

# PetAssist®

## Companion's Corner

### Holiday Travel Hazards for Pets

by Global Pet Plus' consulting veterinarian,  
Dr. Charles Schwirck, DVM

Traveling with your pet during the holiday season can present some unique challenges as compared to traveling with your pet at other times of the year. The basic traveling with pet's guidelines apply but there are some extra precautions to be taken when it comes to food and other holiday hazards.

Of course one of the major potential hazards of holiday travel with your pet is the possibility of them consuming some food they are not used to or worse yet, some food that is potentially toxic to them. Even foods that are seemingly innocuous can cause a bad upset stomach in pets that are not used to them. Fatty foods can cause pancreatitis, bones can cause obstructions, grapes or raisins can cause kidney damage, chocolate can cause toxicity, etc. While friends and relatives might want to slip a special treat to Fido, it's best to advise everyone to refrain and have them only give treats that you deem ok for the pet. In addition, stick with your pet's normal diet and foods that it is used to. It's always advisable to bring your pet's food with you to ensure that it's readily available. Also, do not forget to bring any medications or supplements that your pet regularly takes and make sure there is enough of that medication or supplement to last the duration of your trip.

There is also a nonfood potential holiday pet hazard. Pets have an unusual propensity to consume items that you would not think they would want to or would be able to consume, especially when they are in unfamiliar environments. Pets have been known to swallow all kinds of things. Sometimes they rid themselves of these things and sometimes they can lead to intestinal obstructions or choking.

Another thing to consider is the change in climate and how that may affect your pet. Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years all occur in late fall or winter. When traveling from a cold climate to a warm one, give your pet time to acclimate to exercising (or just walking) in the warmer weather. Warmer climates also have external parasite concerns such as fleas and ticks year round so flea and tick protection will need to be continued or reapplied when visiting those areas. Many people might do the opposite climate change and chose to use the holiday season to go skiing. The same concerns for your pet acclimating to change in temperature and adjusting to snow apply when going from warm to cold as from cold to warm.

The best solution to keeping your pet safe while traveling with them especially during holiday times is to be prepared and keep close track of where the pet is at all times. That will ensure a safe and happy holiday for all!

