



Veterinary Connections



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Pets and Party Planning – Tips to keep your pets and guests stress-free and safe during the holidays

> Article contributed by MAJ Sara Mullaney DVM, PhD, DACVPM, One Health Division Chief, Veterinary Services Public Health Sanitation Directorate U.S. Army Public Health Center

Planning to host a party during the holidays? Even the most outgoing pets can become nervous during all the holiday hubbub. Also keep in mind that not every visitor to your home may feel comfortable around pets. Here are some tips to help reduce stress on your pet, and keep your guests comfortable and safe during the holidays!

Preparing your pet for visitors:

- **Provide a safe haven for your pet.** Make sure your pet has a room or a crate where they can go to get away from all of the commotion. It is best for this location to be in an area where your guests won't follow so Fluffy can truly get some relaxing alone time.
- **Set your pet up for success.** If you already know your Nervous Nelly doesn't like being around strangers or loud parties, set them up in a quiet place with their favorite toy away from visitors and any commotion. If your pet gets extremely upset by houseguests, consult your veterinarian about possible solutions.
- **Be wary of escape routes.** Even if you know your pet is a regular Charming Charlie, make sure you keep an eye on them while visitors are present, especially as people are entering or leaving your home. Also make sure your house guests know not to leave the doors wide open as they come and go. Not everyone is used to having pets and may not double check to make sure they didn't accidentally let them out.
- **Identification tags and microchips... just in case.** Just in case Sir Sneaky does escape, make sure he has proper identification with your current contact information—

especially a microchip with up-to-date, registered information. Microchips reunite families; if your pet isn't currently microchipped, speak with your veterinarian about the benefits!

- **Little ones.** Is your fur-baby comfortable around children? Are the children old enough to interact appropriately? If not and you have children visiting, have your pet spend some quiet time away from the kids full of all that holiday excitement. As the holiday cheer starts to settle a bit, you can slowly introduce the playful pals, but only if you think everyone will be safe. Not all children have been around animals...wagging tails, fluffy ears, and soft whiskers can be tempting targets for entertainment...and not a lot of fun for Fido. No one wants to end up in the emergency room (Vet or Human) during the holidays!
- **Tasty Morsels.** It is always best to keep human food away from pets. If you want to share holiday treats with your pets, buy treats formulated just for them. Make sure your guests know not to sneak Teddy any tasty morsels. If your guests can't resist giving your cutie something yummy, you can involve your guests in reinforcing good pet behaviors and rewarding Teddy with formulated pet treats only. Don't forget to clear the food from your table, counters, and serving areas when you are finished—and make sure any trash gets put where your pet can't reach it.

Preparing your guests for their visit:

- **BYO...P?** Most pet lovers also have friends who are pet lovers (right?). Make sure you let your guests know ahead of time whether or not they are allowed to bring their trusty sidekicks with them during their visit. If you set the rules ahead of time, you can avoid potential issues during their visit (catfight, anyone?).

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Pets and Party Planning

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- **Allergies, phobias, zoonoses, oh my!** Remember that there are some people who simply cannot tolerate certain pets because they are allergic. Others may have phobias (fear) of pets, especially to some exotic pets. Other guests may have compromised immune systems due to pregnancy, disease, or medications/treatments that put them at risk to certain diseases some healthy pets may carry (such as reptiles and *Salmonella*). It's a good idea to inform your guests ahead of time that you have pets (or are allowing others to bring pets), and what kind of pets you have so they can take any needed precautions before visiting.

Following these few tips can go a long way in making sure both your furry family member and your house guests have a stress-free time in your home during the holiday season! From our homes to yours, we hope you AND your pets (furry and scaly!) have a WONDERFUL holiday season!

Reference:

Holiday Pet Safety. <https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/holidays.aspx>. Accessed June 17, 2019.

Who's Watching your Pets this Holiday? Are you prepared?

> Article contributed by Sheldon Waugh, MSc, PhD, Epidemiologist, One Health Division, Veterinary Services Public Health Sanitation Directorate U.S. Army Public Health Center

With the holiday season upon us, travel might be the number one thing on your mind. Whether you are travelling across town or across the country, your furry friend may not be able to come with you. If you need to leave your pet in the care of family, friends, or a boarding facility, there are important things to prepare before leaving for the holidays or any time of year.

