

# Halloween Safety



While Halloween can be a fun time for children and adults, remember that it can be a traumatic and even dangerous time for your pet. Your pets are depending on you to keep them safe from the more dangerous goblins and ghouls that this holiday brings, so keep the following precautions in mind when preparing for the frightfully fun festivities and help ensure that everyone in your family—including your pet—has a safe Halloween.

**Keep your Pet Indoors:** You should never let your pet roam free, but especially not on Halloween. Don't leave your pet out in the yard on Halloween unsupervised: There are plenty of stories of vicious pranksters who have teased, injured, stolen, even killed pets on this night. Keep cats safely indoors, and don't let the family dog accompany the kids trick-or-treating.

**Better Yet, Keep your Pet in a Quiet Place:** Keep your pet in a bedroom, away from trick-or-treaters and other Halloween activities. You may know that the miniature monsters and goblins who come knocking on Halloween aren't real, but pets don't. Dogs and cats are creatures of habit and could become frightened or agitated by the unaccustomed sights and sounds of costumed visitors. If you are having an indoor party, make sure that you put your dog or cat in a room with food and water where they won't be disturbed.

**Make Sure your Pet has Proper ID:** Be careful your cat or dog doesn't dart out through the open door as you hand out candy. Frequently opened doors provide a perfect opportunity for escape, which can go unnoticed during all the commotion. Be sure all pets are wearing collars and ID tags with current contact information in case of an accidental getaway. If they escape out an open door and become lost, this info is their ticket home.

**Keep All Candy Away from Pets:** All those sweets may taste great to cats and dogs, but candy, especially chocolate, can be toxic to pets. Xylitol (an ingredient in sugar-free candy) can cause liver damage, raisins and grapes can cause kidney failure, and macadamia nuts can cause paralysis. Candy wrappers can also be harmful if swallowed. Instead, tempt your pet with a few of his favorite, healthy treats.

**Watch Out for Dangerous Decorations:** Keep decorations that pets could chew on—like streamers and fake spider webs—out of reach. Pets may knock lit jack-o-lanterns over and cause a fire. Curious kittens especially run the risk of getting burned. If pets chomp on Halloween decorations they could choke or become ill and pets could become tangled and injured by dangling cords or decorations.

**Avoid Costumes for your Pet:** Resist the urge to put your pet in a costume. You may think your pet looks adorable, but most pets don't like the constraints of costumes. If you do decide to play dress-up, make sure the costume isn't constricting, annoying or unsafe. Check the costume for parts your pet could chew off and choke on and look for dangling pieces like flowing capes that could injure her. Be careful not to obstruct her vision or hearing, as even the sweetest dogs can get snappy when they can't tell what's going on around them.



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