

Attention Pets: Beware of owner this holiday season

*Survey Shows Pet Owners Likely to Share Holiday Table Scraps
despite Health Risks*

While the number of overweight pets in America continues to grow, more pet owners still anticipate feeding table scraps to their pets this holiday season, according to a poll commissioned by Healthy Bark & Purr. Among surveyed pet owners, 52% said they plan on feeding their pets leftover treats.

Pet owners are indulging their pets with good intentions, the survey found. The top reason cited for sharing food scraps with their pet was "I love my pet and want to see him happy." Unfortunately, this can lead to serious complications, according to Dr. Jeff Nichol, D.V.M., spokesperson for "No Scraps," a healthy pet educational initiative from Healthy Bark & Purr pet insurance.

Pet owners overall have nothing but the best interest of their pet at heart. But this seemingly loving gesture of sharing food can have profound consequences. "Weight-gain, digestive disorders, diabetes, heart and liver problems, painful degenerative joint disease, and in some cases, breathing disorders, can occur if a pet is given table food, or too much of a good thing," said Dr. Nichol. "That's why it is best to completely leave out table scraps. My advice is to feed pets before the big holiday meal, then put them in another room while the family has dinner."

Surprisingly, the survey found that among families, the most likely culprits to feed pets table scraps are the parents. Mom and Dad are nearly three times as likely to provide extra helpings to their pet as their children are. This can set a bad example for both the pet and the children of the household, said Dr. Nichol.

When it comes to their pet's waistline, some owners are turning a blind eye, according to the survey. Only 20% of those surveyed thought their pet was overweight, while national statistics put that number closer to 50%, according to Dr. Nichol. The disparity is significant when you consider that Americans have over 377.8 million pets. "This disconnect underscores the need for more education and is precisely why Healthy Bark & Purr pet insurance created noscraps.com as an information source on healthy pet feeding habits," said Nichol.