

# Preparing for Halloween

Halloween is coming up and whilst it is fun for you and your family, it can be an upsetting time for your furry friend. With all the scary costumes and strange noises you can't really blame them for being at least confused, if not distressed.

In order to minimise the effect on your pet please consider the following points:

 Sweets and chocolates may be treats for you and your children, but they can be extremely dangerous for dogs and cats. If you have any suspicions that your pet may have eaten something dangerous do take them to see your vet. Symptoms may include vomiting, drooling, slow heart rate, sore abdomen, excessive thirst and excitability.

 Give your pet a space they can retreat to, to get away from trick or treaters.

 Reduce responses to any trick or treaters they do see by going for a long tiring walk with your dog during the day. This will mean they have less energy to react.

 Remember that your pet may not even recognise **you** in your costume so be prepared for an unusual reaction from them and approach them with caution, do not rush up to them and give them unwanted attention.



 Do not dress your cat or dog up if they are uncomfortable with this. Especially do not put anything on them that would constrict the animal's movement, sight or hearing, or impede their ability to breathe, bark or meow. If your pet seems distressed in their outfit, allergic or shows abnormal behaviour, consider letting him go au naturale or donning a festive bandana.

 Be aware of any decorations or costume accessories with small parts which may come loose and be a choking hazard for your dog. Lit candles or pumpkins can easily harm your companion – keep these items out of reach and do not leave your pet unattended with such items, as pets can easily knock a lit pumpkin over and cause a fire. Curious kittens especially run the risk of getting burned or singed by candle flames.

 Think twice about taking your dog on a trick or treating outing, as the extra excitement around the event or added attention from strangers may make cause distress. Also other dogs may not be too welcoming of another dog on their territory.



 Be extra careful when opening the door to any visitors as your pet may escape. They are more likely to run away if they are frightened by Halloween costumes. Always make sure your dog or cat has proper identification. If for any reason your pet escapes and becomes lost, a collar and tags and/or a microchip can be a lifesaver, increasing the chances that he or she will be returned to you.