

## Halloween Can Be Scary For Your Pets Too!

While Halloween may be a favorite holiday for children and adults, it can be a scary and dangerous time for our pets. Strangers dressed in costumes and masks shouting “trick or treat” at our doors, spooky noises, and candy carelessly left around are just some of the dangers that dogs, cats and other pets face on Halloween, so pet owners must be proactive to ensure their pet’s safety this October 31<sup>st</sup>.



Plan on keeping cats and dogs indoors and secured in a quiet part of the house on Halloween to prevent accidental escape through a front door that is constantly being opened for trick-or-treaters. Pets that are frightened by costumes and noises may be more apt to bite out of fear and black cats are shown to be at higher risk for the mischievous pranks of teens on Halloween. Also, remember to keep pets restrained and away from open flames used in Jack-o-Lanterns to prevent burned paws and whiskers!

Supervise pets who will be wearing a Halloween costume as these can be bulky or restrictive which can make walking difficult. Pets can easily overheat in costumes if they interfere with their ability to pant and cool themselves. Owners should be especially wary of pet costumes that contain rubber bands to keep them in place. If an elastic band slips or remains on the pet after the costume comes off, it can quickly burrow into the pet’s fur coat and restrict blood flow to a paw or tail.

Dogs and cats seem to share our sweet tooth and have an uncanny knack for sniffing out Halloween treats. Keep **all** candy, especially chocolate, away from pets as it can be toxic and even fatal if ingested. While chocolate is certainly delicious and may even be beneficial for people, chocolate can be deadly to pets. Chocolate contains caffeine and theobromine which affects the heart and nervous system. Dark chocolate and baking chocolate can be even more toxic because they contain higher concentrations of the theobromine. This is equally true if the chocolate is in candy bar form or an ingredient in cake, cookies, puddings or ice cream. Theobromine affects all pets differently depending upon the pet’s size, weight, overall health and amount ingested. Signs of chocolate toxicity in pets include hyperactivity, increased heart rate, restlessness and pacing, panting, excessive salivation, muscle tremors, seizures, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive urination and gastrointestinal distress.



And it isn’t only chocolate that poses a danger to our pets. “Healthy” treats like granola, trail mix, and even sugar free treat can harm Fido and Fluffy. Raisins and grapes contain an unknown toxin that can damage your pet’s kidneys causing renal failure and death. Macadamia nuts contain a toxin that can attack the nervous system, muscles and intestinal tract. Diet treats such as sugar-free gum and candies that contain xylitol can be fatal if ingested by cats, dogs and ferrets. Candy should be kept out of the pet’s reach and young children should be told not to drop or share their Halloween treats with their pet.

If your pet becomes become sick or injured by eating Halloween candy, exploring decorations or running from ghosts and goblins, take him or her to the Emergency Room at Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson immediately! Our calm and caring doctors and nurses are here for you and your pet, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.