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PAW'S CORNER

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By Sam Mazotta

Halloween fun doesn't
always extend to pets

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I'm planning to hold a Halloween party at my apartment, and I want my Toy Terrier "Skip" to be part of it. I even have a little costume picked out for him so he can be part of the fun. My roommate says that parties aren't a great environment for dogs, and Skip could be traumatized by all the noise. What do you say? — Carl in Brooklyn

DEAR CARL: Listen to your roommate. Terriers are energetic dogs who love attention, but a loud, crowded party is stressful for any dog. It's also difficult to keep tabs on where Skip is and what he might be eating. If there is stray chocolate sitting within reach, for example, he might ingest it and get really sick. Ditto for rich party foods with lots of cream, herbs, salt, onions or garlic — all these things can be dangerous for dogs, especially a little guy like Skip.

A better alternative is to keep Skip in your bedroom for most of the night, away from the party, with a nice bed, toys and fresh water. Stop in every hour to say hello, if you'd like.

You can put Skip into his costume and bring him out to meet the guests, but only for about 10 to 15 minutes. And if he begins showing signs of distress — trembling, barking at everyone, growling or snapping — take him back to the room right away. Take off the costume after his visit, so that he is comfortable and doesn't get tangled up in the fabric or chew on any dangling appendages, if the costume has any.

With a little planning, you can still show off Skip in his costume and have a party that is enjoyable for you and safe for him.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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