



Paddling pools make for great summer enrichment.

Happy holidays from SPCA!

The holidays are quickly approaching, along with all of the excitement that comes with them – sunshine, hot weather, beaches, swimming, BBQs, and time off school!

This very special issue of Kind Matters highlights the things every responsible animal guardian (pet owner) should be aware of during the summer and holiday season. While you're enjoying the holidays, take the time to make sure your animals are happy, healthy, and getting the love and attention they deserve during this time as well. Read on to find out how to keep animals safe in the hot weather, what foods are safe for animals, and many other responsible guardianship tips!

Spread the cheer

While you're on a break from school, consider spreading the holiday cheer by making enrichment toys for the animals at your local SPCA!

Enrichment is a vital part of every animal's life as it allows them to express their normal behavior. Just like kids enjoy activities such as reading, sports, crafts, and games, animals also enjoy activities that keep them from getting bored. When you make and donate these toys, you're helping



animals in need stay mentally and physically fit while they wait for their new forever home!

Summer tips!



Provide lots of water sources for all animals!



Provide opportunities for your animals to cool off in the summer heat!



Ensure the five freedoms are met for all of your animals this summer!





Things to remember this holiday season

Coping with the hot weather

With temperatures rising over the holiday season, animal guardians must be aware of the dangers that come with these hot days. Here are a few tips to help keep your animals safe for the summer:

- > Keep your animals hydrated by providing plenty of fresh, clean water at all times.
- > Apply non-toxic animal sunscreen to any areas of white/pale coloured skin like pink noses, ears, and bellies.
- > Provide plenty of cool, shady places for your animals to rest out of the hot sun.
- > Choose appropriate exercise and enrichment for the day's temperature and weather.
- > Take your dog for walks during cooler times of the day, such as early morning or late evening hours and on grass as much as possible.
- > Protect paws from hot sand and concrete. Before walking your dog - check the temperature of the ground with your hand, if it's too hot for your hand, it's too hot for their paws.
- > If your dog likes swimming, take them for a swim instead of a walk.
- > Set up cooler summer bedding and sleeping areas.
- > Provide pet safe frozen treats, such as homemade doggy ice blocks.
- > NEVER leave your animal in a parked car at this time.
- > Ensure your animal is microchipped with up to date contact details registered.



Choose your decorations carefully

Some holiday decorations include trees, plants/flowers, tinsel, lights, candles, and fragile objects. When decorating your home for the festivities, ensure that they are not a hazard for your companion animal. Make sure your tree is safe, avoid toxic plants, keep your animals from chewing on power cords or lights, be careful of sharp and delicate ornaments, monitor lit candles, and skip the tinsel to avoid accidental ingestion!

Try these companion animal friendly decorating tips instead:

- > Make sure your Christmas tree is safely secured to the floor, wall or ceiling and cannot easily topple over.

- > Switch to battery or solar operated candles.
- > Decorate with shatterproof ornaments such as those made from plastic, wood or paper.
- > Keep lights and small decorations out of reach of animals.
- > Use plastic LED lights, they are cool to the touch, durable, and energy efficient.
- > Cover and contain cords with plastic casing or tape them down.
- > Unplug lights and other electronic decorations when you're not home.
- > Decorate with non-toxic, animal safe plants.

Mind the food!

There's always lots of yummy food around the holidays. While this food is delicious for humans, certain human food can be life-threatening for animals. Remember not to leave food lying around, keep an eye on your tables and rubbish bins, and do not feed your companion animals any human food. Human food has

salt, sugar, or additives that can be harmful, fattening, or cause reactions for animals so it's best to avoid them entirely.

A commercial pet food is the best way to ensure your animal is safe and has a suitable diet but you should always talk to your vet about what your animal can and cannot eat!



Don't let your pets eat these foods!



Prepare a safe, quiet place

With large family gatherings, people coming and going, and loud noises such as fireworks, this time of the year can be extremely stressful for companion animals. Make sure you have prepared an area in your house where they can choose to go to feel safe and secure. This can be a quiet, separate room with everything they need including bed, crate, food, water, and toys.



Planning your holiday

If you're going away for the holidays, don't forget to make plans for your companion animal! Perhaps you're going to a pet-friendly place where they can join you, or maybe it would be best to arrange someone look after them. Either way, always put your animals needs first. Ask yourself: are they suited to travel, or will it make them anxious? Do I have everything I need to ensure they're safe during travel? Will they be more comfortable at a boarding kennel or cattery? Is it best to arrange a pet sitter? Always make your choices based on where your animal will be happiest!



Don't forget local wildlife

Wild animals can also struggle during the warmer holiday months. Having shade and enough clean, fresh water and easy access to it can make a huge difference to the well-being and survival of local wild species such as birds, bees, butterflies, and small mammals. This is especially helpful for animals that may not be able travel far, or for animals that are dehydrated.

Birdbaths are a simple way to add a reliable water source to your backyard. All you need is a container, cleaning brush, and water. You can purchase a pre-made bird bath, or you can make your own. Keep it filled daily with fresh, clean water. Just remember to keep it clean, dirty water is not good for animals!

Use a stiff scrubbing brush to remove any bird droppings and algae from the inside of the bath or container, rinse, and refill with fresh water each day.

Animals are for life, not just the holidays

Some holidays come with the tradition of gift giving. While there are many animals looking for their forever homes, remember that when you adopt a companion animal, it's for a lifetime, not just the holiday.

Sometimes people will give an animal as a surprise gift but there are many reasons why this is not a good idea:

Animals are not the same as other gifts.

Along with cute, cuddly, and exciting, comes training, food costs, vet bills, time, understanding, and lots of patience.

These relationships can be extremely rewarding, but only when everyone is ready to take on that responsibility.

The holidays are a busy and stressful time.

Adjusting to a new home any time of the year can be difficult for a companion animal, let alone at such an eventful time.



Compatibility is an essential part of any adoption.

When an animal is given as a gift, the animal and new guardian may not be the best matched to one another.

Unfortunately, the number of abandoned animals in shelters rises over the holidays. After the excitement wears off, many people realize they can't make the commitment to an animal. This can be prevented by not giving animals as gifts. If you and your family have thought long and hard about adopting and are ready for the responsibility, it's best to wait until everything has settled down from the holidays, then you can choose an animal that is a perfect match for the whole family, as a family.

In the meantime, you can prepare by buying supplies and reading all about how to care for an animal on the Kids' Portal!