

## What You Should Know About

# Halloween Hints for Pets:

### **Halloween Hints — No Fright, No Fear For Pets This Year!**

Halloween is one of the most fun times of the year, and it's natural to want to try to involve your family pet in all the activity. It's important to keep in mind, though, that not all Halloween activities are fun or safe for pets. A few simple precautions can keep your spooky celebrations fun for everyone in the family, whether they are two footed or four footed.

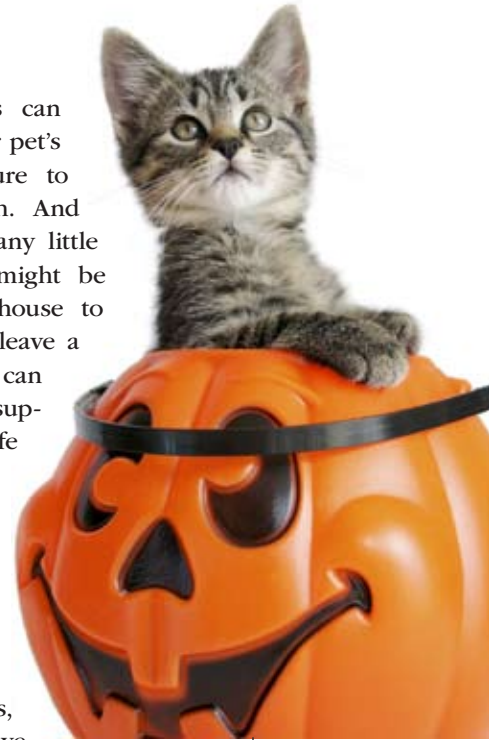
### **People Treats Are Not Pet Treats**

Did you know that chocolate can be poisonous to pets? It contains a substance—theobromine – that dogs find difficult to metabolize. Even modest amounts, such as a snack size bar or two, can be poisonous to a small dog. Other types of Halloween goodies, such as gum, chewy candies, hard balls, etc., can be choking hazards or cause GI upset. And it's not just the treats that you have to worry about. Pets that find dropped candy on the floor will often eat it – wrapper and all! Since foil and plastic are not digest-

ible, these substances can become lodged in your pet's digestive tract. Be sure to keep treats out of reach. And be sure to supervise any little human goblins that might be running around the house to make sure they don't leave a candy trail where pets can find it! Finally, keep a supply of healthy, pet safe goodies on hand, such as carrot sticks or low calorie dog cookies, if you feel the need to treat!

### **Decoration Dangers**

Lighted jack-o-lanterns, spooky fog, and festive lights on strings--all these things help create that spooky, Halloween ambiance you're after. But pets, just like small children, don't understand the dangers of candles, lanterns, or electric lights. If you have pets, use small battery operated lights instead of real flame



### **Kitty Care ALERT!**

It's sad, but true. Cats, particularly black ones, are at risk of being pet-napped or harmed during Halloween season. If you allow your cats outside, do your best to keep them indoors during the Halloween season.



## Halloween Hints

to put that eerie glow in your scary pumpkin's eyes. If you're using dry ice to create a spooky mist inside your Halloween lair, keep pets, as well as small children, out of the fog since it's composed of CO2 gas. Small people and critters can suffocate. Finally, remember that anything new will be of interest to a curious pet. Keep electric cords up out of the way where pets can't reach or chew them and be electrocuted.

### Stranger, Beware

Halloween can be a frightening time for some pets. The people they think they know and love dress up, put on masks, and don't look the same, while complete strangers come to the door and keep ringing the doorbell... again and again and again! It can all be very confusing for a pet. So, put yourself in their shoes, or, er, paws, for the day, and do what you can to minimize stress. If your pet seems nervous or worried, close him or her up in a quiet room with the door shut. Put on the TV, play some music, or leave some toys for them to play with. Don't take him or her out trick-or-treating with you. Keep in mind that some otherwise well-behaved pets may even bite if they are scared or stressed enough. A scary mask can frighten a dog as much as it can a small child, so be prepared and don't take chances.

Black cats are more at risk of being the target of harmful mischief during the Halloween season.

### The Do's and Don't of Pet Dress Up

At Halloween time, lots of owners enjoy dressing up their pets in cute costumes to compliment their own get-ups. When selecting a costume, keep in mind that, while some dogs may enjoy the extra attention, most animals don't like to have any unusual clothing on their bodies and can become scared, irritated, or uncomfortable. If you do dress up your dog, start with something simple and see how they react before putting on costumes that are more complicated. A Halloween theme collar, leash, or bandana may be festive enough for these dogs! Make sure any pet clothing is properly adjusted. Too tight, and it can cut off circulation to a tail, leg, or ear or cause them to choke. Too loose, and your pet can trip on it or get it caught on something. Make sure pets can see, smell, and hear through their costumes. Never leave a pet unattended "in costume" in the event he or she becomes scared or tries to chew it off. Serious injury can occur, especially in cats with anything tied around their neck or chest. It is best to leave the costume capers simple and only attempt with consenting, outgoing canines.

### I ID... Do You?

Constantly opening and closing doors to hand out goodies to trick-or-treaters is also a risk. A stressed pet could easily bolt through an open door. For that reason, make doubly sure your pet is wearing his or her collar and all applicable forms of ID on Halloween night!

