

Halloween & DIA DE MUERTOS

Tips to Safely Celebrate Halloween with Your Pets

(Family Features)

Whether heading to a party, greeting little ghouls and goblins at home, getting the entire family - including the four-legged family members - involved in the Halloween festivities can be the biggest treat of all. However, it's important to take some precautions to avoid spooking your pets, particularly if you'll be dressing them for the occasion.

In addition to keeping your pets out of the candy bowl and tempering their excitement during all the hustle and bustle, keep these tips from PetSmart's resident veterinarian and pet care expert, Dr. Jennifer Freeman, DVM, in mind to ensure your pets are comfortable in their costumes so they're able to celebrate stress-free.

Take baby steps. Start by trying a simple accessory, like a bandana, on your pets. See if they allow this and will walk around with it on for a few minutes. Not all pets like wearing clothes and some may become stressed or agitated while wearing a costume. However, many just need a little coaxing and positive reinforcement, such as praise and a treat.

Reward with something tasty. After you put the apparel or costume on your pets, reward them with their favorite treat to create a positive association between wearing the costume and getting a treat.

Ensure the costume is safe. Once you know your pets are comfortable in a costume, it's important to ensure the outfit allows them to walk, bark, meow and see without difficulty. Additionally, if your pets can easily trip over their legs, try another type of clothing. Make sure there aren't any accessories attached that may be easy for them to chew on or swallow.

Consider the weather. Pets can overheat easily, so ensure their clothing is not too bulky or heavy if it is warm on Halloween. Watch for elastic features around the paw area that may be restrictive and be certain there is enough room around the widest area of the chest to

allow for proper air flow and ventilation.

Keep an eye on body language. Pets often communicate through body language and their behavior may let you know if they're stressed or uncomfortable. Pay extra attention to your costumed pets' body language while attending parties or events and watch for signs of discomfort such as pacing, hiding or refusing to move.

For more tips and tricks for keeping your pets safe this Halloween, as well as ideas for seasonal costumes, toys and treats, visit PetSmart.com.



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featuring: *Gina Ann Marquez*
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