

lissa.scott

From: lissa [lissa@lissa.net]
Sent: Friday, December 10, 2004 7:30 PM
To: extmagdrl@yahogroups.com
Subject: [ExtMAGDRL] DOE Topic #3: Danes and Holiday Precautions

Hi All,

Time for our weekly Dog Owner education blurb. For many of us, 'tis the season to decorate our homes with live Christmas trees and holiday greenery. But did you know that some of these holiday traditions can be hazardous to your pet's health? Perfect timing to cover the precautions we should follow as we enter the holiday season!

- * Lovely lilies are commonly used in holiday floral arrangements, but many varieties--including tiger, Asian, Japanese Show, Stargazer and the Casa Blanca -- can cause kidney damage to dogs.
- * Those delicious holiday chocolates contain a caffeine-like substance which is very dangerous for dogs. Two squares of baking chocolate, or just over a pound of milk chocolate, can kill a 20-pound dog.
- * Make sure all your leftover cooked chicken or turkey is put away, somewhere safe, where your dog cannot reach. Your pet can easily choke on cooked chicken and turkey bones.
- * Do not feed your dog grapes or raisins as these can cause poisoning. Just a handful of grapes have been shown to cause kidney failure. The toxins may be due to a type of mould found on the skin of grapes and raisins
- * Be careful that children's toys are not left lying around, especially if they have small parts that your dog could tear or chew off and choke on.
- * Visiting children love to play with animals. This interaction should always be supervised as one or the other could become over excited and end up being hurt.
- * Wrapping paper, plastic bags, balloons, tinsel, string, Christmas tree decorations, or any sharp objects can be dangerous if your dog swallows them.
- * Dogs are sometimes tempted to chew on Christmas-tree light cords, which can cause mouth burns or fatal shock. Even brief electric shocks can trigger an irregular heartbeat, which can cause fluid to gather in the lungs, leading to serious complications or death.
- * Puppies may be attracted to tinsel, but if a dog swallows a piece, it can stimulate an accordion-like folding of the intestines--a life-threatening condition. Ornaments and tinsel should be kept out of a pet's reach, when possible, and pet-owners should watch their animals closely.
- * Bag the boughs of holly and live mistletoe. Yes, they add a nice touch to your holiday decor, but holly can cause vomiting, nausea, diarrhea and lethargy if ingested by your pet. And should he eat mistletoe, he could suffer gastrointestinal upset and cardiovascular problems. Opt for just-as-pretty artificial plants made from silk or plastic instead.
- * If your dog ingests pine tree needles, she can suffer an upset stomach and oral pain.

* Don't drink the water! Christmas tree water may contain fertilizers which, if ingested, can cause stomach upset. Stagnant tree water can also act as a breeding ground for bacteria -- and your dog could end up with nausea or diarrhea should he imbibe.

* Although the potential toxicity of poinsettias is generally overrated, these showy holiday plants can be irritating to your pet's mouth if eaten, and may cause mild vomiting or nausea.

* If you suspect that your pet has eaten a potentially toxic substance, call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center's emergency hotline 1-888-4-ANI-HELP for round-the-clock telephone assistance. For more information on poison prevention, visit <http://www.napcc.asPCA.org>.

Finally, do yourself a big favor -- put your dog in a quiet darkened room with a radio or TV on whenever you're bombarded with family and friends over the holidays. This avoids stressing both your guests and your dogs.

Thanks for educating yourselves to benefit all dog owners!

Lissa Scott
AKC Canine Good Citizen Evaluator
MD/DC Adoption Screens & Events
Mid-Atlantic Great Dane Rescue League
<http://www.magdrl.org>

"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." - Josh Billings

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