



## Our Fear Free Commitment to You and Your Pet

We are proud to have Fear Free<sup>SM</sup> certified professionals on our team and are dedicated to caring for your pet's emotional well-being as well as his or her physical well-being.

We'd like you to know how we meet that goal. Is your pet showing signs of bad stress and anxiety before arriving at the veterinary office? Ask us if pre-visit sedation or supplements might take the edge off and keep your pet happy and relaxed.

Would your pet be more comfortable waiting in the car rather than the waiting room? Just let us know, and we'll be glad to accommodate you.

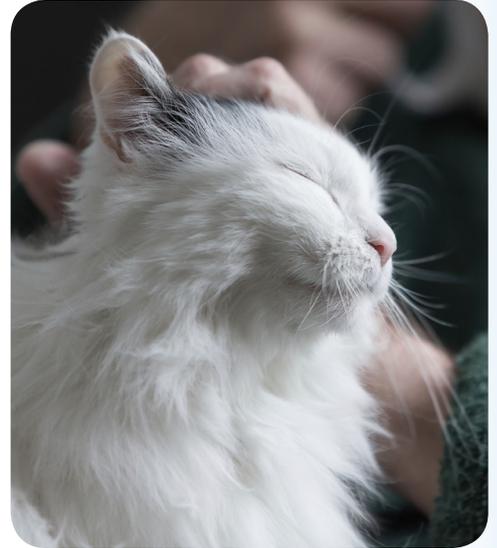
You'll be brought into the exam room a few minutes before your pet will be seen because we'd like the two of you to spend some calm time together. This will allow your pet to explore the room and relax a little first.

Special calming chemical signals, known as pheromones, are infused throughout the room. Only dogs and cats can smell them, and they find them relaxing. The music in the room is also specially created for canine and feline stress reduction.

We promise to keep our voices low and calm, and to never use force to examine, test, or treat your pet. We'll use gentle control techniques, innovative tools, and medication when necessary to ensure your pet's emotional health isn't sacrificed for the sake of medical care.

Unless it's medically inappropriate, we'll be giving your pet lots of treats during the visit. This is so he or she starts associating a trip to the veterinarian with good things! That will keep stress levels low. Bringing your pet into the appointment hungry can help this process along!

Some pets prefer to be examined up high, on the table, in your lap, in their carrier, or on the floor. We'll go where we need to go to make your pet comfortable during the exam. We'll also use specialized distraction techniques to keep your pet focused on good experiences while we perform procedures such as injections that might cause brief stress or pain.



**Questions? Just ask! We want you to be happy, too!**

**Interested in learning more about Fear Free? Visit [fearfreepets.com](https://fearfreepets.com).**

# PUPPY MILESTONES

What to expect when you're adopting

**C**ongratulations on your new family member! If this is your first puppy or even if it's been awhile since you've had a really young one in the household, here are a few milestones to help you track your dog's progress. Keep in mind these are general guidelines and can vary based on your puppy's breed and other factors.



## 5 PUPPY MILESTONES

**1 Whelp**—A newborn puppy that lacks the ability to see, hear or regulate body temperature.



**2 Neonate, 0 to 13 days**—The pup cannot see, hear, regulate body temperature or eliminate

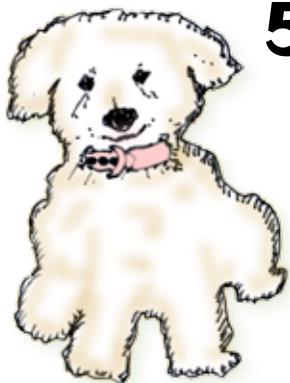
without stimulation and is totally dependent on its mom.



**3 Transition period, 13 to 21 days**—

The pup's eyes and ears gradually open, and it begins to hear and respond to taste and smell.

**4 Awareness period, 21 to 23 days**—The pup is able to use its senses of sight and hearing. Learning begins.



**5 Canine socialization period, 3 to 7 weeks**—

The pup learns specific behaviors that make it a dog such as barking, chasing, biting and body posturing. The pup also begins to eliminate on its own at 3 to 4 weeks.

## DENTAL DETAILS



**> 3 to 4 weeks**—canine teeth start to erupt

**> 4 to 6 weeks**—full temporary teeth erupt

**> 3 to 5 months**—permanent teeth begin to replace temporary teeth

**> 7 months**—full permanent teeth have erupted

## LIFE STAGES



# 10 easy steps to houstrain your dog

You can easily teach your dog to eliminate in an acceptable location by keeping a close eye, recognizing his signals, understanding his instincts, and rewarding his appropriate behavior.

