

Witches, Bats, and Scaredy Cats

Halloween is one of the best holidays for kids, but it can be hard on pets if you don't take some precautions.

The best way to keep your pet safe is to keep it at home. Wandering pets can be spooked by noisy groups of small ghouls and goblins, and might end up running too far from home to find their way back.

Keep pets confined away from the door. You may open the door many times during Halloween evening, providing tempting opportunities for Fido or Fluffy to slip through your legs and outside, unescorted. Pets are calmer, too, if kept away from the door. Dogs, in particular, may resent the endless intrusions of strangers into their territory and become very anxious, which could lead to growling at the children, or worse.

If you have a black cat, you have a special problem. The mythology about black cats being related to witches can lead strange people to do strange things to them. Even kids who mean no harm may yell when they see a black cat, scaring the cat much more than the cat is scaring them.

If you find yourself with a house full of candy on Halloween, don't feel you must share it with your pet. Be particularly careful about letting dogs chow down on chocolate. Chocolate contains a stimulant called theobromine which can make dogs very ill, and could even cause death if consumed in enough quantity. If you want to treat the pets, stock up on dog biscuits or catnip toys — treats with no tricks attached.



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