

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOLIDAYS CAN BE ANYTHING BUT “HAPPY” FOR OUR FURRY FRIENDS

*CHICAGO VETERINARY EMERGENCY CENTER VETS WARN
“HALLOWEEN KICKS OFF A DANGEROUS TIME OF YEAR FOR PETS”*

CHICAGO. Oct. 28, 2011 – Halloween is the first holiday of what can be a scary few months for both pets and their owners. All the yummy candy, fun decorations and a constant stream of visitors can cause problems for many pets not only on Halloween but also on Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year’s and even on football Sundays.

“Fall and early winter create many opportunities for pets to get into trouble, sometimes with serious health consequences,” said June LaFave, DVM and medical director of Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center (CVESC). “Halloween chocolates and candy aren’t the only things that can cause problems for pets this time of the year. There are many other holiday-related items that bring cats and dogs to our emergency center between now and the New Year.”

Owners distracted by trick-or-treaters, football games and visitors allow pets an opportunity to explore and too often get into things they shouldn’t. “We treat pets that have eaten a box of candy left on the coffee table, the turkey carcass from the garbage, hot dogs from a football game party and tinsel from the tree,” said Dr. LaFave. “These items can do more than cause stomach upset, they can lead to poisoning, pancreatitis, surgery, or even death.”

Ten Holiday Dangers for Pets

1. *Halloween Candy is Spooky For Pets*

Many pet owners know that chocolate and raisins are poisonous to pets and that even small amounts can be deadly. Xylitol, an artificial sweetener found in some candy and gum is also poisonous. Pet owners who suspect their pet has eaten candy or gum should immediately contact their veterinarian or Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center.

2. *A Dark and Creepy Night*

Pets should be kept inside on the night youngsters are trick-or-treating. That's safest for the pets and for trick-or-treaters too. When outdoors on Halloween, pets should be accompanied by an adult and kept on a leash. Even when leashed, pets should have their identification tags on them or be micro-chipped so they can be easily identified if they get away.

3. *Holiday Dress Up Don'ts*

The costumes are adorable – but can be dangerous for Fido. Costumes should allow pets to move freely, breath easily, bark or meow and have no dangling parts that can be easily torn off and swallowed. If your pet doesn't enjoy dressing up, it's best to let them be themselves on Halloween.

4. *Thanksgiving Turkey*

A house full of guests can easily create enough distractions to allow a pet to get into things that can cause health problems. Turkey, stuffing, turkey bones and other Thanksgiving goodies can result in more than an upset stomach for pets. "Garbage intoxication" can lead to pancreatitis or the need for surgery.

5. *Holiday Guests*

Increased activity and visitors during the winter holiday season can upset a pet's routine. It's best to keep pets on a regular schedule for feeding and exercise. Pets should be kept away from doors leading to the outside or under control when visitors arrive and depart. Anxious pets often bolt out through open doors.

6. *All That Glitters is... Bad!*

All the glittery goods, from Halloween glow sticks to Christmas decorations, are bad for your pet. While some items will cause a short-term reaction, others can be deadly. Christmas tinsel, for example, can wrap around the base of a pet's tongue, get caught in their intestines and require surgery.

7. *Hang Up Your Ornaments*

Curious pets are often attracted to ornaments hanging from the Christmas tree. Treasured ornaments should be hung high up on the Christmas tree so they are out of the reach of cats and dogs. Wooden, metal, resin-cast or other durable ornaments should be used on the lower branches.

8. *Poisonous Plants*

A number of Christmas season plants can make pets sick if nibbled or eaten. Plants that are likely to cause problems for cats and dogs, include: chrysanthemums, evergreens, ivy, juniper, holly and mistletoe.

9. *Touchdown Trouble*

Hot dogs, brats and other food snatched by dogs during holiday bowl game parties can lead to short-term stomach-upset and long-term health problems.

10. *Ring in the New Year with Caution*

New Year's Day is one of the busier times at many emergency veterinary clinics. Pets get into alcohol, noisemakers and human food. Or they bolt out an open door and encounter problems when alone outdoors.

Pet owners who fear their pet has ingested any inappropriate item should immediately contact their veterinarian or Chicago Veterinary and Emergency Specialty Center. CVESC is open 24 hours a day, every day, to provide emergency, critical and specialty care to Chicago area cats and dogs. The expert staff and state-of-the-art facility are equipped to handle even the most challenging cases.

**About Chicago Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center (CVESC)
(www.ChicagoVeterinaryEmergency.com)**

The oldest pet emergency center in Chicago, the Chicago Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center provides the most advanced emergency, critical and specialty care available to Chicago-area dogs and cats. With a state-of-the-art facility, expert emergency veterinarians and staff, and board certified specialists, CVESC is well equipped to handle even the most challenging cases. In addition to highly-trained emergency veterinarians CVESC has board-certified veterinarians specializing in cardiology, dentistry, dermatology, internal medicine, neurology, oncology, ophthalmology, radiology and surgery to treat pets with emergency or special medical needs. CVESC is always open – 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Media Availability

Media access to veterinarians and the Chicago Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center can be scheduled.

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