1. Prevent undesirable elimination by not allowing your dog to wander all over the house without supervision *and* by keeping your dog confined in a small area when you can't observe him constantly.
2. When your dog sniffs the ground or circles around, quickly but calmly take him to the desired elimination area. Ideally, don't wait for these behaviors. Take your dog outside regularly as described below.
3. Feed your dog a measured amount of food at the same time every day. When your dog walks away, or after about 10 to 15 minutes, pick up the bowl.
4. Be aware that puppies instinctively desire to eliminate after eating, drinking, playing, resting, sleeping, or being confined. These rules apply to most adult dogs as well.
5. Five to 30 minutes after any of the above activities, take your dog to the selected place for elimination.
6. Use a specific verbal cue that you want your dog to associate with desirable elimination, such as "Go potty" or "Do your business."
7. When your dog begins to eliminate, *quietly* praise him.
8. When your dog is done, praise him enthusiastically, pet him, and reward him with food *immediately*. Don't wait until he heads for the house. If he doesn't eliminate, return him to his confinement area, and take him outside again in about 15 minutes.
9. Reward each time with praise, but as your dog learns, give food rewards intermittently.
10. Remember, it is your responsibility to prevent accidents! Prevention is the key to success, but if someone fails to prevent your dog from having an accident, *don't* scold the dog, and quietly clean up and deodorize the soiled area. Preventing accidents requires that you become aware of how often your puppy needs to eliminate. Young puppies (8 to 10 weeks of age) may need to be taken outside every 30 to 60 minutes.

Information provided by Valarie V. Tynes, DVM, DACVB, P.O. Box 1040, Fort Worth, TX 76101. This client information sheet may be photocopied for distribution by veterinarians to their clients. Written permission is required for any other use.



## Teach your dog to ring a bell

Houstraining some dogs can be especially challenging because they do not learn to clearly signal when they need to eliminate. Teaching a dog to ring a bell when it needs to go outside can be a huge help when houstraining. It takes time but is relatively simple if you follow the following steps:

- Purchase a small bell, and set it near the door through which you usually take your dog out for elimination. Ring the bell immediately before opening the door to go outside with the dog. Your dog should already be leashed so that you can step outside with her as soon as you ring the bell. Do this every time you take your dog outside for several days. Allow your dog to only explore the designated elimination area, otherwise your dog may associate ringing the bell with play time instead.
- Next, suspend the bell at the height of your dog's nose right next to the door. Gently touch the bell to your dog's nose, causing it to ring, every time you take her outside. Repeat this step for several days.
- At this point, depending on how quickly your dog makes associations, she may begin approaching the bell on her own when she needs to eliminate. If she doesn't, smear a little bit of cheese or peanut butter on the bell each time you prepare to go outside, and use this to lure your dog toward the bell. Allow your dog to lick the bell, causing it to ring, and then praise your dog as you take her outside.

Once your dog begins ringing the bell on her own, you must take her outside every time so that she learns that making the bell ring reliably predicts being allowed outside.

## Home Care

## Bathing Your Pet

Even the cleanest of pets can sometimes need a bath. For dogs, regular bathing can help keep their skin and haircoat healthy. In general, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) recommends bathing your dog about every 3 months; however, certain breeds and dogs that spend a lot of time outside may need to be bathed more often. Cats, on the other hand, generally do not need regular baths—their tongues are designed to be an essential grooming tool. However, there are situations when your cat—or dog—may need a bath:

- If your pet comes in contact with a potentially hazardous substance or sticky material
- If you are allergic and want to keep pet dander to a minimum
- If your pet goes or gets outside and comes in contact with dirt or fleas
- If a medicated shampoo is prescribed or recommended by us to treat a certain condition

### Preparing for a Bath

Try to make bathing a pleasant experience for your pet—and for you! If you can teach your pet to enjoy being bathed, it can be another way to strengthen your relationship. However, even the calmest of pets (especially cats) may become stressed around water. Make sure you have everything ready ahead of time to keep bath time as short and relaxed as possible:

- A tub (indoors or out) or sink with warm (not hot) water
- A spray hose or nozzle or a large plastic pitcher or unbreakable cup
- A washcloth for cleaning your pet's head and face



Regular bathing can help keep a dog's skin and haircoat healthy.

