

# CHRISTMAS SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR PETS

## TOXIC FESTIVE FOODS

It's tempting to give a tasty treat at Christmas, but lots of festive foods can be fatal to our furry friends

**ALL OWNERS WANT TO PAMPER THEIR PETS, ESPECIALLY AT CHRISTMAS.**

But the festive season can pose some dangers for our four-legged friends, so PDSA vets have put together this handy guide to ensure everyone has a safe and healthy Christmas.

★ **Mince pies, Christmas cake and Panettone**

contain raisins and sultanas which are **highly toxic to pets, and can even be fatal.**

If you're indulging in a sweet treat or leaving a mince pie out for Father Christmas, make sure it's out of paws' reach to avoid any accidents.



★ **Chocolate is poisonous to dogs and cats.**

It can cause sickness and fits, and can be deadly if eaten in toxic amounts. Pets, especially dogs, can sniff food out very quickly and may be tempted to wolf them down, so keep advent calendars, chocolate tree decorations and gifts out of paws reach!



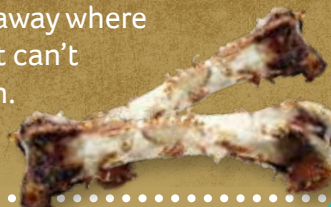
★ **Stuffing and gravy** usually contain onions and garlic which **can be deadly for cats and dogs.**



★ **Alcohol** can cause serious sickness for our pets, so if you're enjoying a tippie be mindful where you leave your glass.



★ **Cooked bones** easily splinter when they're chewed and can seriously damage your pet's throat or stomach. Smaller bones can also cause blockages if they're swallowed whole, so make sure you throw them away where your pet can't reach them.



**FREE PAWS OFF!**  
GIFT LABELS  
(on Page 5)



## Christmas Dinner Dangers

Most of us are guilty of over indulging at Christmas, but sudden changes in diet and overeating can cause serious health issues for pets.

As well as some human food being really toxic, it's also a major cause of pets being overweight. Lots of the foods we eat at Christmas are high in fat. So, while it can be tempting to include your pet when you're sitting down to eat your Christmas dinner, remember the amount of calories they need is much lower than us!

Pets can often develop vomiting or diarrhoea if their diet changes suddenly, so it's best to stick to their normal food and regular mealtimes as much as possible.

If you want to give something extra, pick healthy treats and keep up their usual exercise to stop them piling on the pounds over Christmas. Or treat them to a new toy or extra special play time instead.

*Lean meat such as turkey or raw carrots are a safe and healthy treat you can share with your pets.*

**BEWARE OF GIFTS THAT ARE TOXIC TO PETS**

## Toxic plants

Lots of the plants we traditionally use for Christmas decorations can be harmful to pets, so it's important to be extra careful when we bring them into our home.

**Poinsettia.** The bright red petals can be poisonous for pets, causing drooling and stomach upsets.

**Mistletoe.** If a pet chews on a sprig of mistletoe they may react by drooling, retching and vomiting.

**Holly and ivy.** Eating holly or ivy can make pets vomit and dribble, and give them diarrhoea. Ivy can also cause skin irritation.

## PAWS OFF! Lots of festive goodies can be lethal to pets.

So, if you're wrapping up a yummy or alcoholic gift, or one with small parts like batteries, make sure you add one of our free **PAWS OFF!** gift labels (on page 5).





### Preventing stress

Some pets love the hustle and bustle of Christmas, with family and friends coming and going. But many of our four-legged friends find the noise and disruption stressful, and even the most social pets may need a break from the excitement from time to time.

To put a stop to stress, give your pet somewhere safe and quiet to escape to.

**Doggy dens.** Dogs often love to hide in a cosy den. Build one in a quiet room and encourage them to spend time there by putting in a few tasty, pet-friendly treats.

**Climbing cats.** Many cats feel safest when they're high up and out of the way of any dangers. Give them a cosy place to curl up on top of a secure shelf or cupboard.

**Stressed-out small pets.** If your mice, gerbils or hamsters are feeling stressed, move their enclosure into a quiet room, away from loud visitors and TVs or music systems.

### Decorative dangers

**Baubles, tinsel and flashing fairy lights** are part of the festive cheer, but they can be tempting to play with for cats and dogs, and could lead to disaster!

Dogs explore with their mouths so it's easy for them to accidentally swallow small decorations or break larger ones, which can cause serious blockages and damage in their stomach.

**Remember:** ★ Keep your pets somewhere safe while you decorate ★ Make sure you hang decorations out of their reach ★ Try not to leave your pet unattended while decorations are up.

KEEP  
DECORATIONS  
OUT OF  
PAWS  
REACH



# A PET-FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS DAY

Our Christmas Day guide will help you keep your pet safe so everyone can have a fun-filled day.

## 6-8am: Opening presents

During the excitement of opening presents, don't forget to keep an eye on your pets. Batteries, children's toys, wires or ribbons and wrapping paper could cause a choking hazard or a gut blockage if swallowed.

## 10am: Pet playtime

*Bored pets can be tempted to get themselves into trouble by playing with shiny decorations or sniffing out toxic foods.* This is a good time to take dogs out for a run around or to play with your cat using feline-friendly toys.

## 12pm: Cooking Christmas dinner

*Hot ovens and boiling pans make kitchens a dangerous place* for your pet on any day of the year. The chaos of Christmas increases this danger. *Keep the kitchen doors closed so your pet can't get under your feet.*

Are you having guests over to join the festivities? *Let your pet have some quiet time in their den and ask guests not to disturb them if they have taken themselves away.*

## 3pm: An after dinner nap

This is often the time on Christmas Day when we put our feet up and take a quick nap. Pets might take the opportunity to get into trouble, so *keep toxic foods, gifts and dangerous decorations well out of reach from curious paws if you decide to have a snooze.*

## 6pm: Visiting family and friends

Many of us will be on the road in the evening visiting friends and family. If your pet is coming along too, make sure they're safe in the car. Pets that aren't strapped in could be a distraction to the driver and could be badly hurt if you're in an accident. *A pet seat belt or a secured pet carrier will help to keep everyone safe.*

## 9pm: One last Christmas Day treat

Lots of people will be treating themselves to a mince pie or glass of fizz at this time. You might want to give your pet something too, but *make sure it's pet-safe and you're not over feeding them.*



Make sure your pet has access to their den or 'safe space' all day and ask guests not to disturb them.

[pdsa.org.uk](http://pdsa.org.uk)

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