

A Veterinarian's Top Tips for a Safe, Festive Holiday Season with Pets

by Dr. Whitney Miller,
DVM, MBA, DACVPM

(NAPS)—Pet parents across the country are gearing up to spread holiday cheer with their favorite furry family members. Whether cuddling by the fire with your cat, tossing snowballs for your dog or sprucing up your small pet's habitat with seasonal décor, you can make every moment merry with your pets all season long with these essential tips:

- **Find value all season long:** Petco's Merry Makings collection has everything pets and pet parents need to make the season easy, affordable and special. Stock up on gifts under \$10 including tennis ball ornaments, cake pop-inspired treats, pre-filled stockings for dogs and cats, and more than 40 toys under \$7 such as cat teasers and plush toys. The Vital Care membership program is a gift that keeps on giving with year-round savings on regular check-ups and everyday essentials for cats, dogs and small animals.

- **Watch the winter chill:** A good rule of thumb is if it's cold enough that you need a coat outside, your pet might need an extra layer as well. Adorable, cozy knit sweaters and red-and-green plaid jackets make terrific holiday accessories that will also keep your furry friend warm. Petco's lifestyle and fashion brand, Reddy, offers stylish, functional winter gear including bomber jackets, puffer coats and beanies. For chilly morning walks, pet parents can use the sherpa-lined hand warmer leash attachment that offers protection from the elements. If your pet is walking on frozen ground or salt-treated sidewalks, protect their paws with a set of booties to prevent irritation or pain.

- **Make memories together:** The holidays are often filled with visits to loved ones and social gatherings. Help get your pet ready for all the festivities with a special holiday grooming package featuring a gingerbread-inspired bandana, sugar cookie spritz and more. On Dec. 2, pet parents can bring pets to participating Petco pet care centers nationally for free Photos with Santa. They can also consider donating to Petco Love at checkout to help pets in need.

- **Brush up on manners:** Schedule a positive dog training session to help ensure pups are confident going into the holiday season. If it's your dog's first holiday season, try out a group Puppy,



Have a healthy and happy holiday season with pets with these veterinarian-recommended tips.

Beginner or Fundamentals class to help them learn basic cues and build your bond. If your dog struggles with mild separation or social anxiety, a personalized one-on-one session can help address triggers and develop strategies to make experiences more comfortable for your pet.

- **Put their healthiest paw forward:** The holidays are an excellent time to check in with your veterinarian and confirm pets are up to date on vaccinations and routine care. During this time of gathering and increased travel, it's important to follow best practices such as regular handwashing to prevent the spread of illness; monitor pets for signs of sickness and keep them away from other pets if they are unwell. Pet parents can also incorporate supplements such as a calming chew or probiotic powder into their dog's diet to help address anxiety or an upset stomach over the holidays. Finally, while humans may want to eat cookies for breakfast and candy canes for dessert, pets should keep their treats to no more than 10% of their diet during the holiday and year-round. Also, make sure pets avoid typical holiday foods such as chocolate, turkey skin, bones and onions as well as poisonous plants such as mistletoe, pine needles, holly and poinsettias.

Learn More

For additional guides, recommendations, gifting inspiration and more to help you and your pet have the best holiday season, visit petco.com/holiday or Petco pet care centers nationwide.

- *Dr. Miller is the Chief Veterinarian at Petco, The Health + Wellness Co. and a member of the Petco Pet Wellness Council. She received her DVM and MBA degrees from Colorado State University and has been board certified in Preventive Medicine since 2018.*