- A rubber bath mat to keep your pet from slipping
- A mild shampoo made for dogs or cats (depending on your pet) or the prescribed medicated shampoo
- Old clothes to wear (for cat owners, make sure you are protected against scratches and bites)
- Plenty of large, absorbent towels and/or a blow dryer, if your pet will tolerate it
- Toys and treats for rewarding good behavior

It may be beneficial to have another person assist you in restraining your pet during the bath. If you are comfortable doing so, you can trim your pet's nails the night before bathing to minimize the chance of scratches. Mats, tangles, and loose hair are also easier to remove by brushing before bathing.

### The Bath

- Make sure the water in the tub or sink is not too deep for your pet. For cats

## Home Care

and small dogs, 3 to 5 inches of water is enough. Place your pet in the water and, if you have one, use the spray hose to thoroughly wet your pet, being careful not to spray directly in his or her eyes, ears, or nose. If you don't have a spray hose, use the plastic pitcher, cup, washcloth, or your hands to scoop up the water in the tub.

- Gently massage the shampoo into your pet's haircoat from head to tail. Follow the labeled instructions carefully. Don't forget to lather hard-to-reach areas, such as between the legs and the body. Avoid getting any shampoo in your pet's eyes, ears, nose, or mouth. Use the washcloth to wipe the face/head.
- Thoroughly rinse your pet, again taking care to avoid the ears, eyes, and nose. You may need to drain and refill the sink or tub a few times to make sure you have removed all of the shampoo. Don't forget to check the feet, under the chin, under the abdomen and chest, and any other areas that can be hard to rinse. Shampoo residues left on the skin and hair can be irritating; cats, in particular, may lick them off later, which can cause illness.

- Dry your pet with the towels or a blow dryer on a low setting. If you use a blow dryer, you may need to slowly introduce your pet to the sound of the dryer. Also, make sure

Try to make bathing a pleasant experience for your pet—and for you! If you can teach your pet to enjoy being bathed, it can be another way to strengthen your relationship.

that the blow dryer air doesn't get too hot for your pet. If you can only towel dry your pet, be sure to keep him or her in a well-controlled climate until completely dry.

- Give your pet a toy, treat, and/or calm praise as a reward for good behavior.

If you have any questions about bathing your pet—or whether he or she needs bathing—please ask! We are happy to help you keep your pet clean and healthy.

# Teaching your new puppy the right way to play

Puppies can play rough. So to ensure a lifetime of safe and happy interactions, learn how to play appropriately with your new puppy from the start.

Most puppy play consists of chasing, pouncing, barking, growling, snapping, and biting. So how can you tell the difference between normal play and possible signs of true aggression in your new puppy?

## NORMAL PLAY BEHAVIOR

In normal play, a puppy may play bow (lower its head and raise its hind end), present its front end or side to the owner, hold the front part of its body up, wag its tail, dart back and forth, emit high-pitched barks and growls, and spontaneously attack. Of course, even normal play can become too intense.

## AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

Behaviors that may indicate a problem include prolonged, deep-tone growling; a fixed gaze; a stiff posture; and aggression that is situational or stimulus-dependent (not spontaneous). These aggressive behaviors may be related to fear, possessiveness, conflict, or pain. Talk to your veterinarian if your puppy is exhibiting these behaviors.



## 7 steps to proper play

Follow these steps to prevent inappropriate play:

### 1) Provide plenty of exercise.

New puppies are bundles of energy, so give them productive ways to expend that energy such as going on walks or playing “Monkey in the middle” (see sidebar).

### 2) Provide mental stimulation.

Rubber toys that can be filled with treats, such as Kong (Kong company) or Busy Buddy puzzle toys (Premier), offer puppies a chance to chase and bite the toys and obtain a food reward.

### 3) Play with your pup.

Playing fetch or throwing a soccer ball for your pet to push around will sap some of your pup’s energy.

### 4) Teach and review basic obedience commands.

A well-trained dog is more likely to follow orders when behaving inappropriately.

### 5) Conduct leadership exercises.

Follow three rules to maintain overall order:

- **Nothing in life is free.** Ask your puppy to respond to a command such as “sit” before it receives anything it wants or needs.
- **Don’t tell me what to do.** It’s OK to give your puppy the love and at-

tention it needs, but if it becomes too pushy about getting attention, such as by nudging, whining, barking, or leaning, pull your hands in, lean away, and look away. Walk away if your puppy is too difficult to ignore. Once the puppy stops soliciting attention for 10 seconds, ask it to sit and give it attention.

