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St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program
NS/PEI Council

Christmas & Your Pet



The Christmas season is once again upon us, and although for most it is a fun filled time, it can be a stressful and even dangerous time for our pets.

Of course, most pet owners know that chocolate is toxic to our four legged friends. Baking chocolate is extremely dangerous to pets as it has nine times more theobromine than milk chocolate. So when you are baking Christmas sweets, please ensure that your squares of baking chocolate are far out of Rover's reach.

Many of us love to take pictures of our pets dressed up for the holidays. Who can resist a Great Dane dressed up like Rudolph? However, most of these costumes aren't made for doggy wear and tear, comfort, or safety, so if you plan to dress your pet up for family pictures, please remove the costume immediately after the picture is taken. Also, keep in mind that a holiday bow around your pet's neck, although cute, can strangle your pet if

they get it caught on something. Many pet stores now carry holiday collars for dogs and cats, which are much safer (and less embarrassing) for your pet.

If candles are part of your holiday decorations, you may want to use holders with glass domes, cups or cylinders that cover the candle flame. These are harder to tip over and less likely to singe fur. Small decorations should also be kept out of your pet's reach, as they may try to chew on them and could choke, or swallow them and this could cause problems with their digestion.

When decorating your Christmas tree, it is best to stay away from tinsel and edible decorations (such as candy canes and popcorn garland). There are various kinds of vinyl garlands and specialty lights available that are pet friendly. They are just as eye catching as tinsel, but you won't have to worry about your pet eating them and choking or suffering from digestive problems. If you do choose to use tinsel or

edible decorations on your tree, hang them well out of your pet's reach.

Breakable ornaments should be placed high on the tree as well to keep your pet from knocking them off and breaking them. Decorations should be hung with yarn, as metal hooks can easily get caught in curious mouths.

Strands of lights, loose wires and electrical cords should be kept well out of reach, as some pets do enjoy chewing on them. Your tree stand should be covered tightly with skirting, as the water from the tree base can cause mouth sores, vomiting, diarrhea and loss of appetite. The area around the base of the tree should be vacuumed frequently as well, because both live and artificial pine needles are indigestible to pets.

Some holiday plants can be poisonous to pets. Examples of some of these are mistletoe, holly berries, and poinsettias. At best, these plants should be kept out of the house to prevent any

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accidents, but if they do find a way into your home, make sure to place them well out of your pet's reach.

When it comes time to place presents under the tree, remember not to place sweet smelling holiday treats such as cookies, candy and fruit cake under there. It may create too much temptation for your pet, and as wrapping paper and cellophane are not part of their regular diet, they could become seriously ill. Place edible presents in stockings that are hung out of your pet's reach. Also, try to refrain

from wrapping ribbon around presents. It may look very nice, but your pet can choke on it when they try to open their presents early!

During the holiday season, there are often alcoholic beverages around the house. Make sure that these are not within your pet's reach, or even somewhere that your pet could tip them over easily. If one of these drinks does happen to spill, clean it up immediately.

Yeasty bread can also be poisonous to your pet. The dough itself is fine, but the yeast it contains can ferment in your dog's

stomach and form alcohol, which is poisonous to them.

The holidays are also a time for celebration, and although fun for you, it can be stressful for your pet. If you plan to entertain, set aside a safe haven for your pet. It should be somewhere quiet and well away from the hustle and bustle in the rest of the house. It is also important to watch the door carefully when guests are arriving and leaving, as your pet may escape through the open door.

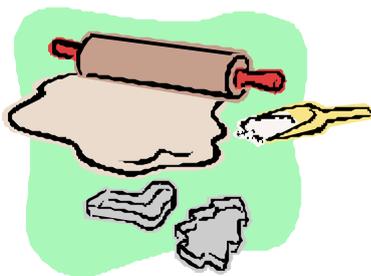
And last but not least, enjoy the holidays!

"The reason a dog has so many friends is that he wags his tail instead of his tongue."

- Anonymous

Peanut Butter Puppy Poppers

During the holidays, we all like to indulge in some fun treats. Why shouldn't our dogs get to as well? The following recipe is doggy friendly.



Ingredients:

2 cups whole wheat flour 1 tbsp. baking powder
1 cup peanut butter 1 cup milk

Directions:

In a bowl, combine flour and baking powder.

In another bowl, mix peanut butter and milk, then add to dry ingredients. Mix well.

Place dough on a lightly floured surface and knead. Roll dough to ¼ inch thickness and use a cookie cutter to cut out shapes.

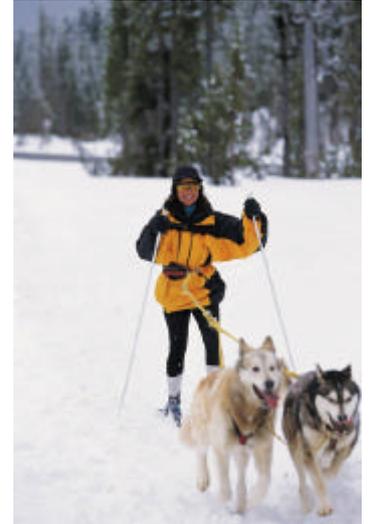
Bake for 20 minutes on a greased baking sheet until they are lightly brown. Cool on a rack, then store in an airtight container.

Although these treats are doggy friendly, please remember to not over feed your dog, as this can cause health problems. A healthy dog is a happy dog!

