

PRESS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kathy Finnie, Executive Director
Vermont Veterinary Medical Association
802-878-6888
Kathy@vtvets.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Think Outside the Box: Unusual Holiday Gift Ideas for Pets and Their Owners

**By the Vermont Veterinary Medical Association
M. Kathleen Shaw, DVM**

During tough times, families bond together and now more and more pets are included in the family festivities. This year millions of people will buy gifts for their pets and pet lovers in their lives. Of course toys for cats and dogs are always appreciated. Scratching posts, squeaky toys, balls, and fishing pole type toys are popular. Laser pointers are inexpensive and both dogs and cats love to chase the hard to catch point of light. Beyond the fun toys for your pets, veterinarians recommend some less common, but definitely helpful gifts.

Being prepared for any emergency may not be a flashy gift, but it could help save your pet's life. Consider getting a window cling for your door to let rescuers know in the event of an emergency that there are pets in your home. Millions of pets wander off each year, unable to find their way back home. A microchip, along with proper registration, can insure your pet's safe return if he becomes lost. If your pet already has one, make sure your information is updated with the microchip company. Consider pet insurance or even a pet health savings plan to help when there is a serious illness or injury.

Gift certificates for pet stores or to the veterinary clinic are great stocking stuffers for the animal lover in your life. Don't forget the friends who have large animals or small ruminants. Stethoscopes, thermometers, and gift certificates to local feed stores or agricultural stores are very useful. Local shelters and rescues do so much great work to help homeless pets and those with special needs. Why not give a monetary gift (in your pet or pet owner's name) to your favorite local animal group?

If money is tight, ask your local shelter what kind of supplies would be helpful. You might have some old blankets, towels, or even pet items that could get a second use at the shelter and help the staff care for pets. Giving the gift of time by volunteering at a local shelter is always appreciated. A free gift to your pet would be to spend a little more time with your pets each day. Take time to take Fido for an extra walk or spend some time playing with the cat. You will BOTH benefit!

Our pets give us so much and ask so little in return. Ask your veterinarian about ideas to help keep your four legged friend healthy and happy this holiday season.

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The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA), founded in 1898, is a professional organization of 340 veterinarians dedicated to compassionate animal care and quality medicine.