



*The Ultimate
Guide to*

**AVOIDING
HOLIDAY HAZARDS
FOR YOUR DOG**

The food and decorations that make the holidays so much fun for us can be dangerous for our dogs

Christmas, Hanukkah, Ramadan, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice and New Year's Day; the wonderful winter holiday season is fast approaching. Here at Canine Campus we want you and your dog to enjoy the happy times the season offers, but it's important to remember the food and decorations that make the holidays so much fun for us can be dangerous for our dogs.

“Dogs are able to see into our souls and remind us of the true meaning of Christmas.”

~ Author Unknown



Here are 45 tips to help you plan ahead carefully to avoid potential holiday hazards for your dog.

Holiday Food Can Be Dangerous for Dogs

Holiday foods we enjoy can be a problem for your dog. Don't let your dog ingest the following:

1. Rich, fatty foods

Dogs can easily have problems from rich, fatty foods like gravy or grease, which can cause pancreatitis. Symptoms of pancreatitis are pain, vomiting and dehydration. Dogs that develop this serious condition often need to be hospitalized.

2. Alcohol

Every year, hundreds of dogs die after consuming alcohol. While some dogs are attracted to alcohol, it can be very dangerous for them, especially if they become intoxicated. Even glasses with a small amount of alcohol in them can be problematic.

3. Coffee or tea

Coffee and tea contain a dangerous ingredient called xanthine, which can cause nervous system problems, urinary tract damage and heart stimulation.

4. Chocolate

In addition to xanthine, chocolate contains theobromine, which can be deadly for dogs. Dark chocolate, including baking chocolate, are the worst culprits, but all chocolate, candy and fudge should be kept out of your dog's reach.

5. Uncooked meat, fish or poultry

Uncooked fish, meat or poultry may contain disease-causing bacteria, such as E. coli and toxoplasma gondii. Be careful to wash all utensils that have come in contact with raw meat and cook meat thoroughly.

6. Bones from fish, meat or poultry

Even small bones from fish, meat or poultry can splinter causing lacerations (tears) in the intestinal tract. Unless you're giving your dog a bone that has been treated or specially sterilized, keep them away from your dog. Rawhide, [Kong toys](#) and hard, sterilized bones are better options.



7. Tobacco

Tobacco products can be fatal to dogs if ingested. Keep cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, nicotine gum, nicotine patches and ashtrays out of reach of your dog. Signs of tobacco poisoning will show up within 15–45 minutes and may include:

- salivation
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- seizures
- excitement
- cardiac arrest.

8. Uncooked yeast dough

Uncooked yeast dough has been known to expand and produce gas in the digestive system. Dogs may experience pain and possible rupture of the stomach or intestines.

9. Grapes or raisins

Grapes and raisins contain a toxin that can cause damage to your dog's kidneys.

10. Artificial sweeteners

Xylitol, an artificial sweetener found in gums, breath mints, candy and other human food can be very toxic to dogs.

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11. Macadamia nuts

Macadamia nuts contain a toxin that can affect the nervous system and muscles of dogs.

12. Foil or plastic

Dogs can smell even trace amounts of food on plastic or foil and can be very sneaky about getting candy wrappers, aluminum foil with food in it, etc. If ingested, plastic or foil can cause choking or intestinal obstruction.



13. String

Dogs find the string used to hold meat together (think roast meat) very tempting and will eat the string. Ingestion can cause an emergency called “linear string foreign body” in the intestines and must be surgically removed.

14. Garbage

Garbage contains all kinds of hazards for your dog, such as plastic wrap, 6-pack beverage holders that can cause strangulation, fat trimmings, bones, ribbon or tinsel. Be sure to secure your garbage cans to make sure your dog can't get into them.

Certain Plants Can Be Poisonous to Dogs

While green foliage and colorful plants make the season more festive for the holidays, many of the plants we like to use to decorate our homes can be poisonous to dogs.

Here's what to watch for:

15. Holly leaves and berries

Holly leaves and berries cause stomach upset and can be fatal to both dogs and cats.

16. Mistletoe

Mistletoe upsets stomach and can cause a heart attack.

17. Hibiscus

Hibiscus may cause diarrhea.

