

Holiday Safety Guide

Tips to Keep Your Pets Safe and Out Of the ER



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Holidays Can Be Scary for Your Pets



Help your pets enjoy the holidays safely by keeping them away from potential problems on these special days.

Holidays – as fun and happy as they can be – they can quickly turn into a nightmare for your animal companions and you. Here are the things to consider to make the holidays a success.

Plan ahead and be ready for the festivities!

TIP #1 - Important phone numbers

- Your veterinarian's clinic phone number.
- 24/7 emergency veterinary clinic (if different).
- ASPCA Poison Control Hotline: 1-888-426-4435 (a fee may apply)
- **Quick action can save lives.**

TIP #2 - Contain Escape Artists

- Microchips (make sure they're registered!)
- Collar with ID tags
- Lock 'em up if needed
- Keep leash on them
- Tape signs to doors leading to the outside and make it hard for people to open these doors, so they have to read the sign and pay attention
- Use GPS collar (not something I usually recommend due to EMF exposure)
- Never let your guard down (even with your generally mellow animals)
- Exercise – plenty of it to make them tired
- Keep your anxious cats and dogs away from guests



Tip #3 - Visitors and Parties

- Set your pets up for success
- Provide safe and quiet place for your pets to retreat away from guests
- Put nervous animals in another room or a crate and talk to your veterinarian about possible solutions
- Keep exotic pets safely away from the hubbub of the holidays
- Alert your guests of your animals' bad habits that could endanger them (foods sensitive to, escape artists, biting, aversion to kids, etc.)
- Guests with pets? Do what is best for yours and decline furry visitors if it's not in your pets' best interest. Your home is their home.



Tip #4 - Food

- Keep food out of reach
- Clear table and counters right away when done
- Even small amounts of turkey and turkey skin can cause life-threatening digestive issues and pancreatitis
- **WHEN IN DOUBT, GET IT OUT (ASAP)!** Don't wait if you think your animal ate something it shouldn't have. Once it is absorbed into the system it can't be removed.
- Cooked bones/carcasses, meat ties and wraps are particularly hazardous
- Secure trash
- Provide safe and limited amounts of treats to your guests to give your animals
- Lock them into another room while food is present if needed
- Train them to wear a muzzle if they can't be supervised closely and you know they'll invariably steal something



If you want to share some food with your pets, here's a list to keep them safe.

UNSAFE

Turkey bone, brine & skin
Gravy & stuffing
Xylitol (gum, candy, etc.)
Onions
Grapes/rasins
Chocolate
Macademia Nuts
Alcohol
Coffee



SAFE

Turkey
Pure pumpkin
Plain yams & sweet potatoes
Plain carrots
Plain green beans
Plain potatoes
Plain cranberries
Low-carb is best

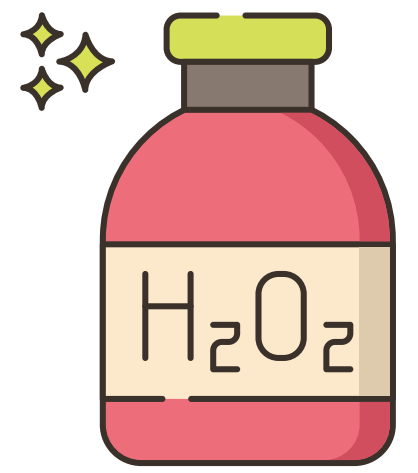


Food does NOT equal love!

Just because they are master beggars, it doesn't mean you should give in.



INDUCING VOMITING



When?

- It depends on what they ate
- If antifreeze has been ingested within the past 2 hours
- After speaking with your vet and he/she tells you to induce vomiting

When NOT?

- Your animal is already throwing up
- If your pet is unconscious or weak they may aspirate their vomit
- After 2 hours of ingesting a toxin, it will no longer be in the stomach but will have passed into the small intestine. From there it will have to get out the other end. Vomiting will not help.
- Caustic substances cause burning going down and coming back up and it is better not to allow it to come back up (bleach, drain cleaner, etc.)

How?

- **DOGS ONLY (Doesn't work for cats!)**
- Use 3% Hydrogen Peroxide (from pharmacy)
- Dosage: 5 ml (1 teaspoon) for every 10 lbs of body weight (50 lbs dog gets 5 teaspoons)
- Mix with vanilla ice cream or honey to make it edible. Alternately you can also syringe it into their mouth.

