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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Some Easter and Passover Treats and Decorations Can Be Dangerous to Pet Health** *CVMA urges you to protect your beloved furry family members during the upcoming holidays*

With the Easter and Passover holidays approaching mid-month, many families are planning to enjoy special holiday traditions that highlight various foods and materials that can be hazardous to pet health. The Chicago Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) wants pet owners to be aware of potential dangers and take steps to keep their pets safe at home.

Common holiday items to keep far away from pets include:

- Easter Lily plant – petals, leaves, stem, and pollen are poisonous to cats and may cause acute kidney failure. Early signs of lily toxicity include lethargy, drooling, vomiting or loss of appetite within 12 hours after ingestion.
- Chocolate – both caffeine and the compound methyl xanthine found in chocolate are harmful to dogs. The highest amounts are in dark chocolate, baker’s chocolate, cocoa powder and may cause digestive distress, an abnormal heart rhythm and seizures and potentially be fatal.
- Xylitol – found in sugar-free candies and baked goods, may cause seizures and liver failure in dogs and ferrets.
- Grapes/raisins – found in many baked goods, may cause kidney failure in dogs.
- Bones from ham, lamb, chicken, or steak can be dangerous and present a choking hazard for pets, leading to intestinal blockage or gastrointestinal upset.
- Plastic Easter grass – this can entangle the tongue or stomach of your pet, resulting in a possible obstruction or choking hazard.

According to Dr. Kirsten Plomin, CVMA Board President, “If you suspect that your pet has ingested any of these items, you’re uncertain about an issue that your pet is experiencing, or your pet is in obvious distress, an immediate call to your veterinarian is your best course of action. While not all situations relating to ingestion of a particular food or object will be dangerous to your pet, many are potentially very serious or life threatening.”

Lastly, Easter is a time when people like to surprise children with a new pet such as a bunny, puppy, or kitten. Unfortunately, many unwanted bunnies are brought to shelters shortly after Easter. According to Ray McGury, CVMA Executive Director, “Pet ownership requires forethought and commitment, and it doesn’t make a good choice of gift. If your family is considering adopting a pet, it’s best to do so after much careful consideration and confirmation that everyone is on board with adding a new family member. You want to make sure you can be there for your new best friend for life.”

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**About the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association:** Chicago Veterinary Medical Association is a professional network with a longstanding tradition that connects more than 1,000 veterinarians with comprehensive resources that support their continued development as champions of animal health while encouraging the fostering of the human-animal bond.

**About the Chicago Veterinary Medical Foundation:** The CVMF, established in 2009, is a 501<sup>(c)</sup>(3) charity that works with Chicagoland veterinarians to provide financial assistance to pet families in need by helping with the costs of their pet’s urgent, unexpected medical and surgical bills. The Foundation’s work plays a vital role in strengthening the human-animal bond by helping sick and suffering pets get well again.