

Planning Keeps Dogs Safe on Valentine's Day

Traditional Valentine's Day fare such as chocolate, flowers, and candles can pose a threat to dogs.

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Sixty percent of pet owners plan to include their furry friends in their Valentine's Day celebrations, according to a nationwide Purina survey of 1,000 pet owners in the United States. However, pet owners may want to show their dogs a little love by taking a few extra precautions for the holiday.

Sweet smells can attract dogs to chocolate or candy, but accidental ingestion can be hazardous to their health. Pet owners should be on the lookout for symptoms of ingestion such as vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, hyperactivity, and increased thirst, urination, and heart rate according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA).

In addition, aluminum foil and cellophane candy wrappers are dangerous as they may cause intestinal blockage and induce vomiting.

Candles may be romantic, but dogs who run past one may knock it over and start a house fire. Keep candles in a location where pets cannot reach them.

Flower bouquets are popular gifts on Valentine's Day, but a colorful and scented floral display may attract a dog's attention.

"Animals are very good at sniffing out things they shouldn't eat," said Dr. Stephen Hansen, veterinary toxicologist and senior vice president of the ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center.

By taking a few precautionary steps, Valentine's Day celebrations can continue while emergency veterinary clinic visits are kept at bay.