



Ahh! The aroma of fresh, mouthwatering, roasting turkey in the oven, Mom's cornbread stuffing cooling on the counter, sweet pumpkin pie tempting your passions. But don't forget the happy little furry feet following your every move! Yep, it's THANKSGIVING! Many people share the family feast with their dog or cat in an offering of thanks and love. While this is an innocent and seemingly gracious and loving gesture, the truth is, it's more loving NOT TO SHARE YOUR HOLIDAY MEALS WITH YOUR PET. While it may seem that a little bit of turkey skin here and a little bit of stuffing there wouldn't hurt, we know how quickly the pounds can add up over the Holiday Season (for us). THE SAME RULES APPLY FOR YOUR PETS!

A diet high in fat and being overweight is very unhealthy. Pancreatitis is just one of the problems that occur with a high fat and unhealthy diet. If your pet is often one that gets table scraps or even a potato chip, extra caution should be taken as the possibility for an acute pancreatitis attack could already be high. However, this doesn't make it OK for you to indulge him or her if it's "just this once" or "just for the holidays." Things can turn bad quickly and with the hustle and bustle of the holidays, you may not be as alert to the first symptoms. Feel free to ask the Veterinarian for more information about pancreatitis.

One way to prevent **over eating** is to make sure your pet has no access to food left on counters or tables when no one is around. After you're done cleaning up the kitchen, make sure you take the garbage out and dispose of it in a secure place where no pets can get into it. Even the best behaved and well trained pets may be too tempted with turkey bones, the string that ties the turkey legs together, or that little bit of Mom's stuffing in the trash.

Other Holiday Food Dangers: Cooked turkey, duck, geese, and other **bird bones** are dangerous to your pet. They are hollow and can break or splinter easily. Also, because they are so easy break, dogs and cats usually won't chew them thoroughly. This results in sharp pieces that can choke the pet or block or tear their intestines. A pet that has a bone fragment lodged in its intestines may not show symptoms for days. When they do occur, the symptoms include: loss of appetite, depression, vomiting, or diarrhea. Sometimes the bone will pass by itself; other times it may need to be surgically removed.

Another danger to dogs and cats is **chocolate**. It contains a compound called theobromine. It is highest in dark chocolate but even milk chocolate contains small amounts. Chocolate can be fatal to your dog!!

***When decorating your home for the holidays take time to think about your pets:

Dangerous Plants

Poinsettias & Mistletoe- can be deadly when eaten so make sure they are out of reach.

Christmas trees- pets, particularly cats, get interested in trees and can knock them down. Make sure your tree is well secured. If you are using a live tree, DO NOT add chemical preservatives or Aspirin to the water. It could be toxic if your pet drinks it.

-If you receive any other plants as a gift and you're not sure if it could be dangerous, check online or ask your local garden store or veterinarian to find out its effect on your pet.

Holiday Decorations

-Beware of tinsel; it can get stuck in your pet's throat.

-Place harmful ornaments higher on the tree so pets can't reach. Make sure any lower ornaments can't be pulled off easily.

Angel hair (spun glass) – low toxicity; can cause irritation of the eyes, skin, and intestines.

Artificial snow- low toxicity; dry particles are inert; however, toxicity of inhalation can occur.

Always make sure you know the HOLIDAY HOURS of your Veterinarian and the information of emergency clinics so that you are PREPARED in case of an emergency. Hopefully this won't happen, but if you're prepared you can react quickly which may minimize the damage to your pet.

Happy Holidays from Dr. Newman and the Staff at Bar N Veterinary Clinic