

# Think about your dog this Christmas

Christmas is coming, which is great for the kids; but what about the dog? Dog behaviourist Dave Brice shares some top tips on keeping fido happy too.



For many, Christmas is really great, the family at home, lots of visitors, presents, food and well, more food, lots of attention and excitement. BRILLIANT!

This is fine if your dog is gregarious, loves people and noise and just wants to play - until Xmas is over and everyone goes back to work and school that is. The middle of January is usually when my phone starts ringing; concerned owners wondering why their dog is suddenly barking all day, destroying the sofa or worse still showing the debilitating signs of anxiety when left.

So what do you do in this scenario? During the Christmas period make sure that your dog gets time to relax and escape the chaos, make a point of going out and leaving them for a while everyday, so they don't become accustomed to your permanent presence and don't make a big fuss when you finally do return to work. The other type of character is the shy, retiring, nervous dog that really wants everything to remain as it is, predictable and safe. They too need special consideration; a safe area to go to when the guests arrive, some nice safe chew toys to keep them occupied, a chance for a fun walk away from the house, maybe a calming pheromone collar to help them cope and the freedom to decide whether they want to meet Uncle Bob or the over-excitable grand children - or not.

Food is also an issue for some dogs, sudden access to rich foods they aren't accustomed to can have predictable results - not pleasant. Please be careful where you put food items; remember - chocolate decorations hanging on trees, nuts in bowls on low tables (especially macadamia nuts), grapes, Christmas cake/pudding all are potentially lethal to your dog.

I'm not trying to be a predictor of doom and gloom, Christmas with your dogs is a great fun time - just a little care and attention will ensure that you are all happy, both during and after the event. **Merry Christmas all!**

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## PET GIFT IDEAS



Dog collars, can be personalised (takes about 5-7 days) from £36, Big Blue Sky



Quilted dog coat from Barbour £31.95, Beachcomber



ABOVE: A selection of all natural pet treats for cats, dogs and small animals, from The Pets Emporium



Joules pet beds from £24.99, The Pets Emporium

### Pets address book

Beachcomber, Wells-next-the-Sea 01328 710 496  
Big Blue Sky, Wells-next-the-Sea 01328 712 023  
The Pets Emporium, Snettisham 01485 541 438