18. Poinsettias

Poinsettias cause blistering in the mouth and an upset stomach.



Decorations, Wrapping and Gifts Under the Tree Can Be Hazardous for Your Dog

Keep the following away from your dog:

19. Yarn, string and ribbons

Ribbons, yarn and string can be fatal to your dog if ingested. If your dog eats them, it can cause intestinal bunching and obstruction. If this happens, your dog will need surgery to remove the item. Curious puppies are especially susceptible to the allure of pretty decorations and wrapping.

20. Adhesives and glue

Adhesives and glue can be toxic and are especially attractive to animals.

21. Potpourri

Potpourri contains oils that can be poison to dogs if ingested.

22. Candles

Candles can cause burns and fires. Never leave lighted candles unattended or within reach of your dog.

23. Batteries

Batteries are often included in toys under the tree but can be toxic if your dog ingests one. An ingested battery can cause an obstruction and have to be surgically removed.

24. Perfume and after-shave

Perfumes, after-shaves and other smell-good products contain ethanol (alcohol) and essential oils which can be very toxic to dogs if ingested.



Christmas Trees and Decorations Pose Hazards for Your Dog

Let's face it. A lovely, full, lush green Christmas tree decorated with sparkly ornaments and pretty lights is a thing of beauty, but dog owners must be especially careful to take precaution so their dog or puppy isn't put in harm's way.

Here's what you need to be aware of when it comes to bringing a Christmas tree into your home.

25. Secure your tree

Make sure you secure your tree in a stable stand and attach securely to a window or a wall using fish line or something similar in order to keep your tree from falling on your dog. You may even want to consider using a [scat mat](#) to deter your pets from playing with your tree.



26. Tree needles

Tree needles can be toxic and cause mouth and stomach irritation. Needles and wire on an artificial tree can be dangerous too. Be sure your dog does not chew on branches or eat fallen needles.

27. Tinsel

Keep tinsel away from your dog. If eaten, it can cause intestinal blockage, which require surgery to remove. When it comes to tinsel, leave it out of your holiday decorations altogether.

28. Angel hair

Angel hair, flocking and artificial snow are mildly toxic to dogs. If your dog consumes enough, however, it can cause blockage in the intestines. For this reason, it is best to decorate with something else to avoid a problem.

29. Electrical cords

If your dog chews on an electrical cord, including a string of lights, it can cause a range of problems such as a burned mouth, electrical shock or even death by electrocution. Some cords can get hot and cause burns. Unplug lights when you can't supervise. Use pet-proof cords and spray with an anti-chew product like [Bitter Apple](#) to discourage chewing, especially by puppies.

30. Glass ornaments

Glass ornaments are beautiful, but if your dog plays with one like it's a ball serious lacerations (cuts) can occur. Sharp ornament hooks have been known to become embedded in a dog's mouth or esophagus. Place glass ornaments high on your tree. Ornaments that are not so dangerous can be placed lower.

31. Candy ornaments

Decorating your tree with candy ornaments is asking for trouble. Candy canes, gingerbread and other sweets are intriguing to your dog. We know of one diabetic dog that ran into trouble with her blood sugars because she was sneaking and eating candy canes off the tree. Popcorn, raisins and cranberry garlands can cause obstructions and require surgery. So be wary about using food as tree ornaments.

32. Tree preservatives

Tree preservatives are sugar-based. Since the sugar and preservative-laden water sits for long periods of time, the water often harbors dangerous bacteria. Fertilizer, insecticides or flame retardants that were used on the tree may get into the water, causing your dog to get very sick if ingested. Cover the stand with a tree skirt or other means to prevent your dog from drinking the water.



Holiday Visitors Pose Special Challenges

Some pets love having visitors and will be on their best behavior. But some dogs may become fearful or aggressive. Puppies tend to get over-excited and urinate when they meet new people. Be prepared to handle your dog should you entertain holiday guests.

33. Give your dog some space

Provide a quiet, comfortable space away from the commotion of the holidays for your dog to help with fearfulness or aggression.

34. Remind your dog of obedience expectations

Work with your dog before the holidays to refresh obedience skills. Be sure to inform your guests if your dog has any undesirable habits (like high-tailing it out the door as soon as it's opened, jumping up on the couch or stealing food from the counter.)