### • Don’t move without permission.

Anytime you begin to move from one area of the home to another, ask your puppy to sit and stay for a second or two before you give it a release command to follow you.

### 6) Don’t sit on the floor with your pup.

This tends to get puppies excited, puts family members in a vulnerable position, and makes it more difficult to control the puppy.

### 7) Promote socialization.

Puppies must have frequent, positive social experiences with all types of animals and people during the first three or four months of life to prevent asocial behavior, fear, and biting. And continued exposure to a variety of people and other animals as the puppy grows and develops is an essential part of maintaining good social skills.

### NIPPING BAD PLAY BEHAVIOR IN THE BUD

If your puppy plays inappropriately, here are the right ways to handle it.

- **Distract the bad behavior.** Always have a toy on hand that your puppy can transfer its attention to.
- **Speak up and step out.** If your puppy is biting hard, yell “Ouch!” and stop playing.
- **Interrupt problem behaviors.** A shake can or a water gun will startle puppies and stop the behavior. But don’t use these techniques if a pet has a sensitive temperament or if they seem to make things worse.
- **Set up a dragline.** Both indoors and outdoors during supervised play, put the puppy on a leash that you can quickly grab to stop the behavior.
- **Use head halters.** These halters provide a more natural sense of control than ordinary collars do and limit the chances of biting.
- **Consider muzzles.** In extreme cases, muzzles may be used for short periods to prevent the biting behavior.
- **Give the puppy a time out.** If your puppy won’t stop a bad behavior, put it in a room or in its kennel with toys to keep it busy until it calms down.

### WHAT NOT TO DO

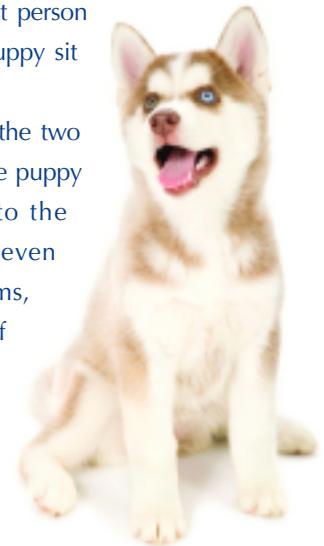
You and your family should never use physical punishment, such as scruff shakes, alpha rollovers, squeezing the puppy to the floor, thumping its nose, or swatting.

## Monkey in the middle: An exercise in obedience

This game not only exercises energetic puppies, it also reinforces the basic commands of “sit” and “come,” enhances name recognition, and teaches a puppy to run up and sit to get attention (instead of jumping up on people). At least two people are needed, and each person should have six to 12 small treats (regular puppy dinner kibble is usually adequate) at hand.

The two people sit opposite each other with about five to six feet in between. The first person calls “Skippy, come” in a high-pitched, upbeat voice. As the puppy approaches, the first person has the puppy sit for a treat. Immediately, the second person calls “Skippy, come” in a high-pitched, upbeat voice and has the puppy sit for a treat. Immediately, the first person calls again and has the puppy sit for a treat, and so on.

The distance between the two people can increase as the puppy becomes accustomed to the game—the people can even move into separate rooms, increasing the strength of the “come” command and the exertion needed to obtain a treat.



Remember, everybody wins when you take the time and effort to teach your new puppy how to play appropriately. You’ll gain a well-behaved pet, and the puppy is more likely to remain a happy, important part of the family.

# 6 SUPER SAFETY TIPS *for the dog park*

Make sure everyone has a good time and stays happy and healthy on your next visit.

**1 Visit your veterinarian.** Your dog should be current on vaccinations and flea and intestinal parasite preventives before running around with other dogs at the dog park. Before a dog park visit is also a great time to talk about your dog's temperament and whether he's ready to engage with other pets and people in an off-leash environment.

**2 Know commands.** You need to be able to control your dog if a problematic situation arises. Make sure your dog knows some basic obedience commands—"come," "sit," "stay" and "leave it"—in order to get him out of trouble.

**3 Find the right spot.** You want to find the dog park that's just right for you and your dog. Ideally, it should have:

- > adequate room for dogs to run
- > secure fences
- > a double gate for entry
- > a separate area for small dogs
- > a safe, sheltered area
- > a source of drinking water
- > posted rules of conduct.

