

Holiday Problems

While we humans love the change in routine that holidays often bring -- the parties, the guests and the decorations -- our furred and feathered family members too often find the disruptions disturbing and sometimes dangerous.

The two of the biggest problems at Christmas and New Year are frightened pets and poisoned or gorged pets. With the increase in noisy activity, visits from scary relatives, fireworks and pool parties, cats and dogs get nervous, and some will take off if they can. That means an increase in animals hit by cars or otherwise injured when on the run.

The animals themselves may be a cause of injury: All those young visitors can trigger territorial instincts or fear responses in some dogs, who may then become a bite risk.

The best solution for nervous or improperly socialized pets is to confine them for the evening in a crate or a quiet room far from the front door or any holiday festivities. Fancy food is a problem more for dogs than for cats, because cats are generally picky about what they eat. Not so for most dogs.

Gastric distension, pancreatitis and food poisoning result. Do be tempted to give in to the drooling demand for leftovers by your dog, wrap it up and bin it. While pets may not like the holidays as much as we do, any celebration can be made pet-safe with just a few basic precautions.

Making travel easier on birds

Pet birds don't routinely leave the house as often as most dogs do. But when they do travel, these avian pets need the right setup for their protection and comfort.

A sturdy hard-plastic carrier big enough for the bird to sit comfortably upright inside is ideal; a clean towel on the bottom of the carrier will provide both comfort and good footing for the avian occupant.

Because birds dehydrate quickly, put orange and apple slices in the carrier for snacking. These tasty fruits have a high liquid content, providing both energy and hydration for short trips. And don't forget to use your car's seat belt to secure the carrier while on the road so a sudden stop won't send your bird flying

Happy Holidays,

Scott & Chris