

Easter Pet Safety Tips

Like most pet owners, you probably know by now that chocolate is toxic to dogs. Since Easter is this month, be sure to remind everyone in your family of the danger and ask them to take extra precautions to keep Easter candy out of your dog's reach. Don't allow small children to have chocolate candy when the dog is nearby. Remind guests not to share Easter goodies with your friendly little pup, no matter how cute she looks when she begs.

Chocolate is not the only harmful thing a dog can find in an Easter basket. Though it's not as dangerous as chocolate bunnies, other candy, especially if eaten in large amounts, can also cause an upset stomach, vomiting and diarrhea.

Plastic Easter grass cannot be digested and it can cause intestinal damage. This is a big attraction with cats, but it can cause major problems for playful dogs too. Keep baskets with Easter grass out of reach to all your precious pets.

If you're having a backyard Easter egg hunt, use plastic eggs instead of hard boiled eggs to prevent another potential illness. Unfound hard-boiled eggs will spoil when left lying in the grass. Your dog will find them later!

Some popular plants—including Easter lilies—are highly toxic to pets and can easily prove fatal if eaten. Make sure that your home and yard are free of these dangerous plants.

A word of caution about another danger of poisoning from Theobromine, the ingredient in chocolate that is toxic to dogs, does not end with the chocolate candy or the baking chocolate inside your home. Pet owners should never use cocoa bean mulch in their flower beds or as garden fertilizer. "Cocoa Mulch", made from cocoa bean shells, contains potentially toxic quantities of Theobromine. Even if your dog has absolutely no interest in other types of garden mulch, cocoa mulch smells like chocolate and that smell attracts dogs.

Bunnies, chicks, ducks and other pets are adorable—but resist the urge to buy or adopt a pet on impulse. "People often forget that these cute little animals grow up into adult animals who require a commitment to provide daily care for the rest of their lives," says Stephanie Shain, outreach director for companion animals at The HSUS. "Bringing any animal, including small animals like rabbits and chicks, into your home places demands on your time and financial resources and should be done only after carefully assessing your family's ability to meet the animal's needs."

Now that Spring is here...

Warmer weather means that you and your dog will be spending more time outside. Make sure your dog is wearing a license. Check his ID tag to make sure your phone number hasn't worn off and the tag is still readable. Are vaccinations up-to-date? Spending more time outdoors means possible contact with other dogs who might not be vaccinated.