If you visit a park and it's too congested or you see overly assertive or aggressive dogs or owners who aren't watching their dogs, keep looking.

**4 Be prepared.** Take these essentials with you:

- > bags for cleaning up messes
- > drinking water, in case the park doesn't have a source
- > toys, unless your dog guards them
- > a leash
- > a cell phone, in case you need assistance

It's also a good idea to take something to break up an aggressive situation between dogs, such as a veterinarian-recommended animal deterrent spray or a compressed-air horn.



**5 Be watchful.** When you first arrive, wait until no other dogs are at the gate. Once it's clear, you can take your dog off the leash and let him run through the gate. Watch your dog, but also keep an eye out for overly excited or aggressive dogs near him. If your dog starts acting fearful or overwhelmed, use a basic command in an upbeat voice to call him back. Also, don't hesitate to call animal control if a dog is acting inappropriately and the owner isn't being attentive.

**6 Know when to intervene.** Playful dogs bounce around, wag their tails and have relaxed postures and facial expressions. Be watchful for signs of aggression—growling, a stiff posture, raised hackles and tail, a closed mouth or a stronger focus. Don't yell if your dog and another dog start growling at each other, because that could trigger a fight. Instead, use a basic command to call your dog back to you and move to another spot. If a fight does break out, don't grab your dog's collar—you could get hurt. Instead, use your deterrent spray, a horn or a water hose to break up the dogs.

# How to get your dog in shape

Weight loss is tough for anyone—two- or four-legged. But losing weight and getting in shape not only adds years to your pet's life, it can also make those extra years more enjoyable.

## Why a healthy weight is important for your dog

If a dog is just five pounds over its ideal weight, it's at risk for developing some serious medical conditions. When a dog is overweight or obese, it's not a question of if it will develop a related illness, but rather how many and how soon.

Veterinarians expect overweight dogs to live shorter lives than their fitter counterparts. Heavy dogs tend to be less energetic and playful. It's common to think dogs that lie around are just lazy, making it easy to overlook the lethargy that results from being overweight or obese. If your dog doesn't run and jump, it might be overweight. But don't worry, your veterinary team can help your pooch get in shape!

## Start with calories

A weight-loss formula seems simple: fewer calories, in plus more calories, out equals weight loss. Unfortunately, it's not that simple. First, never put your dog on a diet until it's been examined by your veterinarian. A medical condition may be causing your dog's excess weight. The veterinarian will rule out these diseases before putting your dog on a diet.

Once the veterinarian prescribes a diet, the next step is calculating the calories your dog needs. First, the veterinarian will calculate your dog's ideal weight. Your veterinarian will use your dog's initial target or ideal weight to figure out how many calories your dog should eat each day. To figure out how many calories are in your pet's food, check the label. If it doesn't tell you what you need to know, ask your veterinarian.

## The art of changing foods

You'll most likely need to offer your dog a diet food if its overweight. When you're introducing a new food, allow several days for the transition. We recommend



gradually adding the new diet over a one- to two-week period. Start by substituting one-quarter of your dog's diet with the new food for two or three days. Then give your dog a diet that's half old food, half new for the next two to four days. Then increase to feeding three-quarters new food for the final three to five days before completely switching to the new diet. To make dry food more appetizing for your dog, try warming the food, adding ketchup or oregano, or even adding a splash of an omega-3 fatty acid supplement or salmon juice on top of the food.

# 5 dog items to toss right now

We all want to do the best we can by our pooches. But did you know some of the dog accessories you currently own might be better off in the trash? Read on to learn more.



## 1. Retractable leashes

Many accidents have been caused by retractable leashes, and they can be confusing to your dog because the place where you want him to walk is constantly changing. The leash portion can be very narrow and cause tangling and even injuries to people and pets.

## 2. Plastic bowls

Plastic may be a wonder to the modern world, but it is difficult to get truly clean. Plastic is easily scratched, with tiny defects all over the surface. These can trap bacteria and oil, which can create issues on your dog's lips and face. They can also be chewed into pieces and swallowed. Don't take a chance. Switch the plastic for stainless steel.

## 3. Smelly or outgrown collars

Our dogs wear collars all the time, close to their skin. These collars are like a pet's underwear and should be kept clean and fresh. Collars can rub the skin and create infections and hot spots around the neck. Don't forget to wash or replace collars regularly.