Get the animal to move around while the hydrogen peroxide irritates the GI tract to induce vomiting. It takes about 15 minutes. If nothing happens after 15 minutes repeat by giving a 2nd dose. If nothing happens still after another 15 minutes, call your vet immediately, because your pet will need stronger drugs. Don't give a 3rd dose!



Tip #5 - When You Leave the House

- Unplug decorations
- Take out and secure the trash (*wild animals can get sick too!*)

Christmas Hazards

Christmas trees – can tip over
Holiday plants – Christmas rose, Holly, Lilies, Mistletoe, Poinsettia, Daffodils, Christmas cactus, pine and cedar, etc. are all toxic to dogs and cats

Ribbons – it may look adorable, but placing a ribbon around your pet's neck may cause them to choke. It can also cause blockage and /or trauma to the gastrointestinal tract if swallowed

Bubbling lights – older forms of attractive decoration may contain methylene chloride which is highly toxic

Electric lights – can cause burns when pet chews the cords.
Fire Salts – contain toxic chemicals

Angel hair (spun glass) – can be irritating to eyes and skin, and could cause intestinal obstruction if eaten in large amounts

Christmas tree water – stagnant tree water of water containing preservatives could result in stomach upset if ingested

Decoration hooks – can cause blockage or trauma to the gastrointestinal tract

Styrofoam – can cause choke

Ornaments – can look like toys, but they can cause serious injury, especially if your pets break or swallow them

Potpourris and candles



Tip #6 - Holiday Travel

- Interstate and international travel requires pets to have a health certificate from your veterinarian. Plan ahead.
- Properly restraint your pets in the car (secure harness or a carrier).
- Air travel can be risky. Please talk to your veterinarian first to advise you on your pet's ability to travel.
- Pet/house sitters and boarding is available to your pets. Prepare their immune system for stress ahead to maximize their health.
- Plan any required vaccines ahead of time (at least 2-4 weeks) and ask boarding place to let you sign a waiver for useless kennel cough vaccines for example. They may also accept titer test results in place of vaccines.
- Keep their diet and supplements as close to what they usually get or transition to what they will eat while boarded ahead of time.
- Make sure the people watching your animals can take of their medical needs.
- Provide the people watching over your pets with emergency contact information as well as your veterinarian's phone number.





New Year's Hazards

Balloons and Confetti – these fun New Year's party decorations can cause your pet to choke or obstruct their intestines if ingested.

Loud noises – New Year's is typically a noisy holiday. Unfortunately, loud noises frighten pets and can cause them to run off. Keep your pets in a separate room, away from noisemakers, music and other loud sounds that may startle them. Stay home with your pet if they're scared.



DON'T WAIT! Start desensitising and counter conditioning at the first signs of noise phobia. Best done when they're still puppies or kittens.

Talk to your vet ahead of time if they need support.

Tip #7 - Take Action NOW!

Whether your pet only has a little bit of anxiety or she/he has full blown panic attacks – you can do something right now.

A recent online questionnaire [survey](#) pooled answers from 1,225 respondents on what they felt was most effective to treat firework fears in dogs.

See for yourself what worked best in the training and treating department.

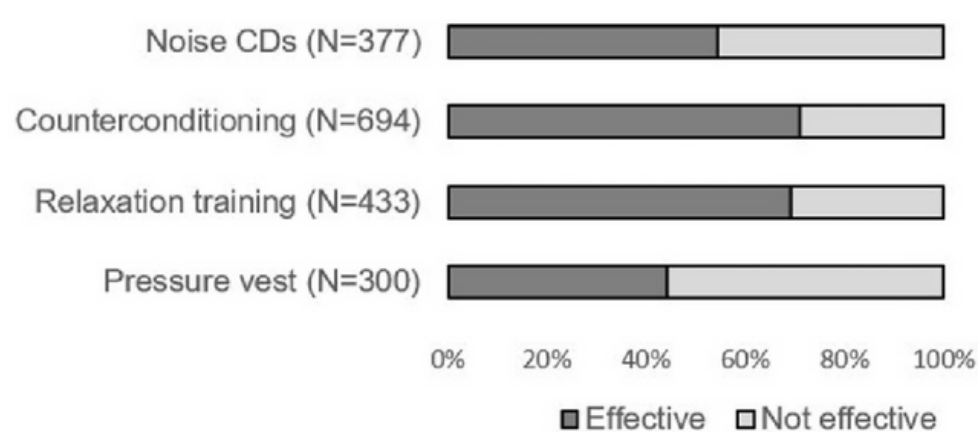


Figure 1. Owner-reported success rates of different behavior modification approaches and pressure vests.

