



ALONE AT HOME PET SERVICES

"Be the person your dog thinks you are."

(C.J. Frick)



December 2025

Holidays: Don't Forget Your Pet!



Pet parents, during the holiday season, remember our dogs and pets can be negatively affected by our anxiety and stress, some more than others!

In 2023, the American Psychological Association uncovered these shocking numbers about stress and the holidays:

- ~ 89% of American adults feel stress during the holidays.
- ~ 41% reported higher stress levels vs other times of the year!
- ~ **Even worse**, 64% of those living with mental illness felt their stress worsened during the holiday season!

If humans are so incredibly stressed out during the holidays, imagine how our sensitive pets feel?!

How Human Stress Affects Dogs

Whether we realize it or not, dogs take their cues from their humans in good times and not-so-good times. Dogs and other pets can immediately pick up on how their human is feeling by detecting the odors of stress resulting from the automatic chemical changes in our sweat and breath during times of stress. In fact, research has shown that our dogs' cortisol levels (the "stress hormone") often mirror their owners' levels. In other words, **if you are stressed, chances are your dog is too!**

While our dogs and pets don't have to worry about buying the perfect gift or making Grandma's holiday dinner with all the trimmings, it **can** often mean disrupted routines, strangers, decorations and unfamiliar sights, sounds and smells, leading to hiding, anxious or destructive behaviors, excessive barking and hyperactivity or worse.

How to Help Your Dog this Holiday

Please don't forget your pets and their needs this holiday season!

- Regularly check on your pets and monitor your own emotions.
- Stick to their **regular routines** for exercise, eating and potty breaks.
- Also, create a **quiet and safe space** for them to relax in with their favorite blanket, bone or enrichment toy when they become overwhelmed or anxious with busy holiday celebrations!

Canine Enrichment for Your Dog



When you're wrapping those holiday gifts, instead of throwing away unusable wrapping paper, scrunch it up and toss it into a box with hidden treats, kibble or favorite toy for your dog to find! **Remember, always supervise your dog to keep them safe.**

And, use the canine enrichment activities we discussed this year to keep your furry best friend busy, happy and content this holiday!

- **Dog-powered sports:** Canicross and cani-hiking/trekking, bikejoring, scootering, skijoring, sledding and cani-skating.
- **Nose/scent work** with favorite toys, treats or essential oils.
- **Recorded buttons** to teach your dog - or cat - to communicate with simple words or commands.
- **Lick mats** can help engage and calm your dog.
- **Food puzzle games** engage natural dog behaviors.
- **Rally obedience/agility training** at home or in a competitive environment.
- Teach your dog **new tricks**; **find or put away** specific items in the house (up the ante by using **new items** from outside, your child's school or your office); **ring a bell** to go outside; or train for the **Canine Good Citizen Certification**.
- The DIY **Muffin Pan Enrichment** toy or K9 Snuffle Mat (or buy one).
- A **Flirt Pole** to attract and engage your dog's prey drive.

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Disclaimer: This information does not constitute professional veterinary advice. Always work with your regular licensed vet for your dog, their medical history, overall condition, age and breed.

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Email: TammyMcMahan@AloneAtHomePetServices.com or Call: 727-395-0051

Certified Veterinary Technician & Certified Professional Pet Sitter





- Apples (no seeds or cores)
- Bananas
- Carrots: raw or cooked (plain)
- Cooked rice/pasta (plain)
- Cucumbers



- Green veggies: plain, steamed (including green beans, broccoli, celery, zucchini, spinach, asparagus)
- Potatoes: plain, baked, peeled

- Pumpkin: plain canned (NOT pie filling)
- Squash: cooked, peeled
- Sweet Potatoes: cooked, peeled
- Turkey: lean meat only and NO bones

- Alcoholic drinks (including egg nog, beer, wine, spirits)
- Artificial sweetener known as xylitol, birch sugar, birch bark extract, wood sugar, xylite, xilitol, d-xylitol, zylatol)
- Blue cheese and other dressings
- Bread dough (raw)
- Caffeine: coffee, tea, chocolate
- Chocolate, cocoa, chocolate coins
- Cooked bones, corn cobs
- Dairy: butter, milk, cream, cheese)
- Desserts



- Fatty meat scraps/skin, drippings, gravy
- Fruitcake, Mince Pie, Christmas/Plum Pudding
- Grapes, raisins, currants

- Ham, bones, bacon, sausage
- Sufganiyot (Hanukkah doughnuts)
- Latkes (Hanukkah potato pancakes)
- Macadamia, walnuts, pistachios
- Mushrooms
- Onions, leeks, chives, scallions
- Rugelach (Hanukkah pastry)
- Salty and/or fatty snacks
- Spices (including sage, baking soda/ powder, nutmeg)
- Stuffing

Move all food scraps, bones and trash to a tightly-secured garbage can to prevent both pets - and wildlife - from being able to access.

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AVOID Chocolate Toxicity During the Holidays

Most pet parents know that the ingestion of chocolate by their dogs and cats is an unwanted and toxic emergency (**especially** the smaller the pet) and time is of the essence for the best possible outcome!

Chocolate's toxicity comes from the **theobromine** (closely related to caffeine in cocoa beans, cola nuts and tea) plus **caffeine** that makes it dangerous for both canines and felines, along with the high fat and sugar content.

In addition, the **darker (and more bitter)** the chocolate, cocoa or cacao, the **more toxic** it is. While milk and white chocolate contain less cocoa and may be less dangerous, it's safer to keep all cocoa powder, baking chocolate, candy and desserts out of your pet's reach!

At SUPERZOO 2025, a new fast-acting, vet-approved product, "**Chocolate Detox for Dogs,**" was introduced for dog/cat parents and **home use**.

The 100% natural ingredients are designed to quickly **absorb** and **neutralize** toxic theobromine while being gentle on the pet's digestive system (unlike traditional activated charcoal) and without the risk of dehydration. This product has been third-party tested by independent laboratories and validated by clinical trials at leading veterinary research institutions for quality, efficacy and safety for your family dog.

And of course, it offers peace of mind when it's needed the most!

BEWARE: Dogs can **also** be poisoned by **cocoa/cocoa bean mulch** which contains discarded toxic cocoa bean shells with theobromine and caffeine.



**Learn more at
ChocolateDetoxForDogs.com.**



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