

KEEP PETS AWAY FROM THE THANKSGIVING TURKEY



Although Thanksgiving is a time for shoring, the American Animal Hospital Association urges you not to share your holiday meal leftovers with your pet. Table scraps, including Thanksgiving turkey are unhealthy for pets. Turkey bones or spoiled meat could be especially dangerous to your pet's health.

Turkey bones, like other bird bones, are hollow and therefore break easily and splinter into sharp pieces. Most dogs will not chew bone thoroughly and sharp pieces can cause blockage and perforate the intestinal tract.

A pet that has a turkey bone lodged in his digestive system may not show any symptoms for one to two days. When symptoms do occur, they may include loss of appetite, depression, vomiting or diarrhea. Sometimes the bone will pass by itself; other times it may need to be surgically removed.

Another common ailment in pets that eat leftover turkey is salmonella food poisoning. Salmonella is an organism that lives in the turkey's intestinal tract. The cooking process usually destroys the organism, making the turkey safe to eat. Occasionally, the center of a turkey may be undercooked, especially if it's large or full of stuffing. If the meat sits out at room temperature for too long, the salmonella organisms can multiply and cause contamination. Pets may become poisoned if they eat any of the turkey that has been sitting out.

Symptoms of salmonella poisoning include gastrointestinal upset, vomiting, diarrhea, depression, high temperature, loss of appetite and listlessness.

Pets should not be allowed to eat table scraps, even on Thanksgiving. If your pet sneaks some turkey from the table and begins showing signs of the above symptoms, consult your veterinarian immediately.