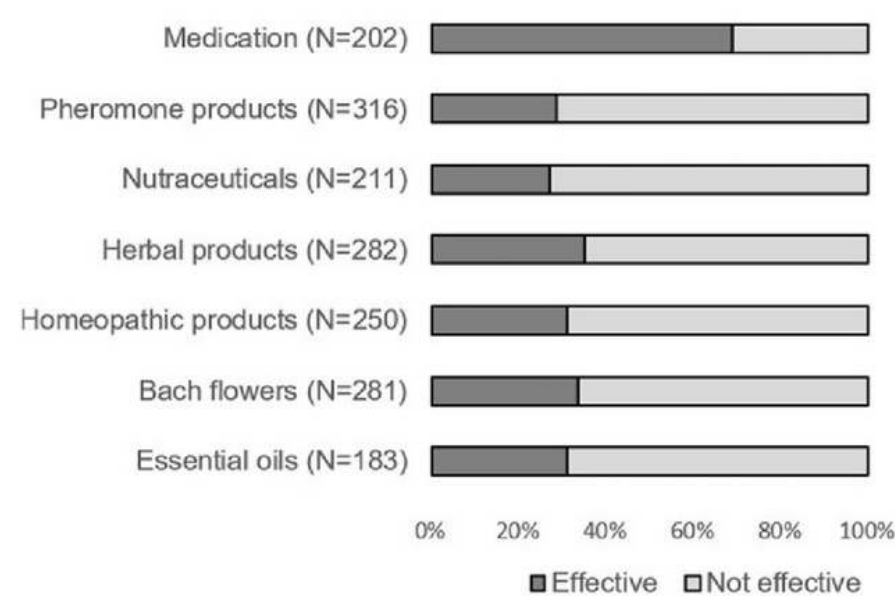


Figure 2. Owner-reported success rates of prescription medication, pheromones, calming nutraceuticals, herbal remedies, homeopathic products, Bach flowers, and essential oils.



Tip #8 - There Is No One-Size-Fits-All

Every animal is an individual and needs to be addressed that way. What works for one pet, may not work for another.

Please always consult with your veterinarian about the different options available to help support your pets during the terrifying times. Also work with an experienced trainer or veterinary behaviorist if your pet has panic attacks and its quality of life is affected.

When adrenaline levels are excessively high, your pet likely lost its ability to learn and may put itself in danger just to get away. In those cases it's unlikely that flower essences or calming herbs will make a dent. Though I'm not a huge fan of medicating animals, there are times where it's **the most loving thing can do for your pet.**

If you let the fear go on, it will get stronger over time, because the brain becomes trained to be scared. Thus, the sooner you start, the better!

Prevent fear wind-up!

Start immediately
and don't allow fear
to escalate.



Tip #9 - Options For Your Pets

Pharmaceuticals

Your veterinarian can help you determine what may work best for your pet.

In combination with desensitisation, counterconditioning and more natural support, drugs may only be needed temporarily.