## 4. Dull nail trimmers

Many dogs don't enjoy having a pedicure—and dull nail trimmers are probably one reason why! Nail trimmers

have a cutting surface, and if it is not sharp, it will crush and split the nail instead of cutting it cleanly. Odds are this crushing effect is not particularly comfortable for your dog, either. Avoid lasting issues and keep your trimmers sharp and in good repair.

## 5. Broken or chewed up toys

Toys should be in good repair and whole. It is so easy for your dog to swallow a piece of a broken or chewed toy. You might not even notice that it's missing until your dog starts to vomit and act sick. Toys are typically not digestible and they are not designed for actual ingestion. They can lodge in the GI tract and block it, becoming a life-threatening situation. Set a schedule for checking toys at least once a week or so, if your dog is home with them frequently. Discard any that cannot be repaired. It is not worth losing your dog to a foreign body obstruction.

You are your dog's guardian and it falls to you to keep him safe. These are easy hazards that you might not have thought of. If you think that your dog has eaten something foreign or has been injured, do not hesitate to call your veterinarian. And if you ever have questions about the products your pet uses, let your veterinary practice know. They are there to help!

If your pet is nervous about the toothbrush you can start by wrapping your finger in a paper towel and wiping the plaque from the tooth.



Every animal is different. You must adjust the way you brush to fit your animal's needs.

If you are consistent and make brushing fun and enjoyable then you will be successful.

Brushing your pet's teeth will improve overall health as well as allow you to recognize when there is something wrong in your pet's mouth, such as broken teeth, redness, bleeding or inflammation in the gums.



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SPECIAL THANKS TO DR. CANTATORE,  
DVM, STARR RIOVO, AND CIARA  
FREDERICKS CVT.  
WRITTEN BY  
STEPHANIE NOVACK CVT  
WALDO & NALA

## How to Brush your Dog or Cat's Teeth

Daily Brushing will help reduce tarter build up in the mouth. Tarter holds bacteria that can migrate through the gums and into the bloodstream causing systemic disease.

**Follow these steps to teach your pet to enjoy daily brushing!**



1. Find a quiet location where you can give your pet your full attention without other pets or people.
2. Find a time that you can spend brushing teeth every day. If brushing teeth is part of your routine then you will not forget, and your pet will look forward to it.



3. Find an animal toothpaste that your pet likes. Veterinarians and Pet stores offer a variety of flavors. The best toothpastes contain enzymes that help to break down tarter and remove plaque buildup.



**DO NOT USE HUMAN TOOTHPASTE!** It contains fluoride and flavors that are not intended to be swallowed.

- Brush in short sessions of 5 minutes or less.
- Always finish with special treat and praise.

4. Get your pet used to you having your fingers in and near its mouth and teeth. Start in the front of the mouth by letting your pet lick the toothpaste off your fingers and gently touching the front teeth.



Spend short session of about 5 minutes or less getting your pet used to you touching their teeth. Make sure that they are comfortable before going to the next step.

**Avoid being bitten!**

**If you see that your pet is uncomfortable then take a break or go back a step.**

5. Start by brushing only the front teeth. Spend several days getting your pet used to brushing these teeth.



6. Over time, your pet should become more comfortable with having their teeth and mouth touched. Now, slowly begin introducing your pet to having the teeth in the back of their mouth brushed.



**You only need to brush the outside of the teeth. The tongue and toothpaste will help remove plaque from the inside of the teeth. Most of the plaque and tarter is found on the outside surface of the teeth.**



# The top 5 tips for teething puppies

Teething is a tricky time. Here's how to keep puppies properly occupied—and out of the shoe closet!



Offer frozen mini bagels, plain or fruit variety, not onion. Allowing them to chew, and eventually consume, the bagels helps to numb the gingiva, easing discomfort. The denseness of the bagel may actually help to remove loose baby teeth.



Cold carrots may help relieve discomfort—and they offer vitamins and minerals. Just don't offer more than one whole carrot a day, because of its high fiber content.



Try frozen fruit, such as strawberries or bits of banana. The “cold pack” may help relieve oral discomfort and the fruit is edible, although it might get a little messy.



Wet a dishrag or towel, twist it into a rope-like shape and freeze. The cold helps relieve oral discomfort, and the chewiness of the towel helps encourage proper biting behavior.



Offer puppy-specific toys, such as a Chilly Bone or Kong. These can also be frozen.

Note: The tips for teething puppies are suggested to help relieve the discomfort of teething. No toy or other implement should be offered without supervision. Not all of the suggestions will work for all breeds of puppies. Discretion is necessary.

