

KALAMAZOO ANIMAL RESCUE

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KAR Friends

December 2010

Dear Reader,

Merry Christmas! While the holidays are a joyous time of year, the hustle and bustle of the season can be stressful on people as well as pets. When indulging in the festivities of the season, be mindful that many holiday plants, decorations and food items can be hazardous to dogs and cats so be sure to check out the safety tips in this issue .

From all of us at Kalamazoo Animal Rescue, may you, your family and beloved pets have a safe and happy holiday season.

Danielle Wallis
Marketing Coordinator

Lynn Bolhuis
KAR Friends Editor

P.S. Our special [Fall Edition](#) newsletter containing some great rescue stories was mailed the end of November. If you didn't receive a hardcopy in the mail, view it online.

HOLIDAY SAFETY FOR PETS

By Karren Jensen

The holiday season is a special time for people and the pets who share their lives, but there are some dangers posed by human traditions that can be harmful to animals. Eliminating these risks for your four-legged family members will keep the season happy.



Holiday Plants

Holiday plants and decorations can be especially tempting to pets and need to be chosen with care. Here are seven plants to be wary of this time of the year:

- **Poinsettias** and **mistletoe** are likely to cause gastric upsets and mouth irritation for both dogs and cats, but are not the powerful poisons that they were once believed to be. These plants should be displayed with caution and pets should not be allowed to chew on them.
- **Christmas cactus** (zygo cactus) and **English holly** will cause more serious gastric problems for dogs and cats, and are probably not a good risk for animals that are drawn to plants.
- Any member of the lily family is extremely toxic to cats and also dangerous to dogs. These plants include **amaryllis** and **Asiatic lilies** (Easter lilies and similar plants) and are not worth the risk.

OUR SPONSORS



UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit the [“Events” page on our website](#) for upcoming adoption (and other) events.



WELCOME NEW KAR VOLUNTEERS

Karren Jensen
Katharine Kiendl
Aaron Kirk
Bethanie Mniszewski

HOLIDAY SAFETY FOR PETS (continued)

- Pet dangers can also lurk with the beautiful centerpiece of any Christmas celebration: the **Christmas tree**. Fir tree oils are a mild toxin that can cause excess drooling and vomiting in both cats and dogs.

An important consideration for plant poisoning issues is the size and age of the pet. Puppies and kittens have smaller body mass than adults as well as insatiable curiosity. Young animals are at risk for serious illness or death if exposed to even a moderate plant toxin.

Keep this contact information handy in case of emergency:

- Your veterinarian’s phone number – they know your pet’s medical history best
- The number and address of the nearest emergency animal clinic
- ASPCA animal poison control center hotline: 888-426-4435 (they do charge a consultation fee)
- Poison control hotline: 800-222-1222 or www.aapcc.org

Holiday Decorations

Decking the halls and rooms of your home adds to the ambience of the season. Here are four things to keep in mind with respect to holiday decorations and pet safety:

- The shiny ornaments used to decorate the Christmas tree can become a hazard to your cat or dog if they are swallowed or broken. The best solution when displaying a tree is to restrict access for your pet and place only unbreakable ornaments on the lower branches where they can be reached by curious paws. The same precautions you would use for a toddler or baby should be used for pets to ensure their safety around the Christmas tree.
- If you have animals, avoid decorating with tinsel. This shiny decoration is a very enticing play thing to cats and kittens, but can cause intestinal problems if ingested.
- Christmas lights add a warm glow but electrical cords can burn or electrocute animals who like to chew. Be mindful of electrical safety and tape down cords to limit their accessibility by pets.
- Some animals like to play with wrapping paper, ribbons and bows. Be careful that your dog or cat does not ingest any of these items as they can be choking hazards.

Holiday Foods

The third area that pets can be at risk during the holidays comes from the special foods used for holiday celebrations. Here are several food items to make sure to keep away from your pet:

- Did you know that **grapes, raisins** or currants that may be used in fruitcake can cause acute kidney failure in your dog?
- Other human foods that are toxic to animals include: turkey bones and skin, onions, garlic, coffee, tea, walnuts and macadamia nuts, and yeast dough
- **Chocolate** poses a threat to both cats and dogs. The highest levels of toxicity exist in the darker chocolates.
- No amount of **alcohol** is safe for pets to ingest and this includes “sugar-alcohols” and artificial sweeteners such as xylitol.

PETS OF THE MONTH

See all of our adoptable [Cats](#), [Dogs](#) and [Kittens](#)!



