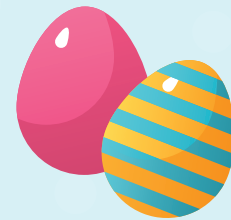


# EASTER HAZARDS



The Easter holiday is a great time to spend with family, however, it can pose some potential hazards to our beloved pets.

## Chocolate and candy

While these items delight children and adults alike, they are not suitable for our pets! Chocolate, especially dark chocolate and baking chocolate, are poisonous to pets. Artificial sweeteners such as xylitol are also harmful, and care must be taken so pets cannot access them. Even the wrappers from these treats can be alluring and lead to gastrointestinal problems.

## Plants and shrubs

We so often welcome spring with cut bouquets of flowers or new landscaping in the yard. Be mindful of what plants and shrubs can be harmful to your pets! Poisoning experiences can range from relatively minor gastrointestinal upset to changes in cardiac and respiratory function and even, in some cases, can be fatal. Take precautions with some common springtime favorites like lilies, tulips, daffodils, azaleas and rhododendrons.

## Guests

Remember that not everyone is pet savvy, nor are their belongings pet-safe. When you share the holiday with friends and family, make sure guests know not to feed pets from the table and not to let pets outside unsupervised. A purse or bag brought in by a guest might contain chocolate, sugarless gum or even prescription medications that your pet should not get into! Have specific areas for your guests' belongings to keep your pet as safe as possible.

## Plastic grass or ribbons

While these items make our presents and Easter baskets look so very festive, they too often end up in the mouth of a curious cat! An ingested linear object can act like a knife against the delicate tissues of the gastrointestinal tract. Make sure to store these away from pets and take care to find every little scrap that might fall from an Easter basket.

## Small toys

New trinkets and toys are a great alternative to chocolate and candy for those feeling more health-conscious, but represent a significant choking risk for pets.

## Live animals

Please discourage the sale and purchase of live animals associated with the Easter holiday. While a bunny, duckling or a small chick may provide short-term entertainment, these animals have specialized needs for their diet and housing, particularly as they grow larger. Any animal kept as a pet is a commitment – it shouldn't be an impulse buy, an uninformed purchase, nor a gift sprung on an unsuspecting family.

