Holiday Pet Tips

At this festive time of year, the Kent County SPCA would like to remind the public that some of our holiday favorites could be very dangerous for our four-legged family members! When decorating or celebrating, please keep the following tips in mind so that *all* members of your family are able to enjoy the most wonderful time of the year!

Bones – The holiday turkey or chicken will leave a lot of tantalizing bones, but don't feed them to your pet. Beware of steak bones too. Small bones or bone chips can lodge in the throat, stomach and intestinal tract.

Candles – Lighted candles should never be left unattended and that is even more important if left at kitty's eye level or within puppy's chewing zone! A happy tail, a swat of a paw, and candles and hot wax can quickly become disastrous. Anchor candles securely and away from curious faces and feet.

Candy – Protect your dog or cat from eating candy. Again, just because it is the holiday season, they should not be treated to any people goodies!

Electrical Cords – Holiday lights mean more electrical cords for kittens and puppies to chew. Be sure you have cords secured and out of the way.

Fat – Even though it is the holiday season, do not treat your pet with people food. Things such as potato latkes (watch the hot oil when making!), gravies, and poultry skin can cause severe gastrointestinal upset for your pet.

Holiday Plants – Holly and mistletoe are extremely poisonous when eaten. The poinsettia may not be truly poisonous, but its milky white sap and leaves can cause severe gastric distress! The best approach is to simply keep all plants out of your pet's reach.

Holiday Tree – Make sure your tree is well secured. If you have a tree-climbing cat or large dog with a happy tail, anchor the top of the tree to the wall, using strong cord or rope. Preservatives often used in the water in a tree stand can cause gastric upset, so be sure it is inaccessible or not used. Avoid sugar and aspirin additives in the water as well.

Ornaments – Sharp or breakable ornaments, dreidels, and even aluminum foil should be kept out of reach of your pet. String objects, especially tinsel and ribbons, are to be safeguarded at all costs. They are thin and sharp and can wrap around intestines or ball up in the stomach.

Pine Needles – Check around holiday trees and boughs frequently. Ingested pine needles can puncture your pet's intestines if sharp enough.

Stress and Company – With everyone coming and going, watch out for open doors and sneaky pets. Make sure your pets have collars and tags on in case of escape (better still, have them micro-chipped!). Ask guests to keep an eye out for pets under foot and remind them that sometimes your normally friendly dog or cat may be less than willing to deal with enthusiastic children and rooms full of unfamiliar people. Provide a special quiet place with a blanket and fresh water for your pets to retreat to when the festivities get too stressful.