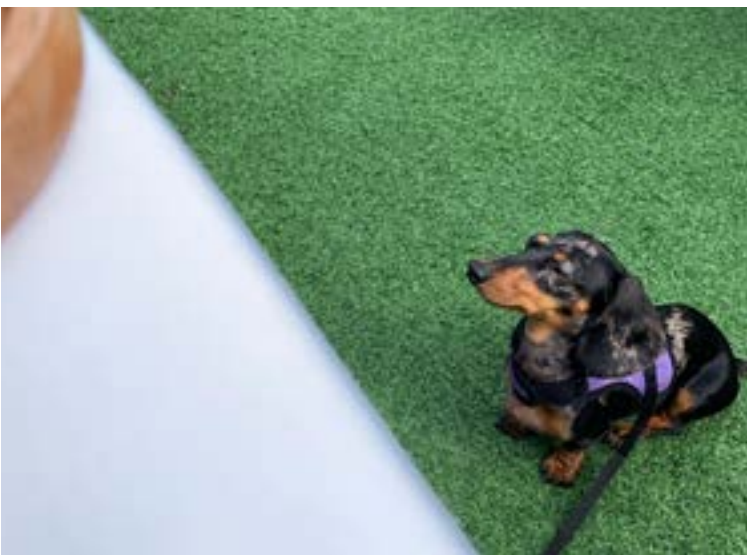
Chocolate | There is generally an abundance of chocolate at Christmas from biscuits and Christmas decorations to great slabs of it (especially with the offers in the Supermarkets where your human's shop!).

Chocolate looks lovely and smells fantastic but should be avoided. Chocolate contains theobromine which can affect the hearts and nervous systems of four legged friends. It is especially concentrated in dark chocolate or cooking chocolate. If eaten it can cause cardiovascular (heart and circulation problems), gastric upsets -vomiting and diarrhoea, panting, shaking, and even seizures and can be fatal.





Raisins and sultanas | These are the main ingredient of Christmas pudding, mince pies and Christmas cake. These again can prove fatal if eaten by dogs and cats. I know Stephen has treated several cases of animals that have eaten raisins with one dog nearly dying from eating just a few of them! They can cause renal failure.



Nuts | There are many varieties around especially at Christmas time for our human carers to nibble on! These should not be on the menu for dogs and cats! They can cause gut blockages and severe stomach problems, hallucinations and occasionally convulsions especially when eaten without being chewed in large numbers. (Stephen has said this is especially common where dogs and cats have tried to 'borrow and sample' (steal) from humans who have left tasty morsels unattended on plates!

Xylitol | which is found in low sugar foods and treats as a sugar replacement. These can cause nasty tummy upsets and in large quantities can potentially be fatal if eaten by us pets.

Gravy and stuffing | No roast turkey dinner is complete without a generous helping of gravy which often contains onions. Drinking gravy or eating these not only make out eyes water but can cause anaemia, lethargy, weakness and gastrointestinal problems or blood in the urine- all of which might mean a visit to the Out of Hours Vets!

Mouldy Leftovers | These can often be found in the recycling bin, left out on the bird table or even buried by yourselves! These are not advised to be on the menu and as with a lot of the above can cause gastric problems or even seizures.

Turkey bones | The mere thought of turkey gets my taste buds woken up and I begin to drool at the mere thought of it.

If we are fortunate to be offered a few turkey morsels by our human carers make sure these are off the bone as these can often splinter and can cause bleeding or blockages in our intestines which should be avoided. Get your human carers to wrap up the bones and ensure they place them well out of our reach.

Poinsettia | These green and red plants are often associated with Christmas. They can be toxic to cats and dogs alike, so I would suggest that cats and dogs alike avoid having a quick snack on the leaves as they can cause vomiting, diarrhoea and a really nasty stomach discomfort.

Lilies | These flowers can, unfortunately, be fatal especially to cats. The whole flower including the pollen is toxic and often cats brush past the flowers and get the pollen on their coats. Cats being cats do clean themselves at regular intervals thus ingesting the pollen.

Holly, Ivy and Mistletoe- None of these are recommended on the menu. All can cause upset stomachs, vomiting, diarrhoea and in rabbits' paralysis and convulsions.

Silica Gel | This is a desiccant and is usually found in sachets within packaging for electronic goods and some leather goods such as shoes and handbags. Often it is labelled DO NOT EAT This is for the benefit of both us four legged friends and our human owners! Generally eating these, although not recommended is not fatal but can as so many other things cause vomiting and diarrhoea.

Batteries of all shapes and sizes | Toys and gizmos and gadgets that require batteries should be avoided by us pets. If chewed or ingested they can be fatal as they contain steel and a mix of zinc/ manganese/ potassium and graphite that reacts with stomach acids and can potentially have lethal consequences.

Foreign bodies | Tinsel, baubles, wrapping paper- I love them all!! Christmas decorations and wrapping presents should not be included on the diet or entertainment sheet for four legged friends. Cats especially love to play with the dangling tinsel and it is very easily eaten. Such items are not easily digested and can cause a blockage which can lead to problems that may warrant surgery. My advice would be stick to the regular diet!





Electrocution | Christmas lights mean that often there is additional cabling lying around. The younger pets especially find these very tempting as a play thing, often they pull at them or start chewing. Unfortunately, this can be fatal as electricity and chewing and wet mouths can have fatal consequences. Get your owners to try to avoid leaving them in tempting positions.

Other considerations | Santa has been in touch via e mail and told me it is likely to be a cold and possibly white Christmas. Please remember pets kept outside will need lots of extra bedding and heating and access to unfrozen water to drink. Please do not use boiling water to refill dishes as this can crack and freeze quickly. Garden birds and hedgehogs will appreciate leftover Christmas scraps (away from dogs and cats) and fresh water as well.

Antifreeze is for the car to avoid it freezing and not for you to drink it even though it may be sweet tasting. It is highly toxic and even a small amount can prove lethal.

Not trying to frighten you all and do love to see you but do be careful and make sure you have a safe and restful Christmas season.

Love Tatti xx



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