

Keeping Your Pet Safe on Halloween

I can hardly believe it's that time of year again - brisk, cool air, the pungent scent of autumn, and leaves falling from wildly colored foliage. Labor Day is a mere memory, and Halloween is upon us.

Halloween is a fun time for children as well as adults. However, it can be a scary and stressful time for your pets. There are many Halloween safety hazards related to this October holiday of which you may not be aware. Here are some suggestions that will help keep your pets safe.

- * Keep your pets indoors on Halloween night – especially black cats. Animals are at risk of being victims of holiday gags and pranks and can be treated cruelly. Also a pet that's outside with trick-or-treaters may get spooked or stressed by the strange costumes, music, noises and voices of costumed people in the streets.

- * Walk your dog before any trick-or-treaters begin their visits.

- * When walking your dog, keep a firm grip on the leash and make sure he has an up-to-date I.D. tag.

- * Don't leave your dog in the backyard or in a car. He may be frightened disoriented, agitated, or even stolen.

- * Keep your pet confined and away from the door while you are welcoming trick-or-treaters. Keep him in a room that is quiet, comfortable and far away from the holiday festivities.

- * Keep Halloween candy out of your pet's reach. Candy, especially chocolate, can be harmful, even fatal to pets. Pets who consume chocolate can experience vomiting, diarrhea, irregular heartbeat, muscle tremors, and seizures. Candies, cookies and cakes and chewing gum containing the artificial sweetener, xylitol, are especially poisonous to your pet. Candy wrappers, as well as candies and goodies wrapped in aluminum foil or cellophane can cause choking or intestinal obstruction.

* Make sure pets can't reach candles, jack-o-lanterns, decorations, or ornaments. Candles and jack-o-lanterns can easily be fire hazards. Wires and chords for decorations can be harmful if chewed or ingested,

* Putting your pet in a Halloween costume can annoy him, and can pose safety and health hazards. If you insist on dressing him up, make sure that his costume is flame retardant and that he can breathe, hear, see and walk without impediment to his range of motion or movement.

Make your Halloween even more enjoyable knowing that your loving animal companion is safe and sound. And, at this time of trick-or-treating, you may wish to give your pet a special treat of his own – a healthy dog or kitty goodie made especially for him!

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