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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CVMA Encourages Pet-Safe Practices During Holiday Celebrations** *Enjoy traditions with family and friends while remaining vigilant for pet safety*

The holiday season is officially underway with decorating and party planning taking place in many homes.

Enjoying annual holiday traditions with family and friends while keeping your pets safe requires a balance of celebration and vigilance. The Chicago Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) reminds pet owners of proactive tips for celebrating with your loved ones, while ensuring your pets are protected and comfortable:

#### **1. Safe Holiday Decorations**

- **Pet-friendly décor:** When decorating your home for the holidays, be mindful of where you place certain decorations. Ornaments, tinsel, and garlands can be irresistible to pets, but they can also pose choking or digestive risks. Use shatterproof ornaments and keep decorations out of reach.
- **Candles and lights:** Never leave candles unattended, especially if your pets are curious. Use flameless candles or battery-operated lights to reduce fire hazards. For string lights, check that wires are secure and not frayed to avoid chewing accidents.

#### **2. Holiday Foods and Treats**

- **Keep dangerous foods away:** Many holiday foods, such as chocolate, nuts, alcohol, grapes, and onions, can be toxic to pets. Be sure to keep these foods far from your pets' reach and remind guests to avoid sharing their food with them. If your pet ingests something they shouldn't, have the 24-hour ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (888-426-4435) readily available as well as your veterinarian's phone number and 24/7 emergency vet clinic.
- **Secure trash:** Pets may be tempted to rummage through trash, where they might find leftovers, bones, or wrappers that can harm them. Use a trash can with a secure lid and keep it out of reach.

### 3. Protect from Hazards

- **Christmas tree water:** If you have a live tree, the water in the stand may contain harmful chemicals or preservatives. Prevent pets from drinking this water by covering the base or using a pet-proof barrier.
- **Secure the tree:** Ensure your Christmas tree is securely anchored to prevent it from tipping over if your pet tries to explore or climb it.

### 4. Hosting Holiday Gatherings

- **Set boundaries for pets:** With many guests around, pets can get overwhelmed or stressed. Create a quiet, pet-friendly space where they can retreat if they need a break. Provide them with their favorite bed, toys, and fresh water to help them relax.
- **Avoid alcohol exposure:** Alcoholic beverages can be harmful to pets. Keep drinks out of their reach, and if you're hosting, remind guests not to share drinks or food with pets.

“By incorporating these pet safety tips, you can enjoy your favorite holiday traditions while ensuring your pets are comfortable, healthy, and safe.” said Dr. Marina Jaworsky, CVMA Board President. “Thoughtful planning and attention to your pet’s needs will allow you to celebrate and make the season bright for everyone—both the two-legged and four-legged members of your family.”

Finally, CVMA recommends ensuring that your pet’s immunizations are up-to-date and carrying a copy of those records with you when traveling. If you’re entertaining at home, make sure that ID collars are in place if a pet gets loose outdoors. Pets and owners typically are reunited more quickly if collars are being worn and the owner’s contact information is current.

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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.