

# How can we help?



*The Helpline team has taken some time away from the ringing phones to cover some of the more common topics of the winter months...*

**C**hristmas is great for spending some quality time with your cat, but it's also riddled with potential dangers! We've put together a checklist to help you make sure the festive period stays safe and happy for both you and him.

- 1 Decorations can be dangerous to cats if broken or nibbled by cats**, particularly items like glass baubles, tinsel and fairy light cables. If your cat can't keep his paws off them, it is best to keep him out of the room when you are not there
- 2 Noisy parties can be stressful for cats** so if you are planning a full house, ensure that your cat has a safe, quiet room to which he can retreat if he wants to avoid all the fuss. Many cats are startled by the sound of loud bangs, so try to keep him out of harm's way when it comes to pulling crackers, letting off party poppers and so on
- 3 Holly and mistletoe are potentially toxic to cats** so if choosing to have them in your house, position them well away from your cat's reach. Also, if you receive any plants as Christmas presents, consult your vet to check they are feline friendly
- 4 If you are thinking of offering your cat a treat** don't be tempted to give him human chocolate, which is not good for cats, or pieces of turkey which may contain small bones. Instead, you can give puss one of the safe-to-eat, healthy Christmas cat treats that are available
- 5 Clearing away Christmas presents.** After opening presents, be sure to completely clear the room of wrapping paper, elastic bands and so on to prevent your cat from nibbling at them
- 6 If going away at Christmas, make plans for your cat well in advance**, particularly if you are planning to put him in a cattery

## **Danger!**

Through the winter months, another common worry for callers to our Helpline is the heightened use of antifreeze as the weather gets colder and the danger this chemical can pose to their pets.

Antifreeze, or ethylene glycol, is a chemical used in car engines and as a de-icer in brake fluids and other liquids.

Many animals find antifreeze sweet tasting and ingesting even the smallest amount can lead to kidney failure and death, especially in cats.

To avoid accidental poisonings

- Always keep antifreeze in clearly labelled, robust, sealed containers away from children, pets and their environment
- Clean up any spills immediately, no matter how small, and make sure pets cannot access the area until it is clean and safe
- Always dispose of antifreeze safely and responsibly. Contact your local authority for advice

If your pet shows any of the following signs take them to a vet immediately

- Increased urination
- Increased drinking
- Vomiting
- Depression
- Lethargy
- Appearing drunk and uncoordinated
- Seizures
- Abnormally fast heartbeat
- Very fast, shallow breathing

The sooner veterinary treatment is received, the better their chances of survival.

## Some general winter worries

### How can I help keep my cat safe during the cold weather?

Your cat may be less inclined to go outside to the toilet when it's cold and wet, so provide at least one, if not two, litter trays in your home as your cat may prefer to stay in the warmth to do his business!

If your cat uses an outdoor water source to drink, make sure it doesn't freeze. Always have clean, fresh water available inside in case the outdoor source is inaccessible.

We all like to be warm and cosy during the winter and your cat is no exception. Provide some shelter for him if he goes outside, such as a designated shelter – or cardboard box – extra bedding, blankets and fleeced cat beds are always appreciated.

Vehicle engines can be seen as a nice, warm place for a cat to have a nap so, before setting out on a journey, be vigilant and check under the bonnet of your vehicle.

Keep your cat in during the hours of darkness when there is a greater risk of road traffic accidents, theft and physical attacks .

### What could I get my cat for Christmas?

Christmas is a great time to spoil your cat. With a wide range of cat products available, why not take a look at our Christmas catalogue? It has some great gift ideas for you and your cat!

- Paw print cat bed £19.99 – 62676
- Cat Treat Ball £3.95 – 66625
- Scratch & Play Catnip Mat £10.99 – 66790

For further details please see our Christmas Gift Catalogue 2011 at [www.catsprotectionshop.co.uk](http://www.catsprotectionshop.co.uk)

### I've got a really busy Christmas lined up and with friends and family coming over, but my cat is very timid and I'm worried it may stress him out. Is there anything I can do to help make it less stressful for him?

