

FELINE FORUM

Courtesy of:



Keeping Your Kitty Safe



Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanza, or just gather with friends during this festive season, here's a list from the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) you can use to keep your favorite feline happy and healthy.

- Season's eatings shouldn't include holiday greenery such as holly, mistletoe, lilies, and amaryllis. They can make your cat sick if ingested.
- Look before you light. Your cat's wagging tail can easily knock over a burning candle. Liquid potpourri is also dangerous to cats if ingested.
- Keep batteries — loose and in packages — away from cats. They contain corrosives that can cause ulceration in his mouth, tongue, and gastrointestinal tract if bitten, chewed, or swallowed.
- Your Christmas tree tempts cats, that have been known to chew on the branches and the decorations hanging from them. Place small, breakable ornaments high up, and keep tinsel and garland out of your cat's reach, as these can get caught in his throat.
- Don't allow your cat access to holiday spreads, as many foods can cause problems.

If you suspect your cat has eaten a potentially poisonous substance, call your veterinarian or the APCC's emergency hotline (888-4-ANI-HELP) for 24-hour assistance.

Seven Questions for Prospective Cat Sitters



1. Why did the sitter get into this business?
2. How long has he or she been pet sitting?
3. What did the sitter do before?
4. What pets does the sitter own?
5. What signs of illness or stress would the sitter look for, and what would he or she do in case of illness?
6. Would the sitter be willing to take your cat to the veterinarian if needed?
7. Does the sitter have a backup in case of illness, car trouble, or inclement weather?



The information for Feline Forum has been prepared by the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY. Copyright 2002

Choosing a Toy for Your Cat



Does your home, like ours, have cat toys tucked in every nook and cranny? James Richards, DVM, director of the Cornell Feline Health Center at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, nailed this phenomenon when he said, "I bet there are a lot more cat toys bought than are ever played with by cats."

What toys are good ones? "Those they'll play with," Richards says. With young cats, those that look or move like a mouse or other prey, and ones that sound like a natural prey will engage them. A rolled up piece of paper will usually do it, as will a Ping-Pong™ ball. Another kind that's a good bet for young and adult cats alike are the fishing pole or wand type, which has a prey-like cloth or feather at the end of a string to dangle from a small pole. Using this "fishing pole" to make that object move like a mouse, bird, or insect is a good bet for grabbing the cat's interest. It also has the advantage of allowing us to interact with our cat, not just watch.

A second definition of a good cat toy is one that is safe. Avoid toys containing sharp edges or corners, and ones with wires, which might become a stabbing pointer. Do not give your kitty a ball of yarn to play with. Should she swallow a strand, it can get caught in her digestive tract or wrapped around her tongue creating a serious health problem. If you have any doubts about the safety of a toy, be it homemade or store bought, be sure to ask your veterinarian.

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