

Keeping Your Dogs Safe During Halloween

PVMA FACT SHEET



It's that time again—time to dress up as your favorite super hero, princess or zombie and reap the rewards of the kindness of your neighbors. Halloween is a time for everyone to have fun, feel like a kid, and eat a little extra candy, but Halloween celebrations can pose risks for the family dog. Here are some tips for keeping your pooch safe during Halloween.

If you plan to hand out candy from your home on Trick or Treat night, remember that all the extra doorbell ringing may have an adverse effect. Depending on the disposition of your dog, excitable kids at the door every few minutes may also add to the stress. Some dogs find the constant commotion frightening and may bolt while you open the front door. Make sure your dog is wearing a collar with contact information for you or your veterinarian. Also, if your dog is microchipped, make sure your registration information is up-to-date. The microchip won't do any good if you can't be reached!

If you plan to have your dog in costume, make sure it fits properly and is not too tight or too loose. It should also not contain decorations that can easily be chewed off and choked on or swallowed. Also make sure the costume doesn't interfere with your pet's senses like seeing and hearing properly. If your pet can't tolerate the doorbell and the trick or treaters, consider putting them in another room—without their costume.

Jack-o'-lanterns with burning candles inside them should be kept out of reach of your pet at all times.

When handing out candy from home, be sure to keep the candy you plan to distribute is out of the reach of your dog while waiting for or talking to trick or treaters to arrive. Chocolate is poisonous to dogs, and depending on the size of the dog and the strength of the choco-

late, it can cause death. According to the Pet Poison Helpline, in 2010, chocolate consumption among dogs increased more than 200% during Halloween! If your dog has gotten into the chocolate candy, call your veterinarian or the Pet Poison Helpline immediately. The chemical toxicity results in vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, inflammation of the pancreas, an abnormal heart rhythm, seizures, and sometimes, even death. Remember, it's the dose that makes the poison. In smaller dogs, even the wrappers from candy can result in a secondary obstruction in the stomach or intestines.

Chocolate isn't the only Halloween danger. High-sugar, high-fat candies can cause pancreatitis while raisins—sometimes appearing in the candy or handed out instead of candy—are also extremely poisonous to dogs and can cause kidney failure. If your dog has eaten any amount of raisins, grapes, or currants, you should treat it as a potentially toxic situation and immediately call your veterinarian or the Pet Poison Helpline.

If you plan take your dog along while taking your kids trick or treating, make sure you keep them reigned in on a fairly short leash while you're out and about. Even if you have a well-behaved dog, letting them get ahead of you on an extendable leash increases the opportunity that they could trip other children, steal a snack out of someone's treat bag, or gobble up anything that gets dropped.

After trick or treat is over, be sure to store your candy in a spot where your dog can't reach it.

Some dogs are more determined than others and may find away to get to it even if it is high up on the counter. Keeping it in the refrigerator or in an upper cabinet or pantry may be a better solution.

If you have any suspicions about what your dog has ingested, be sure to consult your veterinarian immediately or contact The Pet Poison Helpline at 1.800.213.6680 or www.petpoisonhelpline.com.



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