

PRESS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Halloween can be Spooky for Pets

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Many people like to have fun during the Halloween festivities, but our pets can truly be frightened by all of the noises and costumes. Halloween is a holiday with many dangers for our dogs and cats.

Dressing up is fun for humans, but may not be fun for our pets. If your pet tolerates a costume, keep in mind your pet must be comfortable at all times. Avoid any costumes that use rubber bands or anything that might constrict circulation or breathing. Likewise, avoid costumes with toxic paints, dyes, or that are edible.

Costumes on people can be equally scary to pets. Masks, large hats, and other costume accessories can confuse pets and may even trigger territorial instincts. It is not unusual for pets to act protective and fearful of people in costumes, even if they are normally very social with that person. Remember, you are responsible for controlling your pet and insuring that he doesn't bite any guests.

Constant visitors to the door along with spooky sights and sounds may cause pets to escape and become injured in a variety of ways. Consider letting your dog spend Halloween inside with special treats, safe and secure. Even in a fenced yard, Halloween is not a good night for a dog to be outside. This is doubly true for cats: they may try to bolt out the door and even if they are allowed outside, they are more at risk for being hit by cars due to the high traffic from trick or treaters. Black cats, especially, are at a higher risk from human cruelty on Halloween. Consider keeping your cats in an interior room where they are unable to bolt out the door.

Some Halloween decorations can be unsafe for your pets. Fake cobwebs or anything resembling string can be tempting to cats, leading to an intestinal obstruction. Candles, even inside pumpkins, can be easily knocked over, burning your pet or even lighting them (it has happened before) or your house on fire!

Keep pets away from all Halloween candy. Most people know that chocolate can

be toxic to pets, even in small amounts. However lollipop sticks and foil wrappers can cause blockages in the intestinal tract. Candy sweetened with xylitol can cause a life threatening drop in blood sugar if ingested by a pet. Some pets can get an upset stomach just from eating a piece of candy, since it isn't part of their regular diet.

These simple responsible precautions will help humans and pets alike have a safe holiday. For more information on how to make Halloween less stressful to your pet, contact your veterinarian.

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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. For more information, visit www.vtvets.org or call (802) 878-6888.