|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  | |
|  |  |

***PET TIPS FOR A SAFE HOWL-O-WEEN***

If you get the willies when ghosts and goblins come knocking at your door on Halloween, imagine how frightened your unsuspecting pet could be. Constant knocks and doorbells can be very stressful on pets, sometimes leading to panic.

The best place for pets on this holiday is a safe, quiet spot out of the way of the activities and the front door that is opening and closing frequently. As creatures of habit, pets depend on daily routines and some can become very agitated when those routines are changed. For their comfort and safety, the best thing you can do is keep them away from the evening's activities.

**Here are some easy ways to ensure a safe and happy Halloween:**

* Be sure all pets (including indoor only cats) are wearing collars with ID tags if they are indoors.
* Keep pets indoors away from trick-or-treaters and other Halloween activities.
* Hide the candy; it can be harmful to pets. Chocolate can be very toxic.
* Popular Halloween plants such as pumpkins and decorative corn are considered to be relatively nontoxic, but they can produce stomach upset in pets who nibble on them.
* Dress-up can be a big mess-up for some pets. Please don't put your dog or cat in a costume UNLESS you know he or she loves it (yup, a few pets are real hams!). For pets who prefer their “birthday suits,” however, wearing a costume may cause undue stress. If you do dress up your pet, make sure the costume isn't annoying or unsafe. It should not constrict the animal's movement or hearing, or impede his ability to breathe, bark or meow. Also, be sure to try on costumes before the big night. If your pet seems distressed, allergic or shows abnormal behavior, consider letting him go au naturale or donning a festive bandana.

Take a closer look at your pet’s costume and make sure it does not have small, dangling or easily chewed-off pieces that he could choke on. Also, ill-fitting outfits can get twisted on external objects or your pet, leading to injury.

**Lighted candles can be very dangerous, but other Halloween decorations are no treats for your pet or neighborhood wildlife:**

* Hang dangling decorations up high to avoid your pets getting entangled.
* Keep floors clear of items that may end up as your pet's new chew toy and a choking hazard.
* Avoid using fake cob webs. Indoors they can be a threat to pets, cats especially, who may swallow them. Outdoors they may affect wildlife, especially small birds becoming entangled in the webbing.
* Immediately remove any decorations an animal could get their head into such as plastic pumpkins or skulls. They are attractive to wildlife such as deer or raccoon who may think there is food inside and end up stuck on their heads endangering their lives.
* Nocturnal critters such as raccoons, opossums, and foxes wake up and venture out for food, and Halloween night is no exception. Wild animals are just that – wild – so never approach one.