



ANIMAL ANTICS

“A PET IS FOR LIFE ... NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS”

A twist on the old adage, but it still holds true. If you're getting a pet this Christmas, please think very carefully. No matter how large or small the animal may be, it's a big undertaking and one to be given serious consideration. Although most people's intentions are good, unfortunately, some don't take into account the bigger picture of responsible pet ownership. You need to choose an animal that fits into your lifestyle and consider the commitment and financial implications for your pet's lifetime.

It's also worth considering all the noise and disruption around Christmas and New Year. Wait until after the upheaval of the festive period before introducing a new animal to the household. In the meantime, consider making a donation to an animal charity of your choice or purchase some gifts from their Christmas catalogue or shop. If you're still serious about getting a pet, think about re-homing an animal that may have been discarded on last year's Christmas rubbish pile, local charities include:

- Cats Protection www.cats.org.uk Tel: 08707 708 650
- Last Chance Animal Rescue www.lastchanceanimalrescue.co.uk Tel: 01732 865530
- The Kit Wilson Trust for Animal Welfare www.kitwilsontrust.org.uk Tel: 01825 830444
- Raystede Centre for Animal Welfare www.raystede.org Tel: 01825 840252
- Celia Hammond Animal Trust www.celiahammond.org Tel: 01892 783367

(Most animal welfare charities will not allow any animals to be re-homed over the Christmas and New Year period as the months after Christmas are sadly their busiest ... make contact with them and discuss your intentions).

A handy tip ... **NEVER** give an animal as a surprise present. If you're buying a pet for your children, sit down with them and discuss the implications of responsible pet ownership, involve them in the decision making and draw up a list of items that the pet might require and suggest a contribution to the costs from their own pocket money. Then discuss an action plan of clearly defined responsibilities of who will walk the dog ... feed the cat ... clean out the rabbit etc.?

TIPS FOR A HEALTHY & HAPPY CHRISTMAS FOR YOUR PETS:

- Please make sure pets are kept to their normal feeding and exercise routines. We all like to indulge a little, and if you do wish to spoil Fido with something a little extra then please make sure it's in moderation. Too much excess or rich food will only lead to upset stomachs and diarrhoea.
- Please note that human sweets, chocolate and alcohol can be highly toxic and potentially lethal.
- You should never give your cat or dog cooked poultry bones. Please make sure that your bones are safely disposed off in the outside bin or where your pet cannot get hold of them.
- Decorations and electrical wire should be kept away from playful paws.
- Keep your pets away from poisonous festive plants such as holly, poinsettia, ivy and mistletoe.
- If you wish to buy presents for your pets this Christmas, please make sure they're supervised at all times if playing with toys.
- If you're planning a full house, please consider your pet. Make a den in a quieter area of the house where he can rest.
- If you're planning a holiday, make suitable provisions for your pet to be looked after by a professional pet carer and book well in advance to avoid disappointment.

**Pets provide unconditional love and make wonderful companions
... please consider your pet this Christmas.**

**COURTESY OF PET PATROL 365
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