



## **Keeping Pets Safe over the Fourth of July**

*While many pets are afraid of the sound of fireworks, pet owners also need to know that fireworks are poisonous when ingested.*

Minneapolis (June 22, 2009) – Planning on celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July with your pet? While most pet owners know that dogs are often *fearful* of the sound of fireworks, most don't know that fireworks are *poisonous* too. Simple steps can help keep your pets safe, the fireworks display beautiful, and your 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday from being ruined.

Fireworks can contain dangerous chemicals like oxidizing agents (which typically are from the chemical potassium nitrate), reducing agents (like charcoal or sulfur), coloring agents (which are potentially dangerous heavy metals), and less dangerous substances like binders (a starch or sugar source) and regulators (a wick or fuse). The range of toxicity varies with what type of firework is ingested, how much is ingested and what type of coloring agents are used. Fireworks can also be dangerous to pets physically – when exposed to the spark or smoke, a thermal burn injury can result.

“If ingested, fireworks can cause gastrointestinal signs like vomiting, a painful abdomen, and even bloody diarrhea,” said Dr. Justine Lee, DVM, DAVECC, Associate Director of Veterinary Services at Pet Poison Helpline. “In severe cases, tremors or seizures can be seen, along with acute kidney failure, jaundice (yellowing of the skin), bone marrow changes and shallow breathing. If dermal exposure has occurred, then burns to the nose, face, lips, or inside of the mouth may be seen, due to the curious nature of our pets. Eye irritation or conjunctivitis can also occur from the chemicals and the secondary smoke.”

Remember, prevention is key. If a fireworks display is occurring, either keep your pet on a leash or indoors for their safety. If your pet has noise phobias from fireworks, talk to your veterinarian about appropriate anti-anxiety drugs or sedatives to help ease their stress. If you notice your pet ingesting fireworks, don't induce vomiting at home. Seek emergency guidance whether it be calling **Pet Poison Helpline** at (800) 213-6680 or visiting your nearest emergency veterinarian.

### **About Pet Poison Helpline:**

Pet Poison Helpline™ is an international, 24-hour service available for pet owners and veterinary professionals who require assistance with treating a potentially poisoned pet. Available to help every type of pet, with all types of poisonings, Pet Poison Helpline is the only poison control with board-certified veterinary internal medicine (DACVIM) and emergency critical care (DACVECC) specialists who can put your mind at ease when dealing with an emergency.