

Folly Road Animal Hospital October

This Month: Halloween Safety

Halloween Safety

It's getting cooler (finally!) and the lower temperatures often bring to mind a sense of upcoming fun. The holiday season is just around the corner, but before you start singing carols and wrapping presents it's time to scream your head off in scary movies and unwrap bowlfuls of candy. Still, as much fun as Halloween can be for adults and kids, it can be equally frightening and dangerous for your pets. Below are a few tips to help you and your favorite furry friend get through the upcoming nights of ghouls and goblins.

Children wearing freakish costumes and screaming 'trick-or-treat' at the top of their lungs can trigger fear and/or territorial responses in animals, especially when it happens every few minutes over a period of only a couple hours. Many animals will become agitated at the very least, while some will try to bite or run out of the door to get away from the happy little monsters. Many of these animals end up being hit by cars or getting lost forever. Cats tend to be more aloof than dogs, and less likely to bolt, but they can slink out an open door much easier than a big dog could. If your animal is easily excitable, keep him in a room away from the door with his favorite toy and some soothing music for the night. Also, be careful when taking the family dog out trick-or-treating by keeping him on a shorter than normal leash and making sure that he doesn't get overly excited or try to bite. Be sure that all animals have their tags on them so if they do get out they can be easily found and returned home.

Owners with pets who like to participate in the festivities should also be careful. Dressing up your pet with costumes can be fun, but it can also be dangerous for the animals. Stay away from costumes that require rubber bands to stay put – they can be uncomfortable for your pet and if they are mistakenly left on can burrow into the animal's skin or choke them. Also be careful of costumes that they can trip in, get caught on or cannot see well in. Masks are a bad idea, as are paints and dyes. Most importantly, if your pet doesn't want to wear the costume don't make him!

Decorations are another big concern at this time of the year. Candles are popular in jack-o-lanterns and other decorations and can be easily tipped over or played with, and streamers or other such decorations can be eaten or get caught around the pet. If your pet is interested in the candle flame put it someplace that it cannot be touched or knocked over. Burnt paws, tails, whiskers, or carpeting do not make for a fun holiday.

One concern that many people don't consider around Halloween is the danger to your pets from pranksters. Black cats are especially vulnerable and should be kept safe inside during the weeks surrounding Halloween and Devil's Night. Even young children could get excited at the site of a black cat and scream or try to grab it, making the cat nervous and causing it to bolt or bite.

If your pet makes it through the trick-or-treat hours safely there is still one more consideration for the Halloween holiday: sweets. While cats are pickier about what they eat, dogs love sweet treats and will not hesitate to eat candy that wasn't properly put away, wrappers and all. While regular sugary candies can give pets a stomachache, chocolate can be downright deadly. Cats, ferrets and small dogs are especially at risk because they can eat so much of it compared to their body weight in such a short amount of time. Signs of chocolate poisoning include vomiting, restlessness, heart disturbances and seizures, which can be fatal without veterinary intervention. Keep dog-appropriate snacks on hand for trick-or-treating dogs and keep all candy out of reach of all animals.

Do:

- Keep your pet away from the busy door.
- Have doggy- or kitty-appropriate treats.
- Keep candles and other decorations out of your pet's reach.

Don't:

- Let your pet outside without short leash.
- Let your pet get into any candy, especially chocolate!
- Put restricting costumes/paint on your pet.

Seasonal Safety

Another concern at this time of the year is car fluids, especially anti-freeze. With the cooler weather approaching, many people will be changing and topping off their anti-freeze and other car fluids that contain anti-freeze with the toxic ingredient ethylene glycol. Spills that are left on the ground are sweet smelling and good tasting to dogs, but very deadly. Early signs of ethylene glycol poisoning may include stumbling or 'acting drunk'. Minutes to hours can make the difference between successful treatment and death, so if you think your dog has ingested any car fluids, call the vet immediately and let them know you are on your way!

Success Story: Riff Raff!

Riff Raff is an eight year old chocolate lab that loves to roam the neighborhood and 'hang out' with just about anyone. He presented to the FRAH because he couldn't stand up, although only a few hours previous he had been fine. Blood was taken for tests to rule out infections, liver and kidney disease and anemia. X-rays were taken of the chest to rule out heart disease. All tests were normal.

A urinalysis was done and the presence of 'monohydrate calcium oxalate' crystals were detected, which indicated the possibility of ethylene glycol ingestion. Further questioning turned up information that Riff Raff had been helping a neighbor add new windshield wiper fluid to his car. All car fluids can contain ethylene glycol to prevent them from freezing in cold weather.

Riff Raff was placed on intravenous fluids and grain alcohol was delivered into his blood stream via

a catheter. Ethanol (grain alcohol) competes with ethylene glycol for liver metabolism. If the liver cannot metabolize the ethylene glycol into very toxic metabolites because it is busy metabolizing the ethanol, the ethylene glycol is excreted unchanged and safely into the urine.

With the help of the local emergency clinic, Riff Raff was kept inebriated day and night for 48 hours. After recovering from his trip to Margaritaville, follow up kidney tests have indicated no damage from the poisoning.

Today Riff Raff is still visiting his neighborhood buddies, but he is 'on the wagon' and hopes to stay that way!

Dates, Upcoming News, Specials:

Can't get rid of those pesky fleas? Try Capstar! An easy-to-administer pill that works for 24 hours to kill all the adult fleas that bite your pet. When used in combination with Frontline or Revolution, it can help you get the head-start you need to control the fleas.

The FRAH Newsletter is now on the web!

www.follyroadanimalhospital.com/newsletter.htm

Free Feline Heartworm tests!

Kitty Commitment Program: FREE feline heartworm tests will be performed the week of October 10th-14th courtesy of Revolution. All cats are invited to get a free heartworm test and learn more about the dangers of heartworms. Even indoor cats are at risk: a testing of cats in the West Ashley area earlier this year showed 1 out of every 4 heartworm positive cats was 'indoor only', and 15% of **all** cats tested were positive. For more information on Feline Heartworms and Revolution, please visit the FRAH.