- Make sure you provide an ample supply of your **pet's food, medications, and supplements** to cover the time you're away – plus a few extra days, just in case.
- If your pet is on any **medications**, make sure the caregiver knows: (1) Where they are located, (2) What the medication is for, (3) How much to give, (4) When to give them, (5) How often to give them, and (6) How to give them. Don't assume they know; demonstrate the process if needed.
- It is a good idea to create a **simple daily list** that outlines your pet's feeding, medication, walking, brushing, playtime, behavioral considerations, and cleaning (litterbox for cat, habitat or cage for exotics & pocket pets, and so forth) schedule. Your caregiver can refer to and check off each time they tend to one of your pet's needs. They can also track appetite, bowel movements, and activity level to help identify any changes.
- If your pet is microchipped, consider adding your caregiver or another **alternate contact** in the microchip manufacturer's database in the event your pet is lost and its microchip is scanned by a shelter or veterinary hospital.
- If your pet is staying away from your home, you may want to bring their **favorite toy, blanket, and/or bed** along with them to help them feel more relaxed while you are away.
- Provide your caregiver with your **pet's relevant health information**, including your pet's vaccination status and a copy of their rabies vaccination certificate, medication list, veterinary provider contact information, and relevant health conditions.

If you are planning to leave your pet at a boarding facility, in addition to the above:

- **Make your reservations** early to ensure a spot is available
- **Ask what vaccinations** are required for your pet to stay at the facility. Leave plenty of time for them to get any vaccinations they need before their stay.
- **Ask questions** about the daily routine of the facility and how your pet may interact with other boarding pets.
- **Discuss and make agreements** for payments for any kind of emergency treatment

Regardless of whether you're leaving your pet in the care of family or friends or a boarding facility, you should authorize someone you trust to act on your behalf in case of an emergency if you can't be reached. Make sure that person is aware of your wishes regarding emergency treatment; this includes the potentially uncomfortable topic of financial limits if there are any. Provide that person with all possible methods of contacting you, including contact information for your traveling companions as appropriate, as well as an assurance of your trust that they can make decisions if you cannot be reached. If you appoint more than one authorized caregiver, make it clear who has the authority to make the final decision so there are no delays that could harm your pet.

Even if you aren't able to bring your pets along with you on your holiday travel, you want to make sure they are safe and well cared for. Being prepared will allow you to relax knowing your pet is enjoying their "holiday" as much as you are.

Reference:

Who's in charge of you animals care while you're away? <https://www.avma.org/public/EmergencyCare/Pages/petcarewhenyouareaway.aspx>. Accessed July 19, 2019.



New Year's Fireworks & Pets

> Article contributed by MAJ Desirée Broach, MS, DVM, DACVB, Director, VMCE, Veterinary Behaviorist Public Health Activity Rheinland Pfalz

There are a variety of reasons that cause pets to be fearful of loud noises like fireworks. Genetics can play a role in levels of auditory sensitivity, and certain breed categories (herding dogs) have been shown to be predisposed to developing noise sensitivity. Learning through prior experience or a traumatic event can also cause a pet to develop a fear of fireworks. Any pet, not just dogs, can have sensitivity to fireworks, and firework displays are not limited to only summer holidays. New Year's firework displays are also a time for owners to be aware if pets have noise sensitivities.

What can I do to help my pet?

Environment

Prepare early. Especially if your pet is already reactive with fireworks or loud noises, leave your pet at home! Ensure all your pets are microchipped and have identification, even if you think they cannot escape from you or your home. Provide a safe haven (indoors), preferably in an area where you can block the sensory input from outside (noise buffer, blocked, or no windows). Be aware that confinement may make some pets worse; so do not confine to a kennel if your pet has a history of self-injury or panic or if they are not used to staying in their kennel.

Interaction

When your pet is stressed, do not ignore the behavior. Assist your pet to cope with the situation. Do not use punishment or try to force them into a particular activity. Provide positive, interactive play, rewarding any appropriate or relaxed behavior. Recognizing the early signs of stress in your pet is paramount to getting them to engage with you.

Activity

On days when fireworks are expected, make sure to provide your pet with plenty of exercise and play time ahead of time to promote more relaxed behavior when the fireworks start.

Medications

There are two U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medications for treatment of noise aversion in dogs; only one is currently available in the United States. There are currently no FDA approved medications for cats. There are anti-anxiety medications that can be prescribed on a case-by-case basis and other supporting products such as species-specific pheromones and calming supplements. Talk to your veterinarian for guidance on what is best for your pet.

Accessories

Consider your pet's personality and what may help him/her relax. In some cases, compression wraps, ear covers, and/or eye covers can reduce the environmental sights and sounds enough to help the pet relax.

Off-season

Talk to your veterinarian or a veterinary behaviorist to develop a desensitization and counter-conditioning (DSCC) plan to teach your pet to settle and relax during the sound of fireworks. This activity incorporates gradually increasing exposure to the sound of fireworks (desensitization) at a level where your pet remains comfortable and is paired with treats/attention for a desired alternate behavior (counter-conditioning). It is best to implement a DSCC program during a time when fireworks are out of season so that you can control your pet's exposure during training.

