

HAVE A HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Happy Thanksgiving to All - two and four legged, finned and feathered and slitherers too-

At this time of year our thoughts turn to family and friend gatherings and lots of good food to eat and drinks to be imbibed and conversations to be had. We put behind us any differences we may have (at least we hope so) and just connect with and show love for those we care about, including our precious pets.

This is an especially good time to focus on our pets and make plans for them before the actual gatherings begin. If you are going away please plan for where your pets will be or who will take care of them. Every year we hear about pets escaping while under the care of someone other than their family. Before leaving your pet behind get them microchipped so they can be quickly identified and gotten back to family. All vet clinics and shelters have scanners and can quickly locate who the pet belongs to. It is also a good idea to have a collar with a tag from the local pet store with the pet's name and phone #. Even if your pet is microchipped, other id is also helpful. Sometimes someone finds your pet during the time clinics and shelters are closed. With just a simple name tag the finder can easily call the pet's family. I adore my pets and would be losing my mind if I could not find my pet. Be sure to leave, with your pet sitter or kennel, your name and your phone number so you can be located. Be sure your voicemail box is not full. I cannot tell you how many times someone calls with a desperate message to call them right away. When you call no one answers and the voicemail box is not set up or it is full. So frustrating. Be sure to pack everything your pet needs if you take it some place. Extra food is good, in case you get held up on your trip because of illness or inclement weather.

Let's look at it the other way - if you stay home and have a house full of company. Your pet does not need human food from the celebration. Rich and fatty food can cause digestive problems for your pet and in a worst case scenario can bring on pancreatitis, which is painful, will make your pet sick and and can even be dangerous.

Be very careful your dog does not eat macadamia nuts, cooked chicken/turkey bones, leeks, onions and garlic, dairy products (most dogs are lactose intolerant), bacon, raw dough, avocados, corn on the cob, chocolate, grapes and raisins. Admittedly cats are pickier and wouldn't eat a lot of the above foods even if they could. However, those foods, along with coffee, citrus fruits, coconuts are not good for your kitty.

In addition, some plants are very toxic to pets, i.e. poinsettias, lilies, holly berries, mistletoe, Christmas roses and Amaryllis.

Lillies are the most toxic. These plants can cause serious illness up to and including death. If you have these plants around you can spray them with bitter apple (can be purchased at a pet food store). This will hopefully keep your pet from trying to eat these plants.

Depending on the sociability of your pet and the number of guests you have and the ages of the guests, you can decide how much your pet and guests should interact. Some pets are extremely outgoing and love having others around. Some pets are far more reserved and may not enjoy all the commotion. For the reserved pets, it may be a good idea to put your pet in a bedroom where it is peaceful and quiet. Be sure you leave water and maybe food and a litter box if it is a cat and if it is a dog take it for a walk first. And make sure there is a nice bed for the pet to lie on and maybe some toys and soothing music or TV (turned down low).

Thanksgiving Day isn't the best day to put your dog, who does not live with young children, in the situation of being with young children. Worst case scenario is that the young child runs to the dog, throws their arms around the dog and gets bitten (in the face). The child is injured, the parents are furious, and you now feel you need to get "rid" of your dog. Yes this happens; too much. It is so unfair to the dog and the child. Be safe, rather than sorry.

I once had a big, extremely loving/lovable dog and also quite exuberant in expressing himself. I would never have let him be around an older person who might be a bit unstable and easily knocked over. Again, be safe, not sorry.

Keep your beloved pet's safe and enjoy your friends/family and have a Happy Thanksgiving!