

Paws, Prayers, and Peace: Keeping Pets Calm This Festive Season

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Festivities are just around the corner and they are an example of unity among diversity for all Indians. They are another chance to be together with the family, loved ones and celebrate the auspicious and relaxing eve. People tend to various activities to show their devotion and belief to almighty. The famous ones are pandals, bhajans, loud speakers, crackers and lanterns to name a few. Majority of the households are now associated with small animals. Either they have a pet or are emotionally attached to a stray animal, be it a dog or cat. During our pompous celebrations, we should not forget our fellow living beings. Navratri and Dussehra bring intense sensory overload for animals—prolonged loudspeaker noise from pandals and Garba events, sudden firecrackers during Ravan Dahan, crowded streets, and abundant rich foods. Here is how to safeguard pets and help neighbourhood community animals throughout the festivities:



Protecting Pets at Home

- **Create a sound-insulated refuge:** Designate an interior room with the minimal number of windows, and keep it closed off during loud events. Secure the area by closing all windows, drawing thick curtains, and placing your pet's bedding, crate, or a preferred blanket inside. To dampen abrupt, percussive noise associated with dhol beats and firecrackers, run an air conditioner, a fan, or a white-noise machine; alternatively, you may use calming instrumental music to buffer these sudden sounds.
- **Adjust walking routines:** Plan to complete all walks early in the morning and well before dusk, specifically before pandal music begins or effigies are burned. During outings, keep dogs firmly secured on a leash attached to a harness, because even in familiar neighbourhoods startled animals may lunge or bolt in panic.
- **Be watchful of any harmful objects:** Remain vigilant for any remaining crackers located in the area around your pet, since they may ingest them while out on their walk.
- **Prevent access to festive foods:** Keep traditional sweets out of your pet's reach, because these foods (including mithai) frequently contain ingredients that are toxic to animals. Such ingredients include raisins, nuts, chocolate, and milk solids, all of which can produce severe digestive upset. High-fat, oily snacks may also precipitate acute pancreatitis. Communicate to guests that they should not offer pets table scraps.



• **Confirm identification information:** Check that your pet's collar carries an up-to-date tag listing your current phone number and address, and also confirm that the microchip registration details are current. Note that escape attempts tend to increase during evening fireworks associated with Dussehra.

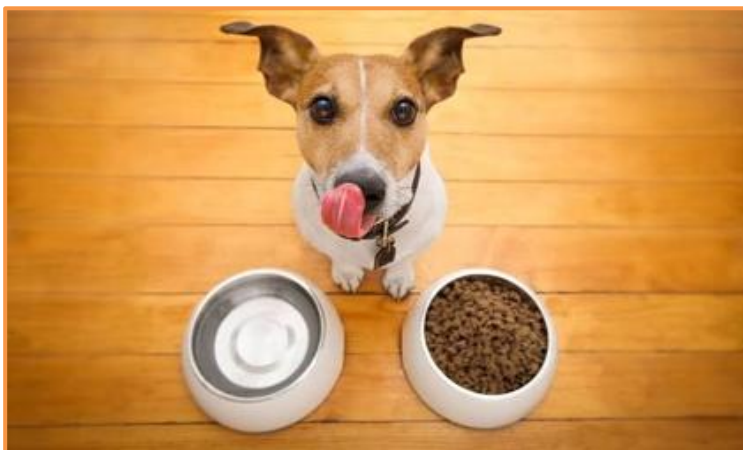
• **Use calming supports responsibly:** Anxiety wraps (for example, Thunder Shirt) or vet-recommended pheromone diffusers—such as Adaptil® for dogs or Feliway® for cats—can help reduce stress levels. If your pet is likely to experience extreme phobia, consult your veterinarian in advance to obtain safe, prescribed anxiolytics; under no circumstances should you administer human sedatives.



Supporting Community and Street Animals

• **Look under cars before you drive:** To avoid crowds and loud noises, stray cats and dogs frequently hide under parked automobiles, next to tire wells, or within engine bays. Prior to starting the hood, the ignition.

• **Arrange essential food and fresh water:** Animals are rapidly dehydrated by stress and firecracker smoke. Put bowls of clean water and basic foods (such as boiled rice, plain curd, or dry kibble) in peaceful, covered areas away from the main thoroughfares and event spaces.



Prevent harassment and firecracker targeting: Keep an eye out in residential roads to make sure local kids or celebrants don't tie objects to animals' tails or toss crackers close to sleeping animals. A calm, strong reminder to neighbours frequently saves damage.

Be ready for an emergency: Keep the phone numbers of nearby animal welfare organizations, bird rescue hotlines, and round-the-clock veterinarian clinics close at hand as emergency veterinary contacts. Dussehra fireworks and cracker remains can inflict burns, ocular injury, or splinter wounds to street dogs and roosting birds.

