

Give This, Not That!

Give Safer Pet Presents This Holiday Season

It's the season for all things merry and bright, and when it comes to hazards, the holidays are full of them. This is especially true for toys and treats. From bones and tennis balls, to ribbons and feathers, this time of year could spell trouble under the tree. With a little planning, you can select safer holiday gifts for your hound or housecat.

Leave These Toys Off the List

You love your pet and want to share the joy of opening presents, but did you know that some toys and treats can be harmful? Here's what to look for, what to avoid, and what to give your pet instead.

Rawhide: Avoid rawhide chews that can soften and lodge in your dog's throat or intestines. Plus, rawhide may be processed with peroxide, formaldehyde and adhesives used to create "candy canes" and other shapes.

Give This Instead: Carrots, sweet potato jerky, bully sticks, naturally-shed antlers, "Chomper Chews" (similar to rawhide but available in pieces)

Bones: Avoid cooked bones as they can splinter in the stomach and intestines. While some raw bones may be safer, all natural bones have the potential to get stuck inside your pet and cause problems such as constipation or perforation of the intestines.

Give This Instead: Nylon bones, "greenie" type edible bones, dental bones

Tennis Balls: Once a favorite among retrievers and other dogs, tennis balls can split into small rubber bits and become stuck in your pet's gastrointestinal tract. They can also pop open at the back of your dog's throat and block the airway.

Give This Instead: Tough Kong type (which can be filled with favorite treats to make them more appealing) and other hard rubber toys, nylon bones. If you decide to give tennis balls, choose a quality brand and give one at a time, always with supervision.



Rope Bones: Promoted as a way to "floss" a dog's teeth while they chew, rope bones can actually wear down tooth enamel. Additionally, bits of rope can separate and become stuck between the stomach and intestines; pulling action from both can lead to devastating results for a dog.

Give This Instead: Hard rubber toys, nylon bones

Ribbon and Feather Toys: Cats love ribbons and feathers, but they can be potentially swallowed and lead to intestinal blockages. Ribbons, when long enough, pose a strangulation hazard as well.

Give This Instead: Stuffed fabric mice with plastic eyes removed, balls without bells inside, catnip

We want to make sure this is the happiest, safest holiday season for you and your pets. Always inspect any pet toy for signs of wear and tear, and throw them out if necessary.

If you have different size pets, make sure that toys are scaled to the larger of your pets. Also consider trimming tags from toys; dogs tend to chew the tag, create a hole and get at the toy's insides. If you have cats and dogs, keep toys separated.

Of course, the ultimate gift you can give your pet is good health with a wellness exam and quality food. Please ask us for more gift recommendations today!

