

## Activities with Pets

# How to Have a Dog-Friendly New Year's Eve



New Year's Eve is a time for celebrating the close of another year and the end of our holiday celebrations. Since your dog is part of the family, you'll probably want to include them in your celebrations, too.

Whether you're planning on hosting a party, heading out for a night on the town, or enjoying a quiet night in, your dog will love to celebrate with a special treat on New Year's Eve. If you're hosting a party or enjoying a night at home, you can take simple steps to keep your dog safe and happy.

**Food and drinks.** With all of the festive food and drinks available on New Year's Eve, you (or your guests) may want to share some with your dog. However, celebratory food often has ingredients that aren't safe for dogs, which can cause digestive upset, poisoning, or other serious health problems. In addition to treats made specifically for dogs, you can stick to whole, fresh foods like carrots, canned pumpkin, or boneless, skinless (and unseasoned) chicken. And keep them away from alcohol beverages!

**Decorations.** Streamers, balloons, and ribbons are commonly used for New Year's Eve decorating. Be careful to keep these decorations out of reach of your dog, as they can cause problems like digestive obstruction, which could leave you ringing in the New Year at the animal ER. The loud noise associated with popping a balloon can also frighten your dog and may cause noise aversion.

**Doorbells and people.** When the doorbell rings or someone knocks on your door, does your dog run and bark in excitement or nervousness? All of the noise and commotion of people arriving can also cause noise aversion. Additionally, with people coming and going through the front door, you don't want your dog to run off. Keep them in a room away from the door to make sure they stay safe inside.

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**Loud music.** Loud music and the celebrating that accompanies it can be stressful for your dog. If they aren't used to it, make sure your dog has a quiet place to retreat to, away from the music and people.

**Fireworks.** Loud pops and flashes of light can be scary for your dog, especially if you're not home. If you're planning to spend New Year's Eve away from your home, create a comfortable space away from doors and windows where your dog can relax. If you're planning on staying home, you can mask the noise of fireworks with some white noise or maybe even an action movie. If you know your dog is scared of fireworks or other loud noises mentioned in this article, it's a good idea to chat with your veterinarian about a medication to help provide them with more immediate relief from their noise aversion symptoms.

Not all dogs are party animals. For those that don't like the excitement that comes along with a party (or the noise that comes with it), a little preparation can make sure that your dog has a fun, safe, and happy New Year.

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