[Polly](#)



[Tish](#)

ADOPTABLE PETS

See all of our adoptable [Cats](#), [Dogs](#) and [Kittens](#)!

HOLIDAY SAFETY FOR PETS (continued)

As a general rule, "people food" is not safe for pets because it may contain ingredients toxic to them. The best way to share holiday joy with your pet is to provide special treats created specifically for dogs or cats. The tasty morsel you are tempted to share when you're confronted by a pair of pleading eyes and a pathetic whimper might lead to serious illness for your furry friend. Be sure that you don't inadvertently share something unhealthy with your pet and ask guests not to give table scraps either. Another precaution is to secure the garbage so that it can't be "visited" by a four-footed dumpster diver.

Following these safety tips will help ensure a happy holiday season that we at KAR wish to you and your pets.

Additional Resources:

- [Toxic and Non-Toxic Plants](#)
- [ASPCA Poison Control Center](#)
- [Dangerous People Foods](#)
- [Holiday Myths Debunked](#)

ASK THE VET

By Bruce Withers, DVM
[Eighth Street Veterinary Care](#)



I have a five-year old male cat who vomits his food often. We have tried a sensitive stomach formula food but there has not been much improvement noted. How should I go about solving his problem? Derek

Derek, your cat is relatively young, but you have not stated how long this problem has been occurring. If it is an acquired or new problem then it is less likely to be a congenital anomaly. Therefore, I would like to answer as if this is a newer problem.

Since you have already tried a number of different foods, I think a more serious problem should be considered before returning to more conservative treatment or feeding options. A number of medical tests should be considered to rule out (or to diagnose) various conditions. A thorough physical examination should be followed by blood work to rule out any physiological problems with his organ systems, electrolytes, protein levels, thyroid disease, or infections. Vomiting is one of the most common symptoms of feline heartworm disease and should be considered for either indoor or outdoor cats. Imaging his stomach and intestines would be another logical step. Ultrasound and radiography (x-rays) could help recognize thickening or tumor conditions of the stomach, intestines, or pancreas. Foreign objects such as small toys, strings or other objects may be ingested by cats and may be present as irritants in the stomach or intestine for a long time without being completely obstructive. Intestinal parasites should be considered as a cause for vomiting. A fecal exam is warranted, as is presumptive treatment with a broad spectrum dewormer and tapeworm medication. Food allergies and food intolerances may warrant a special hypoallergenic diet or dietary elimination trial.

The diagnosis for chronic or repetitive vomiting is not always as easy as changing one item in the diet. Sometimes, it requires diligence in testing and medication or lengthy food trials to solve the problem. Your veterinarian should be able to discuss a plan with you to diagnose and help stop the vomiting and make your cat more comfortable.

KAR LINKS

- [Volunteer](#)
- Become a [foster family](#)
- [Senior Cat Companions](#)
- KAR [Website](#)



Make a [donation!](#)

CONTACT US

Kalamazoo Animal Rescue
 P.O. Box 3295
 Kalamazoo, MI 49003
 Phone: (269) 226-8570

Visit our [website](#)
[Questions or suggestions](#) for the newsletter?

FUNDRAISING SUCCESSES



KAR extends a special thank you to Lauryn for her generosity and thoughtfulness. She raised \$45.33 from her lemonade stand and donated it to Kalamazoo Animal Rescue to help animals.

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The November Dinner and Silent Auction was a rousing success! This year's event will net approximately \$15,000 to KAR. This money will be used to help cover veterinary care, food and other expenses for the animals are in our care.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND MANY THANKS

Kalamazoo Animal Rescue would not be able to accomplish all that we do without the support of volunteers, donors and the people in the community who assist us with our rescue efforts as well as by opening their hearts and homes to adopt a pet.

In the spirit of Christmas, KAR would like to recognize and give thanks to ...

- Our dedicated and hardworking volunteers
- The foster volunteers who care for our animals in their homes
- Individuals, groups and businesses who support the rescue through fundraising efforts, donations of food, pet supplies, items for our dinner and silent auction, and with monetary gifts
- The doctors and staff of area veterinary clinics who treat our animals and provide for their care and well being
- Kalamazoo County Animal Services & Enforcement
- *KAR Friends* sponsors and readers
- The many wonderful people and families who have adopted a pet from KAR.



About Us

Kalamazoo Animal Rescue is an all-volunteer, federally recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that was founded in 1991 and is funded entirely through private donations.

KAR is dedicated to providing refuge to homeless, stray and abandoned cats and dogs in Southwest Michigan.

Our volunteers give their time and energy to the efforts of rescuing animals and helping them to find permanent homes.