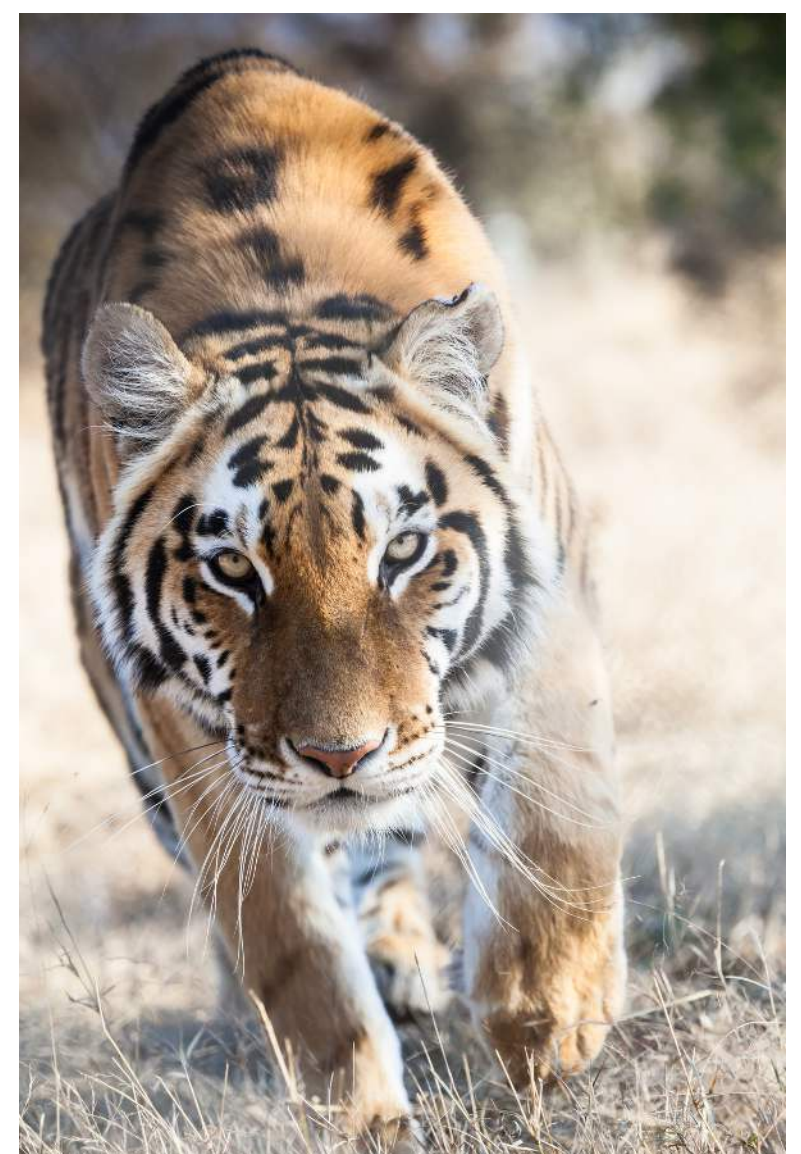
This table is from the same study mentioned above.

Table 4
Owner-reported effectiveness of different prescription medications

Drug	N	Effective	Effective (%)
Alprazolam	32	29	90.63
Dexmedetomidine	19	14	73.68
Diazepam	8	4	50
Trazodone	8	6	75
Acepromazine	4	4	100
Benadryl	3	3	100
Fluoxetine	3	3	100
Clomipramine	2	2	100
Clonidine	2	0	0
Sertraline	1	1	100
Tramadol	1	1	100
>1 drug	17	13	76.47
Trazodone and Alprazolam	7	7	100

Drugs need to be given 1-2 hours BEFORE the scary event!

Acepromazine is *not* a good option because it doesn't reduce anxiety. All it does is decrease an animal's ability to move. This can be equated to being chased by a tiger but being unable to run away.



Herbs and Nutraceuticals

There are MANY to choose from and some animals may need more than just one option, but a layering of multiple supplements.

Herbs and nutraceuticals need be metabolized in the body to become active and therefore **need to be given 4-6 hours prior**, or better yet, also the evening before.

Here are just a few choices:

L-Theanine



- Calming amino acid found in tea
- Promotes alpha brain waves
- Reduces anxiety and noise phobia
- Relaxed but focused
- 1 mg/lb body weight 2x/d

Ashwagandha (Ayush)



- Works well for dogs and humans
- Reduces cortisol
- Good for hypervigilance
- Helps relax
- 12-22 mg/lb twice daily

Bacopa (NOW)



- Anxiolytic (similar to Xanax)
- No sedation
- 23-45 mg/lb twice daily

Other Herbs



- Rhodiola
- Holy Basil
- Kava Kava
- Lemon Balm
- Hops
- Valerian
- Hemp (CBD)

If your anxious about your pet being anxious, you may benefit from support as well.

Caution: *Whatever you choose for your pet, please make sure it's safe for them. Many human calming formulas are too high in Vitamin B6 and Magnesium.*

Other important tips & ticks

- Plenty of exercise before the event!
- A tired pet is a much happier pet!
- Keep them busy with fun brain games
- Diffusing essential oils such as lavender and chamomile can have a calming effect.
- Pheromones also trigger a calming response in some animals (Adaptil for dogs and Feliway for cats)
- Pressure vests
- Sound proofing a small space
- Closing curtains and blinds
- Playing white noise or music to drown out sounds
- Calming music (Whole Tones)
- Homeopathic remedies (ex. Aconitum for profound fear)



ALWAYS do a trial run to see how your pet responds.

The key to success is starting early, persistence and a multimodal approach.

