



Tim Banker, DVM, FAVD
Sedgefield Animal Hospital
and Dental Center

Tim Banker DVM, FAVD (Fellow of the Academy of Veterinary Dentistry) has been in general practice for over 40 years and has always seen the need for proper dental care for his patients. Today he is considered a pioneer in the field of Veterinary Dentistry. Dr. Banker is the owner of Sedgefield Animal Hospital and Dental Center and for the past 32 years he has been a referral dentist and seen patients from all over the Southern United States and Canada.



Brooke Townsend, DVM
Sedgefield Animal Hospital
and Dental Center

Dr. Brooke is a Greensboro native and has worked at Sedgefield Animal Hospital and Dental Center for six years. A graduate of North Carolina State, she has been practicing veterinary medicine for 12 years. Her interests include internal medicine, soft tissue surgery, dermatology and geriatrics. Dr. Brooke enjoys working closely with pet owners to provide all of her patients with the best quality of life and medical care.

Make the Holidays Happy, Not Hazardous!

The holiday season is upon us and we all want to include our furry family member in each and every festivity, but are we being safe and responsible pet parents?

While some of the more common threats, like chocolate, are better known, there are many other holiday dangers you should be aware of to help prevent accidents and trips to the emergency room.

Toxic Plants: Decking the halls with boughs of holly may not be so jolly for your pets. Make sure to keep your pets from ingesting these *commonly misunderstood plants: poinsettia, mistletoe, holly, Christmas trees and Christmas cacti*. While these plants are considered to be less toxic, they can cause mild, usually self-limiting vomiting and diarrhea. Other *highly toxic plants, such as lilies, can cause severe kidney failure and death in cats, even with the smallest exposure*. Vomiting and lethargy usually develop within several hours and your pet can rapidly deteriorate. In these cases, you should seek medical attention for your pet immediately.

Holiday Treats and Snacks: That plate of cookies doesn't only look and smell tempting to us humans. Most dogs wouldn't hesitate to scarf down a delicious holiday treat or the whole plate if given the opportunity. Be sure to keep these treats away from your pets: *chocolate, xylitol sweetener, fatty foods, grapes, raisins, onions, nuts, alcoholic beverages and other harmful leftovers*. You take a bite of a cookie or baked good and your pet looks at you with those big brown eyes. What's one bite going to hurt right? Wrong! Artificial sweeteners contained in some gums, toothpastes, puddings, peanut butters and baked goods can cause severe hypoglycemia and liver problems even with a very low exposure. A small piece of leftover turkey sandwich may not cause problems for the otherwise healthy pet; however, *pancreatitis and GI upset is the #1 reason for emergency veterinary visits during the holiday season*. Small pets and animals with sensitive systems can develop serious illness

from only a small amount of holiday treats. It's best and a lot safer to skip the "people food" altogether.

Decorations: They help spread the holiday cheer but if ingested by your four-legged friend that holiday cheer will cost you more than you bargained for. Tinsel, ornaments, garland, ribbons and bows are just a few new inviting toys for your pets. Why they would eat them is beyond us, but it never fails, some are bound to try. Liquid potpourri is another attractive dangerous item to pets. Potpourri can cause irritation and ulceration of the skin and GI tract. Snow globes can contain ethylene glycol (antifreeze), so be sure to keep these out of reach. We know your pet can't live in a bubble but be sure to keep decorations up high, place a baby gate to keep them out of a certain room, or only allow them access to decorated areas of the house while being supervised.



Toys and Gifts: 'Tis the season! Yes, we give gifts and stockings with treats to our pet family too. There are a few misconceptions about toys and treats that can cause more damage to your pet, especially his teeth. Tennis balls (and similar toys covered in felt-like fabric) can actually wear down tooth enamel, causing defects and other problems. Hard balls and bones can actually fracture and break your pet's teeth. Dogs were actually not designed to chew animal bones, antlers, cow hooves, hard plastic bones or anything else that is hard and rigid. A dog's enamel is thinner than a person's and yet they have 4-10 times the bite force as a human. So, if they bite down on a hard substance with no 'give' (or flexibility) to it, the tooth will break. Know your pet, if he/she has a tendency to tear up toys or ingest items, avoid giving them toys, especially if left unsupervised. Obstructions and "foreign body ingestions" are far more common this time of the year than any other time.

We all want to have a great holiday season and our pets deserve the best too. Just remember safety should come first and consult with your veterinarian if you have any concerns. Enjoy spoiling your pet this year and be sure to support those pets in our community still looking for their forever families. Remember a great gift idea for any pet lover and animal friend would be donating or sponsoring a shelter or rescue pet on their behalf!

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