



Work & Family Matters

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Keep Your Pets Safe During the Holidays



What brings you and your family joy over the holidays could be deadly for your pet. Below is a list of holiday items and the symptoms they cause if they're ingested. As you're celebrating with your family this holiday season, be mindful of the items below and keep your pet out of harm's way.

CHOCOLATE -

Depending on the dose ingested, chocolate can cause vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, hyperactivity, increased thirst and urination, and an increased heart rate.

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Home for the Holidays

When you take your first child off to college, you think that you will never adjust to them being gone. Your house may seem empty and lonely, and you can't wait for the day when they come home again. You envision long talks about their new life and experiences, cozy family dinners, and a house filled with chatter and young people.

Although your child may come home for the long Labor Day and Thanksgiving weekends, for many of us the first time our college-age child comes home for any length of time is the long holiday break in December. And, instead of a happy-to-be-home child, we may instead be greeted by a cranky (from sleep deprivation), burned out (from studying for finals), laundry-bag bearing stranger.

The first shock to our system is the fact

that college students have a different lifestyle than they did before leaving for college. They often sleep until noon or later, and leave the house at 10:00 p.m. for an evening out. Since college kids are used to living without a curfew, they may have a hard time readjusting to any house rules that a parent wants to impose. A simple question such as, "Where are you going?" may be greeted with the response, "When I'm at school, you don't know where I am or what I'm doing." So, clearly, their first long homecoming will be a time of adjustment for you and for them.

By the time they arrive home for the holiday break, you have adjusted to your new, quiet home, and may find it disruptive when your child comes in at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, bangs the refrigerator door and microwave as they make a bedtime snack, and "clomp" through the house on their way to bed.

Students home for holiday break arrive with mixed feelings—many enjoy returning to the warmth and security of home, and can't wait for mom's home-cooked meals, others are fiercely protective of the newfound independence they have acquired while away at school. So, how do we make this holiday break a memorable experience for all?

Here are a few tips for parents:

- Expect your daily routine to be altered.



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LILIES - Toxic lilies can cause kidney failure in cats.

GUM - Candies or gum containing the sweetener xylitol can cause a drop in blood sugar, resulting in depression, loss of coordination, and seizures.

MISTLETOE - Mistletoe and holly berries can cause gastrointestinal upset (vomiting, nausea, diarrhea), cardiovascular problems, and lethargy.

LEFTOVERS - Bones can splinter and cause blockages. Greasy, spicy, and fatty foods can cause an upset stomach.

POINSETTIAS - Considered very low in toxicity, poinsettias might cause mild vomiting or nausea.

ALCOHOL - Alcohol can cause a pet to go into a coma, possibly resulting in death from respiratory failure.

CHRISTMAS TREE WATER - Christmas tree water may contain fertilizers that can upset a pet's stomach. Stagnant water can also be a breeding ground for bacteria.

Source: ASPCA

Now that winter has arrived and the first snowflakes have fallen, we thought it would be a good time to remind everyone about helping out their elderly neighbors. Exposure to cold and the elements can be extremely risky for the elderly. If you have an elderly neighbor—particularly one who may not have relatives nearby—please take the time to check in on them as the weather turns cold and snowy.

Even if they have a snowblower, it may still be difficult for them to clear their driveways and sidewalks. Being out in the cold can be dangerous for an older person, even one who is dressed warmly. In many communities, it is difficult to find someone to hire to clear driveways and sidewalks after a snowfall. Since falls are particularly dangerous for the elderly, it is very important that their sidewalks and driveways are kept clear and free of snow and ice. So, when you are doing your own driveway and sidewalks, be a “good” neighbor and go over and do theirs as well.

In the event of a large snow or ice storm, please take the time to check on your elderly neighbor. Make sure that their home is heated properly, and that they have enough groceries and medications on hand to tide them over until the roads are cleared and driving is safer. If you live in an area that has frequent power outages, remember to check on your neighbor if the power goes out for a long period of time. As we said earlier, exposure to the cold can be deadly for an elderly person. So make sure they have everything they need to keep warm until the power goes back on.

It is extremely important that an elderly person have an emergency supply kit prepared in case of a power outage. The kit should contain a flashlight and batteries, warm blankets, a non-electric can opener, first aid kit, matches or lighters, enough medications for several days, and foods that require no cooking or refrigeration, such as bread, crackers, cereal, canned foods, and dried fruits. There should also be a supply of water stored in clean containers or purchased bottled water (at least 5 gallons per person) on hand. When you are preparing your own emergency kit, be sure to check with them to see if you can help them prepare one for their home.

If your elderly neighbor still drives, you may want to check that they have enough windshield-wiper fluid on hand to keep their windows clear while they drive. Make sure that they have an emergency kit for their car which contains blankets, water, booster cables, flashlight and batteries, and some non-perishable food such as crackers, granola bars, etc.

It is always fulfilling to be a “good” neighbor. But, particularly if you have an elderly neighbor, make sure you keep them in mind when the weather gets bad. Remember to check on your neighbor to see if they need any type of assistance, or just to hear a friendly voice asking if everything is all right. Think of the warm feelings that you will experience if you take the time to look out for your neighbor as well as yourself.

- Within reason, allow your child to have a “vacation” from school—bend the rules a bit to accommodate sleeping in, cooking special meals, and encouraging visits from old friends from high school.
- While it is fair to ask about his or her whereabouts and schedule, do so with an eye toward their new independence.
- Instead of demanding time together with your child, *ask* them to do something special with you—a shopping trip, going out for breakfast or the movies.
- Most children fondly remember family traditions, so be sure to follow as many as you are able.
- Remember to be thankful that your child looks forward to coming home to you.



Family Resource & Referral Program

Explore a wide variety of resources that can help you manage your work and personal responsibilities.

UAW-represented Chrysler workers are eligible to take advantage of this work/life program with topics ranging from **CHILD CARE & COLLEGE PREPARATION** to **RETIREMENT & ELDER CARE**.

Developmental stages and ages are also part of this free service. Plus, benefit from **CONVIENENCE & CONCIERGE** services, where we will locate services in your area, including, electricians, plumbers, landscapers, dining and night life -- we'll even help find those hard-to-find gifts for the holidays!

RELOCATION information is also available for families on the move.

All topics in the *Family Matters* newsletters are covered in this program.

Professional Care Consultants are available 24/7 either via telephone or web. Take advantage of this free service for all of your family needs!

Call Today!

1.877.682.2472

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