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"Shed Pounds" Now for the Holidays ahead!



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SURE TO MAKE CHRISTMAS MERRY, a puppy under the tree. Treat him gently, give him lots of rest and keep him away from all swallowable objects -- from tinsel to turkey bones.

Christmas Puppies

Deck your halls with boughs of holly, but make sure they're out of Bowser's biting range. Holly berries can poison a dog. Mistletoe is dangerous too.

If there's going to be a puppy under your tree this year, make plans for a very wary Christmas. Until he grows a bit, chewing is baby Bowser's favorite sport, and you can bet your bottom Christmas tree ornaments that he'll sample everything in sight during the Yuletide season.

In fact, Christmas is an especially hazardous time for puppies, according to Bob Bartos, Director of Friskies Research Kennels.

GLASS ORNAMENTS, tinsel, and figures in your under-the-tree creche (a holy terrier in Pennsylvania wolfed down one Wise Man, Joseph and half an angel before anyone noticed) are just the kind of thing a puppy gulps now and regrets later.

Exposed extension cords, which he loves to get his teeth into, may give him the shock of his life. Soft rubber, as found in many children's toys, tears easily and can stick to puppy's insides. Wooden and plastic toys can be chewed into splinters.

Your safest course is to clear the decks of all swallowable objects when puppy has the run of the house. And while you're at it, get rid of those tempting turkey bones; a little gnawing can make them as

sharp as daggers. Even an older dog will go for leftover bones, so put them safely out of reach.

In spite of the fact that canine sales shoot up 50 percent at Yuletide, Christmas day is not the best time to introduce a new puppy to your household, advises Bartos, author of (the paperback manual) "All About Puppies." Christmas morning chaos can be terrifying to the little fellow, and if his first day in new and strange surroundings is an exhausting and frightening experience, you could end up with a nervous pup on your hands.

IF A PUPPY heads your family gift list, why not choose one ahead of time and make arrangements to pick him up after Christmas, when all is calm? You can still make his imminent arrival an exciting surprise on Christmas morning. Hang an extra stocking filled with a new collar, leash, doggy toys, and a stuffed dog peeking out. This is one way to make Christmas last longer. Puppy might last longer, too!

If such delaying tactics won't work, do keep puppy out of the Christmas hub-bub as much as possible. Remind the children that he's not a toy. Handle him gently. Put him in a quiet room frequently for naps. Give him some safe toys of his own, and make your house as puppy-proof as possible. For the Christmas puppy, take a tip from Good King Wenceslas -- look out!