



Debbie Hawkins
B. Sc., DVM

Hawkins Animal Hospital

Debbie Hawkins B.Sc., DVM

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

550 Ontario Street South,

Milton (Pizza Hut Plaza)

Phone (905) 875-6888

Fax (905) 875-6853



Christmas Hazards

Christmas is nearly upon us, and as in each year previous, I would like to remind you about the hidden seasonal hazards.

Firstly, try to avoid using *Tinsel, ribbon, string* and in fact anything linear. These are immediate attractions for cats and kittens, who see sparkly, dangly things as prey which just have to be 'dealt with'. In real life, these materials if swallowed, can catch in the gastro-intestinal tract. This could then cause the intestines to spasm and bunch, as the body tries in vain to move the foreign body. This is definitely a situation to avoid. It could prove life threatening and would require surgery for correction. ‘

I would also draw your attention here, to the hazards of *electric light cords*. Particularly at risk would be the teething puppy or kitten. Biting through the cords could cause tongue and mouth burns, which could in turn lead to respiratory distress. This accident would require immediate medical attention.

Secondly, *avoid table scraps* for pets. In the first instance our pets are not generally used to such rich foods, and the last thing you want to be dealing with at Christmas is your pets upset stomach! Christmas leftovers are usually particularly fatty, and this could cause the pancreas to become inflamed and overloaded. This condition is serious and may require hospitalization.

Equally dangerous, are the turkey bones that are given, or even stolen by the pet. I have performed more surgery to remove bones and foreign objects from pet's stomach at Christmas time. This is so distressing for patients and clients alike.

Thirdly.... *chocolate*. Again, I have treated more dogs for chocolate poisoning and have hospitalized more dogs for the treatment of potentially fatal pancreas inflammation at this time of the year. Clinical signs of chocolate poisoning include hyper-excitement, nervousness, vomiting, diarrhea and death.

Lastly, just as we become stimulated by the aromas of the roasting turkey, keep your pet out of the kitchen, and away from the *basting and roasting* for obvious reasons. They too become very thrilled by the cooking smells, and may get very close to the stove.

On a lighter note, I would like to wish all readers and their pets, a very happy and safe Christmas.