

Care Guides

Pets at Christmas

To keep Christmas merry for the whole household, Friars Moor Vets are urging animal lovers to ensure their home is safe for four-legged friends by following these five simple tips:

1. Protect your pet from poisons – a number of festive treats and traditions, such as chocolate, raisins, xylitol (found in sugar free treats), nuts, grapes, liquorice, poinsettia, holly and mistletoe are toxic to cats and dogs.
2. Keep decorations out of reach – ribbons, wrapping paper, baubles, tinsel and tree lights can all prove irresistible to cats and dogs but can be very dangerous if broken, chewed or swallowed. Batteries for Christmas gifts also need to be kept safe as, if ingested, they may cause severe chemical burns to the mouth, throat and stomach.
3. Forget festive food for pets – we all enjoy a richer diet over Christmas, but fatty foods and Christmas dinners shouldn't be shared. They can trigger, sickness and diarrhoea or other conditions from gastroenteritis to pancreatitis, so try to stick to your pet's regular diet and routine. Bones including turkey bones should not be given to pets as they can splinter and puncture the digestive tract. Make sure any bones are disposed of in a bin that your dog won't be able to access.
4. Give toys not treats – we all want our pets to share the fun and many of us include a gift for our pet on the shopping list. But too many treats can lead to fat pets which can have serious consequences for their health, so consider opting for a new toy, or a long walk if you want to indulge your pet this Christmas.
5. Know where to go – even with all the care in the world, animal accidents and emergencies can still happen. Make sure you're prepared by checking your vet's emergency cover provision and holiday opening hours or, if you are away from home, use the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' Find a Vet facility at www.findavet.org.uk For more information on pets and poisons download the free Animal Welfare Foundation 'pets and poisons' leaflet at www.bva-awf.org.uk/pet-care-advice/pets-and-poisons