

10 TIPS FOR A PET-FRIENDLY HALLOWEEN

Pet safety advice from the Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center

CHICAGO, ILL., October. 24, 2013... Halloween can be a dangerous time for pets, caution doctors at the **Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center** (<http://www.ChicagoPetEmergency.com>).

Each year, the emergency room veterinarians at **Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center** treat pets for Halloween-related injuries. Candy, decorations, and crowds of strangers can all be hazardous to your pet's health.

Here are some tips from the **Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center** to help keep your pets safe this Halloween:

1. Keep Pets Inside on Halloween

Crowds of costumed trick-or-treaters can spook even the most mild-mannered pets. Keep pets inside when costumed children are out and about. Use a leash if you take your dog for a walk during trick-or-treating hours, and be prepared for unexpected barking or bolting. Animals don't understand the costumes and can easily be frightened or think the child is a danger to you or them. The result can be that the dog will unexpectedly break away from you or bite the child. Cats should always be kept inside.

2. Don't let Pets Escape When Trick-Or-Treaters Arrive

If trick-or-treaters visit your home, the door is going to open and shut a lot more than usual. Pets may be curious, become frightened, or think they need to protect their home from danger. It's best to keep pets away from the door area or on a leash when opening the door for trick-or-treaters. Consider securing them in another part of the house.

3. Keep Chocolate, Gum and Other Halloween Treats Out of Reach

Chocolate, grapes, raisins and sugar-free gum are all poisonous to pets. Cats are less likely to be interested in sweet treats than dogs, but both can be affected. Even non-poisonous treats can cause an upset stomach, and wrappers can become lodged in a pet's digestive tract and require surgery to remove. If you suspect your pet has eaten any kind of Halloween candy or treats, immediately contact your veterinarian, a poison control center or **Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center**.

4. Keep Dogs Away from Corncobs and Outdoor Decorations

Dogs are not discriminating eaters! If you take your dog out for a walk around Halloween, be wary of lawn decorations. Many involve squash and other autumn vegetables that dogs are all too happy to chew on. Corncobs are particularly dangerous: dogs love to eat them and broken chunks can become lodged in their throats or digestive tracts, requiring surgery to remove.

5. Be Careful with Pet Costumes

Pet costumes can be dangerous. Be certain that costumes allow animals to move freely. Avoid anything with elastic straps that go under the chin or around the neck. If your pet can't make noise (meowing, barking, etc.), it may be because the costume is interfering with your pet's ability to breathe. Never leave any animal unattended in a costume! If you plan on having your pet wear a costume, consider helping it get accustomed to the costume by putting it on them for a few minutes at a time over the course of several days.

6. Keep Cats Away from Loose Strings and Ribbons

Streamers, ribbons and strings can all cause choking or digestive problems for cats. Be especially careful of small ribbons from decorations or loose strings from the hems of costumes. Cats can easily pull a string or ribbon off an unattended costume. These ribbons and strings can get caught in a cat's intestines or wrap around the bottom of their tongues, requiring surgery to remove. They can even lead to death.

7. Keep Your Pet Identification Updated

Halloween is a good time of year to double-check your pet's identification. All pets should wear collar tags and have microchips, even indoor animals. Tags and microchips allow rescuers to quickly identify lost pets and locate their owners. If your pet is not microchipped, a veterinarian can insert a microchip quickly and easily. Keep your contact information current and up-to-date with the microchip company.

8. Beware of Candles

Curious pets love anything that flickers and candles are no exception. Cats and dogs can burn their hair if they get too close to a candle, or knock it over and start a fire. If you have pets, we recommend that you use electric candles.

9. Glow Sticks and Lights Are Dangerous to Pets

Be sure to keep glow sticks and other chemical lights out of the reach of pets. Plastic parts and chemicals can cause harm to pets that chew on them. Although most pets will just suffer from stomach upset, some can become seriously ill from the chemicals or require surgery if parts become lodged in their intestines.

10. Have Key Phone Numbers Handy

Hopefully, you and your pet will enjoy an uneventful Halloween. However, it's best to be prepared in the event of a problem. If your pet ingests anything unsafe or is injured this Halloween, please seek immediate medical attention. Be certain to have key phone numbers handy including:

- Your Veterinarian
- ASPCA Animal Poison Control 888-426-4435
- **Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center 773-281-7110**

About the Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center

Chicago's oldest and largest pet emergency facility, the Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center provides advanced emergency, critical and specialty care for cats and dogs. Each year the center treats more than 11,000 cats and dogs in its emergency room and thousands more are cared for by veterinary specialists. Staffed by highly-trained specialists and equipped with the latest technology, Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center is always open – 24 hours, every day of the year.

In addition to emergency veterinarians and staff, Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center offers board-certified veterinarians who specialize in cardiology, dentistry, dermatology, diagnostic imaging, internal medicine, neurology, oncology, ophthalmology and surgery. This state-of-the art facility includes ultrasound and MRI equipment, specialized surgical suites, a blood bank, specialized oxygen cages, heart

monitors and more. Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center has been providing emergency care for cats and dogs since 1978.

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