

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HALLOWEEN BEGINS A DANGEROUS SEASON FOR PETS

Treats, costumes, decorations and parties all present potential hazards for pet owners.

CHICAGO, ILL., October 15, 2014... October may be the start of a long and prosperous season for retailers, but it's the beginning of a dangerous time for pets. According to the team at Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center (www.ChicagoPetEmergency.com), the stretch of holidays from Halloween through New Year's Eve is a high-risk time for pets.

"Fall and early winter may be the most dangerous time of the year for pets," said Dr. Jerry Klein, Supervising Veterinarian at Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center. "Candy, decorations, human foods that may be toxic and visitors opening doors are all risks for pets."

Candy ingestion is a major cause of pet emergency room visits around Halloween. Chocolate is the biggest problem, accounting for approximately 50% of the toxic food-related calls to pet poison hotlines. Other problem foods include raisins, grapes, sugar-free candies and sugar-free gums. All are toxic to pets, even in small quantities.

Decorations are also a problem for pets. "Both cats and dogs can harm themselves with decorations," said Klein. "Long streamers and ribbons can be a choking hazard or can become lodged in a pet's intestines requiring surgery to remove. Candles are also dangerous as the flicker of a candle flame is a tempting target for cats. They won't feel the heat until after they've pounced and burned themselves."

Here are five tips to help keep pets safe at Halloween:

1. **Decorations**

Keep all decorations out of the reach of pets, especially burning candles and items that glitter or have dangling parts. Corncobs and outdoor decorations should also be kept away from pets. Like other decorations, the corncobs can become lodged in the pet's throat or intestines.

2. Open doors

Make certain that pets are secure when opening doors for trick-or-treaters or other visitors. Pets should be kept inside on Halloween. All pets should have up-to-date identification including a microchip to help reunite them with their owners should they escape from the house.

3. Candy, gum and human foods

Be careful to keep chocolate, grapes, raisins, sugar-free candy, sugar-free gum and other goodies out of the reach of pets. Even a small amount of these items can be harmful to pets.

4. Pet costumes

Pet costumes should be used with caution. Avoid costumes with elastic straps that can make it difficult for your pet to breathe. Never leave any animal unattended in a costume.

5. Important phone numbers

Pet owners should keep the phone numbers of their veterinarian, Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center and pet poison hotlines readily available. Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center can be reached 24 hours a day, every day of the year at 773-281-7110.

“Our 24-hour emergency room is always open with veterinarians on staff,” said Dr. Klein. “Our hospital is fully equipped to take care of pets should they encounter any problems at Halloween or on other holidays.”

About Chicago Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center

www.ChicagoPetEmergency.com

Chicago’s oldest and largest pet emergency facility, the Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center provides advanced emergency, critical and specialty care for cats and dogs. Each year, the center treats more than 11,000 cats and dogs in its emergency room and thousands more are cared for by veterinary specialists.

Staffed by highly trained specialists and equipped with the latest technology, Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center is always open, 24-hours every day of the year. In addition to emergency veterinarians and staff, the facility offers board-certified veterinarians who specialize in cardiology, dentistry, dermatology, diagnostic imaging, internal medicine, neurology, oncology, ophthalmology and surgery. This state-of-the-art facility includes ultrasound and MRI equipment, specialized surgical suites, a blood bank, specialized oxygen cages, heart monitors and more. A cancer and rehabilitation center is located across the street. Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center has been providing emergency care for cats and dogs since 1978.

Media Availability

Veterinary doctors at Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center are available for interview and comment. Arrangements can be made for video to be shot at Chicago Emergency & Specialty Center facilities.

Media Contact

Virginia Mann

312-420-3344

Virginia@VirginiaMann.com

#