# Chew on this!

You can help keep your pets' teeth strong and healthy at home—and positively impact their overall health—with these tips for home dental care and pet toothbrushing.



**1 Start brushing their teeth as soon as possible**—8 to 12 weeks old is best. If you brush every day your pet will become familiar with the routine when their permanent teeth erupt. Please note: You may need to stop brushing while your pet is losing its baby teeth. Their mouth will be a bit sore and handling may cause more pain. Continue once all the permanent teeth come in.

**2 Work with your pet's mouth.** Be patient and make it fun. Use love and praise, and try to practice at the same time each day to establish a routine. Choose a quiet time, such as late in the evening, or if your pet is highly motivated by food, try just before dinner so your pet will be rewarded for cooperation.

**3 Handle the muzzle and touch your pet's lips** and work up to rubbing the teeth and gums with your finger. Put a few drops of water flavored with low-sodium chicken or beef bouillon for dogs and tuna juice for cats in their mouth and they'll begin to look forward to these sessions.



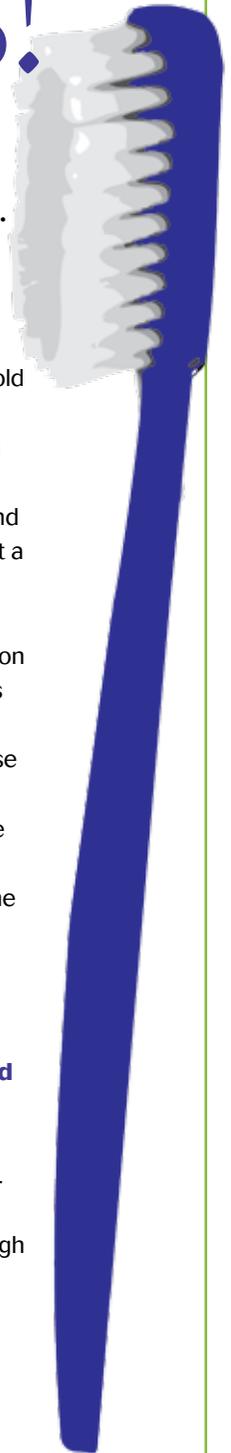
**4 Use a bouillon- or tuna-flavored washcloth** or a piece of gauze wrapped around the end of your finger to rub the teeth gently.

**5 Finally, use a finger brush or a soft veterinary or human toothbrush** to brush the teeth using the bouillon water or tuna juice. Hold the brush at a 45-degree angle to the tooth and brush gently back and forth or in a circular pattern from gum to tip. Brushing the tongue side of the teeth is less critical, but still good. Offer rewards and treats when your pet allows you to brush to keep it a good experience.

**6 Consider other dental aids.** A large selection of veterinary toothpastes, oral rinses, and gels are available to you. Our veterinary team can help you select the one right for you and your pet. These products all enhance your home care program, but daily brushing is best. Avoid human toothpaste because fluoride and detergents can be harmful if swallowed. Hydrogen peroxide can be harsh on the gums and shouldn't be swallowed either. Baking soda has a high sodium content and should be avoided in older pets.



**7 Pick kibble and rubber chew toys** that will help keep the teeth clean. Avoid natural bones, which are hard enough to fracture teeth. Your veterinarian can recommend a complete and balanced professional diet to use at feeding time and as a treat.



Thank you for letting us help improve your pet's dental health. Following a consistent home care program will safeguard your pet's dental health and result in fewer professional cleanings, less tooth loss, and a happier, healthier pet. Just remember there's no substitute for professional veterinary care. Work with your veterinary team to ensure a long, happy life for your pet.

# Why punishment **fails**; what works **better**

Think some form of punishment is necessary when training your dog? The following examples will show you why it just doesn't work and can make matters even worse. *By Valarie V. Tynes, DVM, DACVB*

**P**unishing a dog often doesn't work or can even make a behavior problem worse. Three important rules must be met for punishment to be effective.

- 1.** The punishment must occur every time the unwanted behavior occurs.
- 2.** The punishment must be administered within a second or two of the inappropriate behavior.
- 3.** The punishment must be aversive enough to stop the dog from repeating the unwanted behavior in the future but not be so aversive as to frighten the dog.

Meeting all three of these criteria can be difficult. That's why punishment often fails to solve behavior problems and should not be the first training method of choice. Positive reinforcement training, in which animals are rewarded for appropriate behaviors, is safer and more effective.

