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Enjoy a Happy Thanksgiving While Keeping Pets' Safety in Mind *CVMA reminds pet owners to consider pets' safety during holiday gatherings*

Thanksgiving is a time for family, food, and celebration, but it also comes with some pet-specific safety concerns. Keeping your furry friends safe during this holiday involves being aware of common hazards associated with the food, decorations, and general festivities. The Chicago Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) encourages families to be mindful of ways that beloved pets can safely be a part of Thanksgiving Day celebrations.

Here are some key aspects for pet owners to be aware of when planning for holiday gatherings:

1. Avoid Dangerous Foods

Many Thanksgiving foods are toxic or harmful to pets, so it's best to keep them out of reach:

Turkey skin and bones: While lean turkey meat is generally safe in moderation, cooked bones can splinter and cause choking or digestive issues. Also avoid;

- Ham, bacon and other sodium-rich meats
- Garlic and onions
- Grapes and raisins
- Chocolate, nuts, and artificial sweeteners (Xylitol) and products containing them

2. Create a Safe Space for Your Pet

Holiday gatherings can get noisy, and some pets might get stressed with all the commotion. Provide your pet with a quiet, safe space where they can retreat if they feel overwhelmed. Consider giving them a cozy bed or crate away from the hustle and bustle of the celebration.

3. Keep Decorations Pet-Safe

If you decorate for Thanksgiving, make sure to avoid hazardous items:

- **Candles:** Pets might knock over candles, so consider using flameless ones to create a warm atmosphere without the risk.
- **Table centerpieces:** Ensure that decorations are out of your pet's reach, as many can be toxic (floral centerpieces containing Autumn Crocus, Chrysanthemum, or acorns from oak trees) or a choking hazard.

4. Have a Plan for Emergency Situations

Even with the best precautions, accidents can happen. Keep the 24-hour ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center hotline (888-426-4435) and your veterinarian's phone number in a prominent place in the event of an emergency.

5. Travel Safety

If you're traveling with your pet for Thanksgiving, make sure they're securely fastened in the car using a pet seat belt, carrier, or travel crate. Bring along their favorite toy or blanket to keep them as comfy as possible. If you're traveling by plane, bring a copy of your pet's medical records and be sure their ID tags are secure and visible.

“By being proactive and mindful of potential hazards, you can help ensure that your pets remain safe and comfortable during your Thanksgiving celebrations.” said Dr. Marina Jaworsky, CVMA Board President. “Keep an eye on them, provide a calm space if needed, and always err on the side of caution when it comes to food and safety. If you have questions about how best to include pets in your celebrations, reach out to your veterinary provider; they are there to assist you.”

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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^(c)(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.