

## Spotlight

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## Holiday leftovers

### pose hazards for pets

**All that glitters  
can be toxic to animals**

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Beware of hazards in your home that could be potentially harmful to your pets.

There are many objects, foods, plants and chemicals that can cause damage to a pet's digestive system and intestines, and many of them are in abundance in homes in the winter months following the holidays, according to the Schenectady County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

"I think it's important to be on the lookout and keep your pet away from Christmas trees and decorations," said Valerie Brozzetti of the SPCA.

The SPCA also warns it might seem funny to catch Piff with a mouthful of leftover Christmas tree tinsel, but if ingested, it can cause serious problems with her digestive system. And while it may be tempting to toss Rover some leftover turkey or give him a bone, be careful: They're brittle and can easily splinter, causing lacerations to an animal's gums and intestines. Keep paws and wagging tails away from snow globes - they contain anti-freeze, and if they break and your pet licks up the anti-freeze, it can be toxic. If one does break, remove your pet from the room and clean the spot with water and floor cleaner to prevent a potential fatality.

Another danger for pets include popular holiday

plants, such as mistletoe, holly, poinsettia, lilies and the Christmas rose.

"Popular holiday plants are all poisonous to pets so keep them out of reach," said Matthew Tully, chief of the SPCA.

Even though the holidays are over, there is still plenty of residual cheer to go around. With all of the activity going on — friends and family visiting, holiday parties, etc., it's easy for pet owners to forget about all of the potential hazards for their pets that come along with decorations, food and activities.

"When you prepare for and celebrate the holidays you have to do so with your pet's safety in your mind," said Tully.

If there's a Christmas tree still in your home, beware of its many hidden dangers for pets. Make sure it is secured to the floor or the ceiling to prevent it from getting knocked. If it is a natural Christmas tree, make sure that you prevent your pet from drinking the tree's water. Chemicals found in the water contain preservatives that, according to the SPCA, can cause severe indigestion in pets. Also, sweep up fallen pine needles regularly. If eaten by your pet, they can puncture his or her intestines and gums.

Figuring out if a pet is sick or injured can sometimes be tricky, because, unlike a child, for example, they aren't able to communicate with us verbally so be prepared ahead of time.

"You have to know where there's a 24-hour vet," said Tully.