35. Use baby gates

For dogs that are aggressive, consider setting up baby gates or putting them in a different room during the time your guests are visiting. Or, consider boarding your dog at Canine Campus if you think your dog might not be safe around guests, especially young children or babies.



36. Guests with pets?

If your guest asks to bring a pet and you're not sure how they will get along, you may need to decline the request or plan to spend some time acclimatizing the pets to each other. You will need to supervise them carefully and monitor their actions to prevent an incident where someone gets hurt.

37. Cleaning products

We tend to use extra cleaning products during the holidays in preparation of guests or events. Remember that many cleaning products can be harmful to your dog and keep them out of reach.



38. Prevent allergies

Be sure to let your guests know ahead of time that you have a pet so they can take whatever precautions they need to if they are allergic. Try using a product such as [Allerpet](#) to help decrease the dander in the house.

39. Consider boarding your dog if you plan to travel

If you are the one doing the traveling, you may want to leave your dog in a safe environment that is comfortable, fun and designed with your dog's needs in mind. We recommend you make accommodations as soon as possible as we fill up fast during the holidays. If you haven't visited Canine Campus yet, please give us a call at 719-448-9600 to arrange a tour and admissions test for your dogs.

Refrain from Getting a New Dog during the Holidays

40. A new dog or puppy is not a good holiday gift.

Dogs need routine and time to bond with their new family. The noise and chaos of the holiday season is not the best time to introduce a new animal to the household. Consider waiting until after the holidays are over to adopt a new dog.

Holiday Gift Ideas for Your Dog or Dog Lovers

You want to include your dog in the holiday spirit. Here are some gift ideas your dog will truly appreciate.

41. Dog toys

We highly recommend project toys for your dog. Also known as puzzle toys or interactive toys, project toys hold your dog's interest and give them the mental stimulation they crave as well as being fun. [Check out our article on project toys for dogs.](#)

42. Dog treats

Choose healthy holiday treats for your dog and offer them in moderation.



43. Give your dog the gift of quality time

There is nothing your dog wants more than quality time with you. Take some time to relax and give your dog undivided attention. Your dog will think that is the best gift of all!

44. What to give prospective dog owners

If you know someone who is planning to adopt a dog consider giving them a “starter” basket filled with toys, treats, books and gift certificates. [Contact Canine Campus](#) to purchase gift certificates for dog grooming, day care and boarding.

45. Help homeless pets in our community

Consider giving a donation to your favorite pet homeless shelter and make the holidays a bit brighter for homeless animals in Colorado Springs. Contact a local shelter like [The Humane Society of Pike’s Peak Region](#) to find out if a donation of food, bedding, toys or your time is needed.

We would love to spend time with your dog during the holidays should you decide to take advantage of our award-winning dog boarding services. [Learn more](#) about our ideal accommodations, policies and how to prepare for your dog’s stay. We book up quickly during the holidays, so if you’re interested please call us at 719-448-9600 or [contact us](#) right away! If you already have a log in, click on our [K-9 Connect online program](#) to set up or modify room and board reservations. We’d love to hear from you!





Canine Campus Dog Daycare & Boarding

Located in beautiful Colorado Springs, Canine Campus is a pioneer in the world of dog daycare and overnight boarding. Open since 1999, we continue to lead the animal industry with our doggie play group games, all-day activities and our in-house training programs for our faculty members.

To top things off, your pooch will never be unsupervised on a Canine Campus playground. We do more than just "watch" the dogs all day. Canine Campus offers a unique type of K-9 daycare experience... one not found anywhere else in the world. Our faculty specializes in actually interacting with your pooch all day long -- something rarely found in this industry.

You will find nothing but true dog-lovers at a Canine Campus, from the dog grooming faculty and professors on the play fields to the founder, who still "works the pack" and trains all of the staff. Dogs are not just pets to us...they are members of our families; something only true dog-people would understand.

We invite you to tour our Campus anytime. We love surprise visits from our prospective parents (owners)! You will find more than just a typical mom-and-pop dog daycare shop. Instead, you will find hometown customer service complete with corporate standards.

It's a combination you won't find at any other kennel in the world!



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