

Halloween Safety Tips for your Pets

Pumpkin spice and everything nice, it's almost Halloween! A night of trick-or-treating with our two-legged children eating all the candy we can get our hands on! And while our favorite pups also like joining in on the festivities, there are certain dangers lurking about for our four-legged friends.

It is important to remember not all treats are pet approved, like chocolate. While it may be our favorite Halloween snack, if ingested by pets it can cause significant illness. Chocolate is toxic because it contains caffeine and a chemical called theobromine which dogs and cats cannot metabolize. The more bitter or darker the chocolate, the more caffeine and theobromine present. And the smaller your pet, the less chocolate it takes to produce toxicity. Treatment depends on the type and amount of chocolate consumed and treatment should always be initiated quickly.

Of course, we don't typically share candy with our pets, but it's important to remember hard candies, jawbreakers, and lollipops are notorious choking hazards. Just like with children, these candies are small and sticky and can easily get stuck in your dog's throat causing them to choke. Keeping candy bowls and your child's stash of trick-or-treat candy out of your pet's reach can help decrease choking potential.

But it is not just treats that can cause problems for pets. Wrappers and treat bags can potentially cause nightmarish tricks too. Ingesting wrappers or bags can lead to choking, foreign body obstructions, and possible surgery. These bags and wrappers can also turn into suffocation hazards in minutes! A pet rummaging for crumbs can easily get their head stuck in the bag's opening and without assistance suffocation can result.

If you live in a large neighborhood or you are a popular stop on the trick-or-treat route, a ringing doorbell will bring a parade of princesses, superheroes, and other Halloween guests all night! While some pets love visitors, others may get anxious and hide, experience GI upset, or even run away. Do you have a pet who is more of an introvert and visitors or costumes might not their thing? Talk to your vet about ways to help with anxiety before trick-or-treating starts. There are options from pheromone sprays to medications that can help keep pets safe and lower stress.

And don't forget, if your pet likes dressing up be sure to bring them by your veterinarian's office and show them off!