

# Top 10 Holiday Foods to Avoid Feeding Your Pet

By Dr. Jasmine Streeter, DVM

It is officially the season of feasting. With Thanksgiving leftovers tucked in the fridge and Christmas cookies baking in the oven, you and your pet are probably being tempted with all types of aromas. There are many holiday dishes that families enjoy during this time of year. Sometimes we are tempted to share these meals with our pets. This month's focus is on keeping your pet healthy and happy by avoiding these toxic foods and beverages.

- 1. Poultry Skin:** Turkey, duck, chicken and geese are one of the hallmark dishes served for many families around the country. Their cooked skin is usually covered with delicious seasonings, oils and fats, making them toxic to your pet. Pets that ingest these skins are at risk of developing a life-threatening illness resulting in inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis). Severe vomiting and diarrhea may also be observed.
- 2. Drippings and Gravy:** The drippings of meats are often used to make gravy. The gravy contains all

the seasonings and even more fat than the skin of the meat itself. These foods may also cause pancreatitis, vomiting and diarrhea.

- 3. Cooked Ham, Poultry and Steak Bones:** These bones may be a favorite of your pet. Did you know that they are dangerous when ingested? When consumed, they can break and splinter into sharp points that cause tears in the intestine or a foreign body obstruction.
- 4. Dough:** Bread, cake, cookie and muffin dough often contain leavening agents that make ingestion harmful to your pets. When eaten, the dough expands in the stomach causing pain and producing toxic ethanol from fermentation.
- 5. Alcohol:** This substance should never be shared with your pet. Alcohol or ethanol is metabolized differently in dogs and cats than in humans. Ingestion of this substance can lead to difficulty breathing, seizures, vomiting or death.
- 6. Onions and Garlic:** These two commonly used seasonings can cause red blood cell damage in your pet

leading to anemia and sometimes the production of red or brown urine (hemoglobinuria). Other similar vegetables of the genus Allium (e.g., chives, leeks, and scallions) are also toxic and should be avoided.

- 7. Raisins and Grapes:** These fruits of the genus Vitis can lead to acute kidney failure and death when ingested by dogs and cats.
- 8. Macadamia Nuts:** These delicious nuts have been shown to cause hind limb weakness (paresis) and abnormal gait (ataxia) when ingested in large quantities.
- 9. Chocolate:** This sweet treat contains caffeine and theobromine which are toxic for your pet. The darker the chocolate (e.g., bakers or dark chocolate) the more harmful it will be to your furry family member.
- 10. Corn on the Cob, Twine, and Tooth-**



Dr. Jasmine and her cat Soleil wear festive attire for the season

**picks:** These are commonly stolen items from leftover dinner plates when ingested can lead to foreign body obstruction or vomiting.

This season should be spent creating memories of love and joy. Hopefully, by following this guide, you will avoid costly veterinary bills and save money. Wishing you a Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa, and a Happy New Year!

Do you have a question for Dr. Jasmine? Email your pet questions to the veterinarian at [drjasmine@theskanner.com](mailto:drjasmine@theskanner.com).

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SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF U.S. STRATEGIC COMMUNITY ALLIANCES AND CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT FOR NIELSEN  
Cheryl Grace is the visionary behind Nielsen's African-American Consumer Report. This award-winning report led to the company's historic creation of Nielsen's Diversity Insights Series. Each report focuses on the rapidly growing African-American, Hispanic, or Asian consumer base. Cheryl is known for her engaging and refreshing perspective about why we buy what we buy.



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