

Holiday Survival Tips from + dog

It's official: the holidays are here and along with them, the accompanying hustle and bustle: the incessant yapping of T.V. ads, the barking of impatient horns at the malls, the tail-wagging effects of too much popping of the bubbly, the whining of frenzied owners, the licking under the mistletoe, the trips to the groomer for bath, manicure and obligatory red plaid bow, and way, way too many treats you don't even have to beg for!!

How to cope with it all??? Take 5 and follow the 10 tips below:

1. Before your guests arrive, take your dog on a long walk or stimulating doggie adventure. It will take the edge off your dog (and you!) and give you a calorie deficit in preparation for all those gourmet hors d'oeuvres that will be passed around.
2. Speaking of hors d'oeuvres, don't forget your dog! Stock up on long-lasting treats like knuckle bones, bully sticks and marrow bones. Stuff a kong with canned or raw food, broken up dog biscuits, cheese or peanut butter and stick it in the freezer. Your dog will stay busy and content for hours.
3. Dismiss your dog behind a baby gate or in a crate until all your guests – dog & human alike! - have arrived and the initial excitement has quieted down. Then, let him or her out to meet and greet, asking everyone adhere to the “5-minute rule”.
4. Be vigilant about what treats your dog is given by guests. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with human foods that can be toxic to dogs (depending upon the size of the dog and how much is ingested) including bittersweet and baking chocolate, liquor, onions, garlic, uncooked bread dough, macadamia nuts, grapes, raisins, coffee and coffee grounds, certain mushrooms, Xylitol sweetener (used in sugar-free gum and candies), and more. If you think your pet has ingested anything toxic (food, chemicals, etc.) and need emergency 24-hr. advice, call the Nationwide Pet Poison Hotline 800-213-6680 or the ASPCA/Angell Poison Control Center at 1-877-2ANGELL. Note: Unlike human poison hotlines, both of these resources charge a per-call fee.
5. Include, don't exclude. Don't banish your dog during holiday activities, but do encourage good manners by requiring that he or she stay on the dog bed, in the crate, behind the baby gate or tethered during the holiday meal.
6. If overnight guests are joining you for the holidays, orient them with a list of your dog's rules and etiquette to ensure your training efforts are consistently reinforced. For example: no feeding from the table, no approaching the dog when he or she is sleeping or eating, feeding only “approved” treats, etc.

7. Store leftovers immediately and take extra-care to keep the turkey carcass along with any string the turkey was tied with and sharp “pop-up” thermometers, out of your dog’s reach. Poultry bones become brittle when cooked and can splinter or puncture your dog’s mouth, esophagus, stomach or intestines. Rich gravy, spoiled or moldy foods from the trash (or countertop!) can cause intestinal distress and make your dog ill. And the aluminum foil those foods were wrapped in can obstruct your dog’s intestinal tract.

8. Keep lit candles well out of reach of wagging tails and leaping Labs. Extinguish every candle before you leave a room and be sure to use a screen around the fireplace.

9. Keep the Christmas tree organic. Use only plain water in the base, without adding commercial “tree preservatives.” Those additives can contain chemicals or fertilizers that are toxic to your dog if he laps up the tree water. Holly, ivy, mistletoe lilies, amaryllis, potpourri and pine needles all present hazards to dogs.

10. Happy New Year! Your dog has sensitive hearing and the fireworks, bells and whistles of New Year’s revelers can be very frightening. Be sure your dog is in a safe place away from the noise and that he or she can’t escape from your home, yard or auto.

Happy Holidays to All from your friends at **the pawsitive dog.**