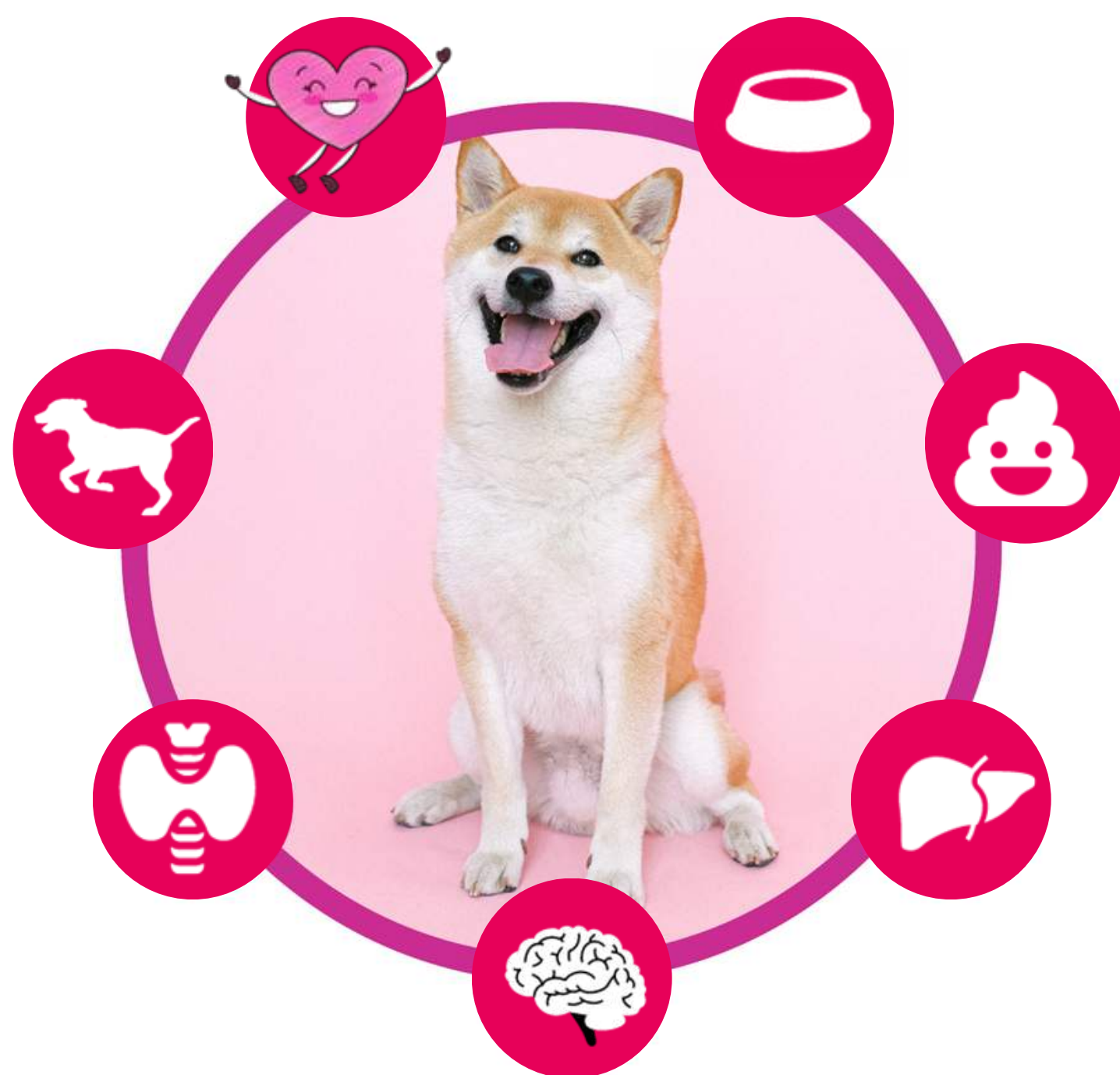


Tip #10 - The 7 PILLARS of Health

"The part can never be well unless the whole is well." – Plato

Of course, anxiety and fear can also be rooted in physical issues such as low thyroid levels, a toxic brain, an imbalanced microbiome, poor quality food and lack of meeting breed specific needs.

Thus, for maximal success, addressing all seven pillars of health will result in better outcome.



**Learn how you can maximize your pet's health.
Check out my FREE Masterclass.**

[Yes, I want to learn more!](#)



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Photo credit: Shael Diaz