



Paw Prints

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Columnist

Keep Halloween safe for your pets

It's almost the spookiest night of the year. Halloween can be a fun and festive time for families — but for pets it can spell disaster.

This time of year — replete with jack o' lanterns, witches costumes, ghosts, ghouls and trick-or-treaters — can be upsetting, frightening and dangerous for your furry friend.

All but the most social dogs should be kept in a separate, quiet room, away from the front door during peak trick-or-treating hours. Masks and costumes change how people look and smell to a pet, so even familiar friends may become frightening. Dogs are especially territorial and may become

anxious and growl at innocent trick-or-treaters.

K.C. Theisen, director of petcare issues for The Humane Society of the United States, warns that “the things that make Halloween a treat for people — noises, smells, trick-or-treaters at the door in costumes, can overwhelm many pets.”

Always make sure your dog or cat has proper identification. Many times when opening the door for trick-or-treaters, your dog or cat can easily dart outside, without you noticing.

During the week of Halloween, calls to the veterinarian at Pet Poison Helpline increase by 12 percent.

Most of the calls involve pets accidentally ingesting candy. Any candy is bad enough, but chocolate is particularly toxic to pets. Dogs are especially attracted to the smell of chocolate, making it a significant threat.

Other candy treats that contain plastic sticks, like lollipops, can be harmful, even deadly, if swallowed by your furry friend. Cellophane and foil wrappers also are potential hazards that could get gulped down along with the Halloween candy.

Keep all the candy in a



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Luna the black cat on Halloween. The holiday is fun for people but can be rough — and dangerous — for pets.

sealed container away from your furry kid. And make sure that your guests, particularly children, know not to tempt Fido or Kitty with candy.

Since it may not seem fair for your pet to miss out on all the goodies, have a supply of healthy dog and cat treats to give them.

Most pets are happiest wearing nothing but their birthday suits. But if Fido enjoys being dressed up in a costume, forgo the mask or anything that covers his eyes

or ears and anything that might tangle in your furry friends legs.

Halloween decorations such as candles and jack o' lanterns can also be a hazard when they are within your dog or cat's range. Frightened cats zooming through the house can easily tip over a candle or knock into a carved pumpkin with a candle inside, causing a fire.

Cats, especially black cats, are particularly at risk around the night of

Halloween. What can you do to keep your cat safe from any cruel pranksters? Keep her safely indoors on the days leading up to Halloween. Remember that a cat out on the street at this time is also at risk of being panicked by children wearing costumes.

Do not hesitate to contact your veterinarian or the 24-hour Pet Poison Helpline immediately at 1-800-213-6680 if you suspect that your pet has ingested something or might be injured.

Top Ten Reasons to Adopt a Black Cat...

10. You'll save money on their Halloween costumes.
9. You can always find them in the snow.
8. Holding a black cat is very slimming.
7. Black cats will match any décor.
6. A lint brush isn't required for a black-tie affair.
5. When you love a black cat, luck is on your side.
4. Black cats are like onyx, a beautiful gem.
3. Hey, they don't care what color you are!
2. Love knows no color.

And the number-one reason to adopt a black cat...

1. They are the least likely to be adopted.

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WALLY WEST: I'm a big (try 17 lbs.!), handsome black cat with beautiful eyes. I'm half of the “Cupboard Couple” with my very best friend, Princess! We like being together all the time — all the time! Princess and I have decided that we need to go live somewhere quiet together. We're both a bit shy and need an indoor home together. So, we talked BrightSide into adopting us out as a pair for the price of one — not to lessen our importance or wonderfulness, just an incentive to let us continue to live together because she's my BFF. (Pet ID number A19014583)

BrightSide Animal Center
1355 NE Hemlock Ave., Redmond
Open Tues. - Sat., 10 to 5
541-923-0882
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