

# **Even the Cat has Tinsel!**

- by Chris Taylor DVM

Ahh, Christmas! Its that time of year when every veterinarian looks forward to that emergency phone call about the pussycat with the scintillating posterior, often known by its medical term – “Tinsel-Butt”. More on that later....

The holiday season is a perfect time for pets to run amok. What with all the decorations, the vast quantities of unattended food, and distracted pet owners, its amazing that your local veterinarian even sees their own family at this time of year! Give a thought to your pet when decorating. Christmas trees should be secured so that they cannot be pulled over. Cats will climb, and dogs will burrow under them. Keep your favourite fragile decorations away from pet paws and tails.

Some decorative plants are toxic like mistletoe, others like poinsettia just highly irritating to the intestinal tract. Neither are things you wish to experience, so just keep them out of the way. Everyone worries about chocolate. Yes, it can be toxic, but mainly to very small dogs that eat “Baker’s Chocolate”. Small amounts of milk chocolate probably won’t kill your pet, but it still isn’t a good idea. Think about it, maybe your Jack Russel Terrier doesn’t really need that chocolate covered espresso bean pick me up either! This leads to that whole realm of human thought, where otherwise intelligent and thoughtful people think that treating Fido or Fluffy to a little turkey gravy won’t hurt, after all, everyone else is getting special food... A word of advice, save the seasonal gourmet food for Uncle Harvey, or you may end up in the middle of a race for the biggest bill between me and the carpet cleaner! Ask your generous friends if the gifts they hand you to be placed under the tree contain any food items, otherwise your pet will gladly inform you, and your carpet, later that night.

With all the hustle and bustle of the season, please remember to keep an eye out on your pets. If they are not looking right, maybe you should make some time to get them checked out. The Holiday Season is the time of year we veterinarians are most likely to see patients that have been left just a little too long. Save yourself the grief and expense of more serious pet illness and get your fluffy friend checked sooner rather than later.

Lastly, have a mind for those less fortunate than yourselves and your loved ones. The local SPCA and wildlife shelter needs your help today and throughout the year. Even small donations can help reduce misery and suffering!

As for the tinsel-ated pussycat – well if kitty is happy, running around and eating normally don’t panic, and DON’T PULL the tinsel. Just trim it with some scissors. It will probably pass, as it does similarly in dogs that eat long grass. If it does not pass, or kitty is not being her normal self, veterinarians around the country await your call. And next year, please forgo the tinsel!