Prevention

Provide early, controlled exposure to a variety of sights, sounds, and stimuli for puppies and kittens during their socialization periods (a time of social and emotional development). Ensure that a safe gradient of exposure is used and that you do not overwhelm or overstimulate the pet. Adolescent and young adult pets can still learn with controlled exposure; however, if you do not know your pet's past experience or reaction with fireworks, consult your veterinarian for a DSCC plan instead.



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Baker's Bottom Line for Food Safety

> Article contributed by CW2 Priscilla Baer, Food Safety Officer, Public Health Activity-San Diego

It's that time of year again. It's winter; the holidays are just around the corner, and your inner Betty Crocker is calling! You find yourself dreaming about Thanksgiving pies, holiday cookies, fruit cakes, Rugelach, gingerbread men, Yule logs... the list goes on and on! But before you start whipping up 10 dozen of your mother's famous snowball cookies for the office holiday party, be sure to follow our food safety tips so you (and your co-workers) can enjoy a safe and illness-free holiday season!

Most of us are familiar with the dangers of eating raw eggs and the risk of becoming ill with *Salmonella*. That is one reason it is important not to taste any doughs or batters containing raw eggs prior to cooking. Children are especially susceptible to serious illness from *Salmonella* so it's best if your little helpers only test fully cooked baked goods.

Did you know that not only raw eggs but the unbaked flour in your batter or dough can cause foodborne illness if eaten raw? According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, uncooked flour can contain the harmful bacteria, *Escherichia coli (E.coli)*. *E. coli* can cause typical foodborne illness symptoms like vomiting and diarrhea but can also result in a severe infection that results in kidney failure.

So, how do you prevent getting ill when preparing your favorite holiday treats? That's easy; just follow these 6 simple steps in the kitchen:

1. Store uncooked flour, baking mixes, dough, and eggs separately from ready-to-eat foods

- 2. Prepare** yourself and your space: Tieback long hair, clean counters, pull ingredients and equipment together, wash your hands, and wear an apron
- 3. Keep separate** the measuring, mixing, and handling of unbaked batter or dough from where you cool, serve, and package baked products
- 4. Test** baked products with a food thermometer at the center to ensure doneness
- 5. Clean** equipment and work surfaces with hot, soapy water or in the dishwasher
- 6. Wash hands** before you taste, serve, or package baked goods.

So, the bottom line: though we all probably have fond memories of licking the beater when we helped Mom or Dad with the baking, today that is a BIG no-no. NEVER consume uncooked batter or dough. Depending on the type of baked good, the internal temperature should reach anywhere from 150-209°F to ensure any harmful bacteria are killed. All egg and cream or meat-filled baked goods should be refrigerated within 2 hours of baking to prevent any bacterial growth after cooking.

References: Food Safety. <http://homebaking.org/foodsafety.html>. Accessed July 11, 2019. Say No to Raw Dough! <https://www.cdc.gov/features/no-raw-dough/index.html>. Accessed July 15, 2019.

Is Your Bake Good Done? DING! Don't just rely on an oven timer to indicate your baked good is done. Use a thermometer to take the internal temperature!

<p>150°F</p>  <p>Cheesecakes (Remove from oven at 150°F to avoid cracking; temperature should rise to 160°F as it cools)</p>	<p>160°F</p>  <p>Quiche, Meringue Pies, Bread Pudding, Baked Custard, Clafouti, Molten Chocolate Cakes</p>	<p>165°F</p>  <p>Stuffing & Casseroles, Leftovers, Chocolate Cream Pies, Meats, Cheese or Poultry-filled Breads (Empanadas, Pot Pies, Pasties, Calzones, Bierocks)</p>	<p>170°-175°F</p>  <p>Custard Pies, Fruit Pies, Flan, Creme Brulée</p>	<p>190-210°F</p>  <p>Yeast Breads (Soft Rolls 190°F, Crusty Breads 210°F)</p>	<p>200°-210°F</p>  <p>Most Cakes, (Pound cake 210°F, Cupcakes, Quick Breads, Scones, Biscuits, Pecan Pie)</p>
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Veterinary Connections

Goal of publication:

- Veterinary Connections is a quarterly publication written by Army Veterinary Service personnel and published by the Army Public Health Center to inform and educate Service members, beneficiaries, and retirees about Animal Health, Food Safety, and One Health.
- One Health refers to the intersection and overlap between animals, humans, and the environment.
- Army Veterinary Service personnel serve around the world supporting the Department of Defense as proponents for Animal Health and Food Protection.

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