



By: **Lisbeth Tanz**

While the holidays can bring their own brand of stress to human lives, they can prove to be taxing and utterly tempting for our companion animals. Look at it from their perspective - new and unusual foods are available for gobbling up, unattended sweet-smelling drinks provide a thirst-

Keeping Your Animal Companions Safe During the Holidays

quenching repast, seasonal decorations that look good enough to eat are everywhere, not to mention all the people coming and going! It's enough to put the most happy-go-lucky animal over the edge. Here are some tips to keep your furry friends healthy, relaxed and safe during the holidays and beyond.

Plants

The lovely poinsettia has gotten a bum rap over the years. In terms of its toxicity to animals, it ranks low as compared to holly, mistletoe and lilies, whose ingestion can truly be illness-producing and even fatal. If you must decorate with plants, consider using silk. They last forever and are not the least bit interesting to animals.

Food and Drink

Any time your dog or cat is fed

foods not normally eaten, you run the risk of making them sick or worse. Most everyone is familiar with the problems chocolate can cause, but did you know that dogs shouldn't be fed grapes? On the liquid side of things, dogs and cats shouldn't drink alcohol ever. But other drinks such as punch and eggnog can definitely wreak havoc on delicate digestive systems. Do you really want your dog or cat to be vomiting, or worse, just as you sit down to a holiday meal?

Decorations

Trees, lights, garland and beautifully wrapped presents all provide a curious animal with plenty to ponder and munch on. You may have to sacrifice the perfectly decorated home for one that keeps your pets safe and away from those tempting

glass balls, yummy smelling candles and all things sparkly.

Guests

If your dog or cat becomes stressed when company comes; house him in a safe, quiet space until your guests leave.

Timber!

Cats love to climb, so if you have a Christmas tree, secure it to the wall or ceiling so it can't be toppled.

For a complete listing of foods and plants poisonous to companion animals, visit the Humane Society of the United States website at www.hsus.org.

Have a question or concern you'd like addressed in this column? Contact Lisbeth Tanz at:

ltanz@stlwomensjournal.com.

Pets of the Issue

Given the number of homeless dogs and cats in St. Louis and surrounding areas, the Women's Journals is lending a hand in showing off some the gorgeous potential pets that Stray Rescue of St. Louis has available for adoption.

Interested in adopting? Visit www.strayrescue.org and complete the online adoption application. Questions? Call Stray Rescue of St. Louis at (314)771-6121.

Cats

Marissa is a beautiful domestic short hair kitty. She was a little timid when she first arrived at her foster home but comes when she's called and gets along with other cats. She does enjoy having a carrier around for the moments she likes to have to herself. She is a senior cat (14-years-old) and would love to have a home with a family to love her and let her be your lap cat.

Sally is a longhaired princess about 1-1/2years-old as of 5/1/08.

Underneath all that long hair she is a very small cat. She is a little shy and skittish. Sometimes the other kitties at her foster home scare her so she would probably do best in a home without a lot of other cats around. She loves having her long hair brushed. Once you get her in your lap, be prepared to sit for a spell. It's never her idea to get down.

Dogs

Boston Andy is so much fun! He loves being and playing with other dogs. He's always happy! Just 2-years-old, he had a tough life living on the streets. When rescued, he weighed 10 pounds, but he's gained weight and is looking handsome! His days on the street played havoc with his stomach, however, so Andy is on special meds. If needed, Stray Rescue can assist with the medication cost until he doesn't need it anymore. When he does get tired, he'll jump into your lap, cuddle and fall asleep. You can even take him home with the Rent-a-Pet program to see if he matches your family!

Kita is a high-energy dog! Do you like to jog? How about power walking? Do you need an outdoor exercise buddy or a companion to play Frisbee/ball with in the backyard? If so, then Kita might be the dog for you. She's friendly, often offering kisses and hugs! She would do best in a

home where she can get all of your love and be the only pet. And, she would be best with teenage kids. She's received training at Kennelwood, so she's housebroken and walks fairly well on a leash. Kita is 2-years-old and also available for the Rent-a-Pet program.

Boston Andy



Kita



Marissa



Sally

