Whether you think Valentine’s Day is fun to celebrate or a silly waste of time, you still might end up with a few things around the house from your sweetheart or an admirer that could pose a danger to your pet. Take a minute to make sure you understand the risks.

Roses Can Be a Thorny Issue
Ouch! You know how much it hurts to jab your finger with a thorn from a rose or other thorny stemmed flowers. Imagine if you bit down on one of those thorns or accidentally stepped on one. Pets don’t realize thorns will hurt, and may not be able to resist taking a bite out of your bouquet or knocking it on the floor and stepping on it. Puncture wounds in the mouth or feet not only hurt but can become infected.

Cats and Lilies Don’t Mix
Most people don’t realize that all species of lilies can be fatal to cats. If you’re purchasing a bouquet for someone who has a cat in the household, hold off on including lilies. Even so, other forms of leaves and flowers can be toxic to pets so watch for stomach upset, vomiting, or diarrhea as an indication that your pet has ingested a portion of your flower arrangement. The ASPCA has an online list of toxic and non-toxic plants at http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants.

Chocolates
It’s no secret that chocolate—especially dark chocolate—is toxic to dogs, but that doesn’t stop them from trying to eat it. There are variables to chocolate toxicity—smaller dogs are at greater risk after ingestion, darker chocolate increases the danger of poisoning, and of course it matters how much chocolate was ingested. Regardless of the amount of chocolate your pet ingests, be sure to contact your veterinarian immediately. Even if your pet looks fine, it can have a negative effect on their cardiac, gastrointestinal, and neurologic functioning, as well as pancreatic troubles.

Let’s Make a Toast
If you’re celebrating with your sweetheart or friends at home with cocktails, be sure to keep them out of reach of your pets. Whether you spill a glass of wine and your pet wants to help clean up or they take a drink out of your glass, alcohol is bad news for dogs. Animals not only have less tolerance to the effects of alcohol (they’re much smaller!), but if enough alcohol is ingested, respiratory difficulties, central nervous system depression, and even coma are possible.

A Romantic Dinner
If you plan to dine by candlelight or sit in front of the fire, make sure to put it out before you leave the room or leave the house. Nosy pets can get hurt (or burn the house down!).

Giving the Gift of ... a Pet?
Just like during the holidays, some folks just can’t resist presenting their loved ones with a brand new puppy, kitten, or other small furry creature, but is it really such a good idea? Probably not. While your loved ones might think the animal is cute, they may not be ready for pet ownership or even have a true understanding of the responsibilities of owning a pet. There is also the financial obligation of providing proper care, food, and supplies. In addition, many pets who were given as gifts end up in shelters because of the owners inability or lack of desire to care for the animal and give it the time and attention it needs.