

## Easter Tips to Keep Pets Safe

**Dog and cat owners urged to look out for household hazards during the holiday.**

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As tempting as it might be for some people to give a loved one a new animal as a pet for Easter, animal welfare organizations are spreading the word that such gifts are not usually a good idea.

The reason why, according to groups such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA), is that animals require lots of attention to make sure they grow up healthy. After the novelty of a kitten or puppy wears off, the daily responsibility of feeding, cleaning, exercising and giving attention to the animal sets in, and often the animal gets dumped or taken to a shelter.

Instead of buying a new pet for a child as a holiday gift, it's best to give a stuffed animal instead. That way there are no consequences if children become bored with the daily chores. For those adamant about getting a live animal, remember that it is a lifetime commitment and not a seasonal trend, according to spcaLA.

For pets already in the home, several hazards around the home pose a risk. However, by following some easy safety tips, they can be avoided.

Easter lilies are bright and decorative but are also poisonous to pets and can cause kidney failure. Keep all Easter lilies in a spot where pets cannot access them. Another option would be to purchase more pet-friendly plants such as Easter orchids or daisies, suggests spcaLA President Madeline Bernstein.

Easter usually means there are a lot of sweets around the house, especially chocolate. Chocolate can make animals seriously ill and possibly kill them. All candy, especially chocolate, should be kept away from dogs and cats.

While Easter grass may make gift baskets look inviting, it can also be highly dangerous to animals. If ingested, the plastic grass can cause a serious intestinal blockage that may require surgery. Safer alternatives include straw, tissue paper or newspaper shredding.