

# KATS' TALES

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## 11 HIDDEN HOLIDAY HEALTH HAZARDS FOR YOUR PETS

As the holidays approach, decorations come out of storage and guests tend to gather. But before holiday planning and festivities go full tilt, take a moment to assess any hidden health hazards your home or guests may present to your pets. While you may know that certain foods, like grapes, are bad for your dog, your guests may not. Although pet-proofing your home may sound extreme, it may just prevent an emergency visit to the veterinarian. Here's what you need to watch for: **Avoid These Dangerous Foods** With so much food around at holiday time, pets can easily and unexpectedly help themselves to people treats. Dogs are masters at finding unattended plates and trash cans, while cats can easily jump onto countertops and tables. Unfortunately, as much as your dog or cat may enjoy the snack, a number of food items are not meant for canine or feline consumption. Here are five foods you should make sure your pet always avoids: **1. Chocolates** Chocolate products may contain methylxanthines, which include caffeine and theobromine. Depending on the type and amount of chocolate ingested, your cat and dog may be at risk for serious complications. Baker's semi-sweet, and dark chocolate, as well as cocoa powder, all contain large amounts of methylxanthines—making them toxic even in small amounts. Vomiting and diarrhea are common side effects of eating chocolate. More serious side effects include anxiety, hyperactivity, stumbling, tremors, abnormal heart rhythms, and seizures. In most cases, if the pet is treated early, the prognosis is generally good. **2. Xylitol** Sugar-free items containing the artificial sweetener xylitol can be deadly to dogs. Ingestion causes a dangerous drop in blood sugar, which can result in vomiting, lethargy, weakness, collapse, or seizures. Signs appear as quickly as 15 to 30 minutes after ingestion but may be delayed for up to 12 hours. In some dogs, liver failure can occur up to 72 hours after ingesting xylitol. **3. Fat Trimmings and Bones** Although it's tempting to feed your pet fatty leftovers or bones, it's best to avoid doing so. Possible consequences are serious and include inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis), broken teeth, severe vomiting, diarrhea, or a blockage of the esophagus, stomach, or intestines—which would require emergency surgery. **4. Grapes and Raisins** Although we don't know why it happens, eating grapes or raisins can cause kidney failure in dogs. It's not clear how much a dog must consume in order for these fruits to be dangerous, so it's best to keep them far out of your pet's reach—and to inform guests of their potential danger. Signs that your dog may have eaten grapes or raisins include vomiting, followed by lethargy, loss of appetite, and increased thirst and urination. **5. Alcohol** Dogs and cats are very sensitive to alcohol; even small amounts can cause coma and death. Signs usually appear within 15 to 30 minutes and may include an unsteady gait, vomiting, and lethargy. Create a Safe Environment for Your Pets **6. Tinsel, ornaments, and ribbon** Cats are especially attracted to, and will want to play with, dangling or sparkly ornaments. Keep your pets away from ornaments, as broken glass from ornaments can cause cuts, and eating ornaments, tinsel, or hooks can cause serious intestinal injury. **7. Plants that are toxic, like lilies** Poinsettias get the most attention as potentially poisonous holiday plants, but their toxicity is overrated. Eating them will not risk your cat or dog's life, but ingesting the plant can cause mouth irritation and possibly vomiting and diarrhea. Mistletoe can cause heart problems, but eating it usually only causes gastrointestinal symptoms. The same goes for holly. If you're a cat owner, lilies are the one plant you must worry about, because eating them can cause kidney failure. If you spot lilies in an arrangement, get them out of your home immediately and clean up any pollen—every part of the plant is toxic! Another overlooked danger is Christmas tree water, which can contain fertilizer as well as bacteria. **8. Cords and candles** Pets often want to chew on electrical cords and lights, which can cause electrocution, so cover or hide all cords. And hide candles as well, because a dog or cat can knock them over and cause burns or a house fire. **9. Liquid potpourri** Keep potpourri out of reach, because both cats and dogs can be attracted to its smell. It takes only a few licks of these oils to cause serious chemical burns. **10. Stress and anxiety** If you're having guests over and have an anxious or nervous pet, consider keeping the animal isolated in a quiet room with food, water, and a cozy bed. You can also speak to your veterinarian about medications that may help relieve anxiety. **11. Your guests** It may seem unnecessary, but guests—especially non-pet owners—may unknowingly place your pet in danger. Make sure to show them where the “approved” treats are located, request that they keep luggage closed to prevent a curious pet from investigating it, and instruct them to not leave medications on tables. **What to Do About a Pet's Holiday Mishap** If your pet is exposed to a toxin or seems ill, act quickly, because many veterinary interventions are time-sensitive. Taking immediate action can mean the difference between life and death for your pet. Contact your vet, local emergency clinic, or pet poison control center immediately if you have any concerns. If you need to go to the ER, remember to bring the wrapper or box with you if you know what your pet has swallowed, and so the vet can calculate the ingested dose. Two numbers to keep handy are the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435, and the Pet Poison Helpline at 855-764-7661. Both provide valuable advice for a fee. By Julio Lopez, DVM, DACVIM Source: *Pet Health Today's Newsletter (Everyday Health) Nov. 19, 2015*

ALPHASHEPHERD



Persephone is an approximately one-and-a-half year old female who will bring joy to your home, we're sure. She's playful and mischievous, but she would probably do better in a one-cat household. If you are interested in this fabulous feline, stop by the shelter today!



A special thank you to all the kind folks who helped with the Subaru Share the Love event. We couldn't do this without all of you!  
**THANK YOU!!!**

### \*UPCOMING EVENTS\*

- February 27 YARD SALE Butler's Bus Service, Red Village Road, Lyndonville Call Nancy for more info (802) 249-3199 or to arrange for a drop-off of items.

### KAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Helen Morrison – Co-President  
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Did you know....Cats have around 53 loosely fitting vertebrae, which makes their back really flexible. Humans have just 34.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE DIRECTORS AND VOLUNTEERS OF KINGDOM ANIMAL SHELTER!!

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT** The purpose of the Kingdom Animal Shelter is to facilitate the placement of stray and unwanted animals and pets in desirable homes; to establish and maintain an animal shelter and associated procedures that promote health, care and handling; and to prevent overpopulation and the prevention of cruelty to animals. The animals in our care, our guests, are never euthanized merely because we lack space or because the animal's stay with us has exceeded a predefined amount of time.

Please forward this to your friends, family, co-workers, or anyone interested in supporting our shelter. If you no longer wish to receive emails from Kingdom Animal Shelter, please hit “Reply” and change the subject line to UNSUBSCRIBE. Kingdom Animal Shelter respects your privacy and will never share or sell your email address or other information.