Feliway® is a synthetic copy of the feline facial pheromone, used by cats to mark their territory as safe and secure. Feliway® can be used to help comfort and reassure cats, while they cope with a challenging situation and/or help prevent or reduce the stress caused to a cat during a change in their environment.

Provide extra hiding places and high vantage points where he can sit and watch what is going on around him.

If you are able to do so, please provide your cat with a separate room where he can enjoy some quiet time, please remember to leave him with food, water and a litter tray and give him a few extra cuddles! ●

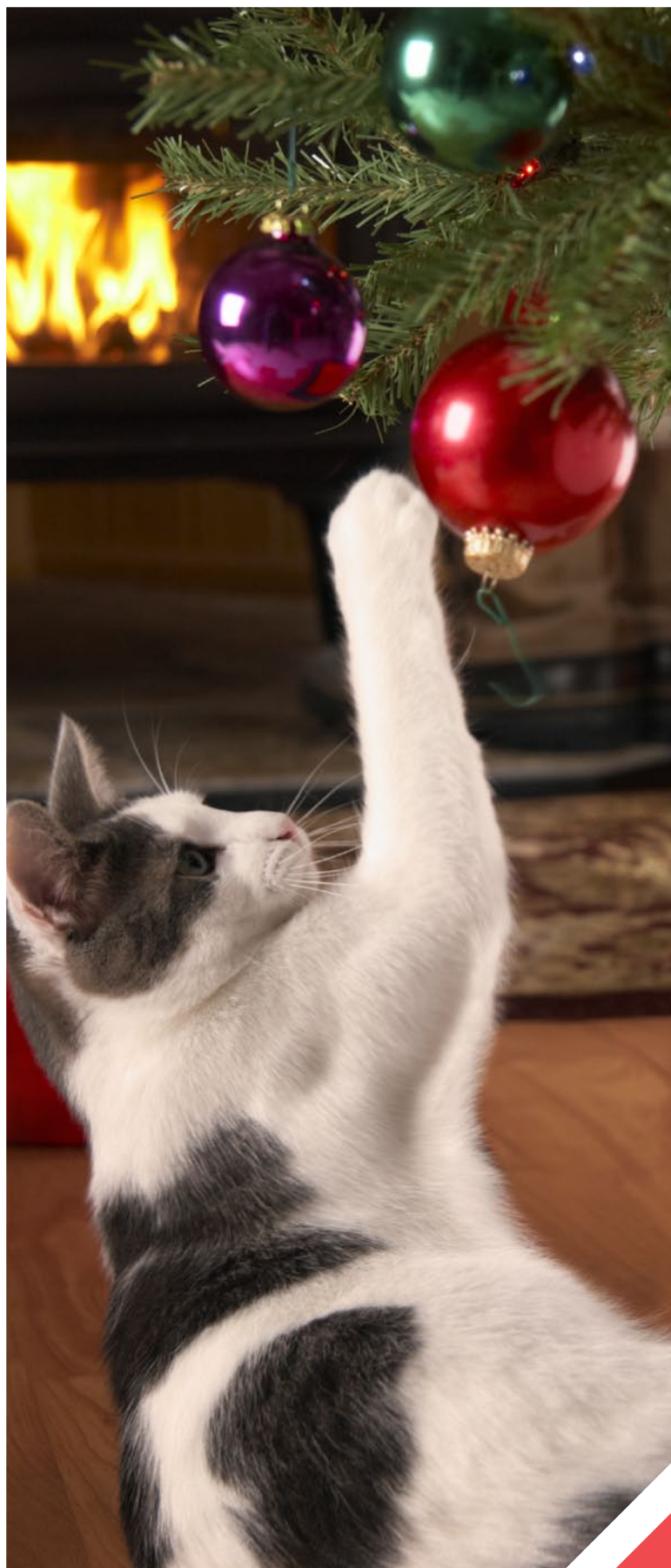


Photo: istockphoto.com/Janine Lamontagne

To contact Helpline, please phone  
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