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Contact:

Ray McGury, Executive Director, Chicago Veterinary Medical Association, 630-461-0095, rmcgury@chicagovma.org

Protect Your Pet's Health While Enjoying Easter and Passover Celebrations

CVMA reminds pet owners that holiday decorations, foods can be harmful

With the Easter and Passover holidays in early April, families are set to enjoy special annual holiday traditions that incorporate foods and materials that can be dangerous to pets. The Chicago Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) reminds families to be wary of potential dangers and take steps to keep their pets safe and healthy while celebrating the holidays.

Common springtime 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.
- **Meat 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. Marina Jaworsky, CVMA Board President, "If you suspect that your pet has ingested any of these items, you're uncertain about the source of an issue that your pet is experiencing, or your pet is in obvious distress, don't hesitate; an immediate call to your veterinarian or nearest emergency clinic is your best course of

action. It's important to note that 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. Ray McGury, CVMA Executive Director issues this reminder: "It's never a good idea to give an animal as a gift. Pet ownership requires preparation and commitment. If your family is considering adopting a pet, it's best to do so after much careful consideration and assurance that everyone in the family is on board with the decision. All animals deserve to have owners that are invested in their care long-term."

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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[©]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.