

# ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE of BOSTON



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For Release on:

October 19, 2021

## **“Pandemic Pets” About to Experience First Halloween**

*Pet owner tips to keep in mind to ensure pets are safe and calm*

With Halloween essentially cancelled in 2020, so-called “pandemic pets” will be experiencing their first spooky holiday, and the Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL) wants to remind pet owners that amongst the festive costumes, parties, trick-or-treating, decorations, and candy lurks potential danger and stress for our furry family members.

**Media Availability:**

**When: Tuesday, October 19 @ 9:30 a.m.**

**Where: ARL’s Dedham Animal Care and Adoption Center, 55 Anna’s Place, Dedham**

**Interview opportunity: Laney Nee, ARL Animal Behavior Manager**

As pet owners prepare for the spookiest night of the year, ARL recommends these 5 tips to keep pets safe:

1. **Keep treats out of reach.** The bowl of candy that we make easily accessible for tiny trick-or-treaters, is also in paws-length for our pets. Chocolate in all forms can be dangerous for cats and dogs, as it contains theobromine and caffeine. The darker and more bitter the chocolate, the more harmful it can be. Additionally, the artificial sweetener xylitol found in sugar-free candy is toxic. Even ingesting small amounts can cause seizures, liver failure, and even death. If you suspect that your pet has ingested something toxic, immediately contact your veterinarian or the ASPCA Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435.

2. **Take care with decorations.** Halloween gives us the opportunity to set a spooky ambiance for the season. However, many decorations are not pet-friendly. Faux spider webs or plastic toys can be ingested. Curious puppies and kittens can easily knock over a lit jack-o-lantern causing severe burns or setting fire to your home. When in doubt, keep potentially dangerous objects out of the house, and admire your neighbor's elaborate décor instead.
3. **Set up a calm environment for your pet.** If you have a pet that is shy, skittish or anxious, Halloween can increase these behaviors. The constant ring of the doorbell, and a flurry of strangers coming and going can be too much for some animals. Set your pet up in a separate room with everything to make them comfortable and relaxed – toys, treats, and their favorite bed. You can also put on the TV, radio, or a white noise machine to drown out the bustling activity.
4. **Make sure your pet's identification is up to date.** With the front door frequently opening and closing, there is always a chance that your pet will dash out the door. In the event that your cat or dog becomes lost, you want to make sure your pet's ID tag and microchip information are current. Having these two things drastically increase the chances that you will be reunited.
5. **Skip the costume (well, sometimes).** Dressing up your pet can be adorably cute, but it may also cause them undue stress and anxiety. Unless your cat or dog is completely comfortable with it, it's best to avoid costumes altogether.

With a little bit of planning and precaution, you can ensure that everyone in your household can enjoy Halloween spook-free.

#### **ABOUT THE ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF BOSTON:**

***The Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL) is an unwavering champion for animals in need, committed to keeping them safe and healthy in habitats and homes.*** Founded in 1899, ARL provides high-quality veterinary care, adoption, and rescue services; while also confronting the root causes of animal cruelty and neglect through innovative community programs, police investigations, and public advocacy. In 2020, ARL served nearly 17,000 animals throughout Massachusetts. ARL is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. The Animal Rescue League of Boston does not receive government grants or public funding (with the exception of limited COVID-19 relief funding) and relies on the generosity of our supporters to help animals in need. For more information please visit us online at [arlboston.org](http://arlboston.org); and be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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