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Holiday Gifts and Goodies Can Be Deadly for Curious Pets Specialty Veterinarian Shares Pets' Most Commonly Swallowed Holiday Items

Langhorne, PA – While the rest of us sit enjoying that big holiday feast, our pets might be quietly savoring those new diamond earrings or munching on an unsuspecting child's new toys. Top specialty veterinarians say cases just like these are commonplace, holiday after holiday, many requiring surgery or endoscopic treatment and some even resulting in death.

A specialty veterinarian at Center for Animal Referral and Emergency Services (CARES), in Langhorne, says it's often the least suspected household and personal items pets can be attracted to during the holidays, like toy parts, coins, and even jewelry.



"Pets will eat just about anything, given the chance," says Dr. Jennifer Adler, MSc, VMD, DACVIM at CARES, "and while some objects might pass, others can become lodged in a pet's gastrointestinal tract and could require life-saving surgery or removal with an endoscope."

Pictured Above: Toy Ball

Every single holiday season, x-rays reveal surprising swallowed objects inside of our curious furry family members. "Working in a referral veterinary practice means you never know what you are going to find," says Dr. Adler. "From a fish hook, to needle and thread, to tube socks and a stack of coins, just when you think you've seen it all, an animal is rushed in having eaten something more unusual."

Common Holiday Swallowing Hazards Include:

Bones – "There are no safe bones. Bone fragments and shards can become lodged in the

esophagus, stomach, and intestines, potentially requiring life-saving surgery,” warns Dr. Adler.

People Food & Table Scraps- “Dogs should not be fed fatty ‘people-food’ because it can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and pancreatitis, a serious and potentially life-threatening disease,” she says. “Keep fatty table scraps away from dogs; sticking to dog treats proves your love!”

Real Christmas Trees – “Tree needles can be irritating to pets’ digestive tracts when eaten. Tree water can also cause an upset stomach, so cover up the water and keep them safely away from the tree.”

Ornament ingestion – According to Dr. Adler, “A lot of tree ornaments look like tasty toys or treats to our pets, so be mindful that low branches are right at whisker and muzzle level!”

Tinsel and Ribbons – “Cats love to play with tinsel and ribbons, and often eat them,” she adds. “The problem is, both can become lodged in their intestinal tract, requiring surgical or endoscopic removal. Keep your cat away from tinsel, ribbons or string, to avoid this potentially serious problem.”

Signs a pet may have ingested a foreign object:

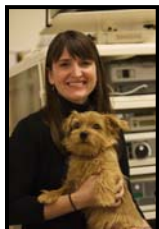
- *Repeated Vomiting and Dry Heaving
- *Sensitive or bloated stomach, pain to the touch
- *Continued stretching or attempting to get comfortable
- *Extreme Lethargy
- *Not eating



Pictured Right: Nail, Metal Construction Staple & Other Hardware

What pet owners can do to keep their pets safe and prevent a costly vet visit:

“Pet owners should keep their animals away from potentially dangerous items in their homes, just like you would a young child” urges Dr. Adler. “People who suspect their pet has swallowed a foreign object should bring them to their family veterinarian or emergency hospital as soon as possible. A timely diagnosis and treatment can lead to fewer complications and quicker recoveries for pets in trouble.”



Jennifer Adler, MSc, VMD, DACVIM, Internal Medicine Specialist at CARES, is available for interview and endoscopic procedure

demonstrations. Foreign body x-ray images are also available upon request. Media inquiries and booking requests, please contact Julie Robbins (646) 981-3342 or Julie@FetchingCommunications.com.

About CARES:

CARES is a full service specialty and emergency referral veterinary hospital. Specialty cases are seen by referral from the primary care practitioner. Specialty services include: Cardiology, Clinical Pathology, Internal Medicine, Oncology, Ophthalmology, Radiology, Surgery and Client Support. The hospital also offers 24 hour emergency care. CARES has been voted 2008 Neighbors' Choice Award Winner for Best Veterinarian/Animal Hospital in Bucks County. For more information, visit www.vetcares.com