Winter & Your Dog

Here are some tips to keep your dog safe during the long winter months:

1. Dogs are susceptible to frost-bite through their foot pads and ears. Ice forms quickly to cause frost-bite, so promptly clean snow off the pads of their feet and between their toes after they have been in the snow. Rubbing Vaseline on your dog's feet before taking them outside can help snow from sticking to them, and is non-toxic and digestible. Wearing boots may also help your dog.
2. For short-haired dogs, an adequate coat or sweater is good protection from the cold.
3. Ethylene Glycol is an extremely toxic substance that is used in anti-freeze (among other products). It is sweet tasting to dogs, so if you spill some, clean it up immediately.
4. Keep your dog indoors unless you are outside with them, as when roads are slippery motorists have a hard enough time stopping for other cars, let alone your family pet. Dogs may also endanger themselves by walking on thin ice or slipping and hurting themselves in the winter conditions.
5. If your dog's water bowl is kept outside or in a cooler part of the house (such as the porch), check it regularly for ice.
6. In hypothermia, the animal's body temperature is reduced because heat is lost faster than it can be replaced. They slow down, start to shiver, and finally become unconscious. Old or very young dogs are most susceptible to this condition. If you suspect your dog is suffering from hypothermia, have them checked by a vet immediately.
7. Do not leave your dog outside in very cold weather, no matter the breed.



"If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went."

- Will Rogers

Why I Joined the Therapy Dogs



The following was sent in to me by Dartmouth handler, Dianne Hills. Dianne and her dog Holly (pictured on the left with their friend Terry) have been Therapy Dog volunteers since April, 2004. They currently visit Oakwood Terrace in Dartmouth.

"I started with the Therapy Dog Program as I needed something to keep me busy. When I signed up, I was thinking that the program sounded interesting, but didn't believe my dog would be calm enough to participate.

There are procedures and regulations that have to be met. The police criminal check had to be done, a medical for your dog had to be passed and the final test of role play was completed. I have a Sheltie and they have a tendency to bark so I

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was a little nervous of her character. However, Holly proved to be Therapy Dog material at the evaluation, and passed with flying colours.

They {dogs} must know where it is appropriate to bark and where it isn't, because Holly doesn't make a peep while we're at Oakwood.

I visit the home for the elderly at Oakwood on Friday nights. I chose this time as I have teenagers at home, and

they tend to have friends they hang out with on that evening. Also, I didn't think there would be as much activity going on at the facility on Friday nights as there would be during the week or on the weekends.

There are 5 residents that I make a point of visiting, but of course there are always others that I stop to see along the way. One gentleman by the name of Terry always has crackers for Holly. He keeps them in his pocket just incase he gets a visit from a dog. He likes to break up the

cracker and ask Holly to do tricks for her treat. His favorite one is to drop the cracker on the floor and say *No* to Holly. She sits patiently looking from Terry to the cracker and back again. Once he is satisfied that she has waited long enough, he says *Go Ahead* and Holly cleans the floor and waits for more.

You can tell that dogs visiting at the senior's home is rewarding, not only for the residents, but for myself and Holly as well."

"There is no psychiatrist in the world like a puppy licking your face."

- Ben Williams

Things We Can Learn From a Dog



"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself."

- Josh Billings."

1. Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride.
2. Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.
3. When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
4. When it's in your best interest, always practice obedience.
5. Let others know when they've invaded your territory.
6. Take naps and always stretch before rising.
7. Run, romp and play daily.
8. Eat with gusto and enthusiasm.
9. Be loyal.
10. Never pretend to be something you're not.
11. If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
12. When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently.
13. Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
14. Thrive on attention and let people touch you.
15. Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
16. On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.
17. When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.
18. No matter how often you are criticized, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout. Run right back and make friends.

- Author Unknown

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Wanted: Someone To Love

Every day there are scores of homeless, neglected or abused dogs rescued by caring people that are willing to give them a second chance at life and love. Some of these rescued dogs have gone on to become great Therapy Dogs right here in Nova Scotia and PEI.

With this in mind, I have decided to spotlight a different adorable adoptable in each issue of *The Barker* that could become a wonderful addition to someone's home as well as the next Therapy Dog.

In this issue, I will be introducing you to Baci (pictured on the right).

Baci is an adult male red merle Australian Shepherd who is in foster care under observation and will soon be looking

for a new home. He was originally a stray, so not much is known about his history, therefore a period of observation is required in order to determine the best home for him. He will be fully vet checked before going to his new home. Baci is thought to be 7 years old, and gets along well with other dogs and cats (but may try to herd them). He needs to lose some weight and would do well in a home that is fairly active and can commit to helping him lose some weight and maintain a healthy physique. He would do best in a calm household where he will receive exercise and plenty of mental stimulation, and where there is another dog present. Preference will be given to a home with another compatible



dog. He does suffer from separation anxiety when left alone without another dog for company. This handsome fella is currently in foster care. Please contact his foster home at dogma@nsdogs.com for more information.

From The Editor

I am always looking for pictures, stories, jokes, etc. for future issues of *The Barker*. I'm also looking for ideas of what you would like to see in this newsletter. If you would like to contribute, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Mullen – Program Assistant, St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program

Pictured here is Therapy Dog Brutus Maillet. He is owned by Tami and Russell Maillet of Kingston, NS