As seen in the two examples below, punishment teaches an animal what you don't want it to do but fails to teach it what you expect of it.

## **Example A**

**Problem behavior:** A dog gets on the furniture.

**Owner's response:** Every time the owner sees the dog on the furniture, she yells at it and threatens it with a rolled up newspaper.



When she does this, the dog slinks off the furniture.

**Result:** The dog continues to get on the furniture, although it is less likely to do so in the owner's presence. Because the dog still gets on the furniture when the owner is away, it is being rewarded part of the time for the unwanted behavior, and the first rule above is not being met. So the punishment does not solve the problem. If the owner gets increasingly frustrated with the dog, she may increase the severity of the punishment, and depending on the dog's temperament, it may respond by becoming fearful of the owner and avoiding her. Some dogs might even begin growling and snapping when the owner approaches.

**Suggestion:** Success will be more likely if the owner blocks the dog's access to the furniture whenever she can't be around (e.g. confine the dog to a crate or a different room in the house). Or the owner can make the furniture less appealing by covering it with plastic. Commercially available devices for keeping animals off surfaces such as elastic mats, plastic mats with rigid points (or plastic carpet protector material laid upside down) can also be used. A comfortable bed should also be made available to the dog in the vicinity of the favored furniture, and the dog should be rewarded every time it is caught resting on the bed.

### Example B

**Problem behavior:** A dog greets people by jumping on them.

**Owners' response:** Whenever the dog jumps on its owners, they knee it in the chest or kick it.

**Result:** The dog avoids the husband (the largest man in the household; he has kicked the dog hard enough that it is now afraid of him) but continues to jump on everyone else. Many dogs are highly motivated to greet people by getting close to their faces. In most cases, kneeling or kicking such a dog is less powerful than the dog's desire to greet people by jumping on them. In addition, since not all people the dog meets will knee it or kick it, the punishment doesn't meet the first rule. The third rule is also not met because the dog doesn't always perceive the kneeling as punishment and, in fact, is reinforced for jumping because it's getting attention.

**Suggestion:** Rather than trying to punish the dog for jumping, the owners should use positive reinforcement to teach the dog to sit to greet everyone. Sitting is an alternative behavior that can be rewarded with petting or a food treat.

### Appropriate behavior modification

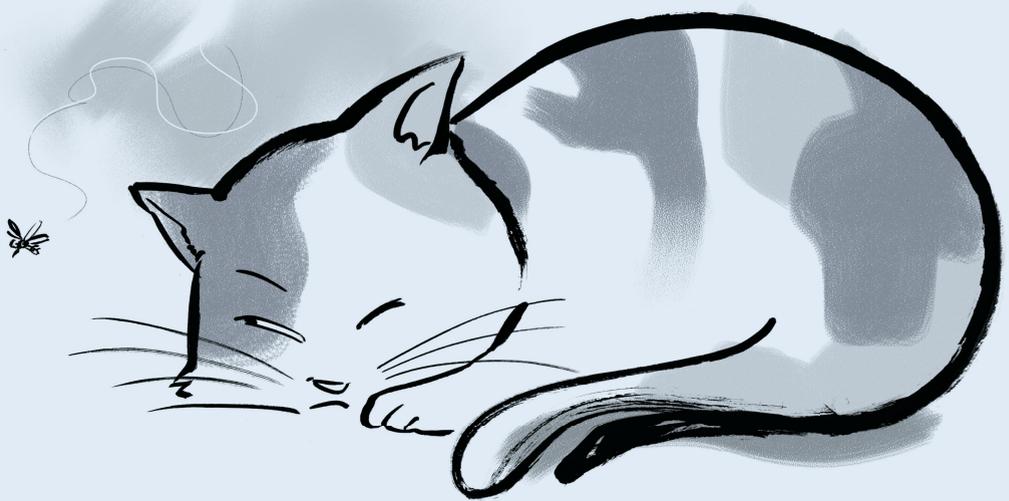
These examples highlight the fact that when the punishment criteria are not met, behavior problems can worsen, and the bond between the pet and the owner can be damaged beyond repair. When punishment is used incorrectly, it will appear unpredictable and confusing, so many pets become anxious or fearful around the owner that administers the punishment. When punishment is used in an attempt to train an animal that is already afraid or anxious, its fear and anxiety are likely to worsen and may lead to aggression.

If your dog is exhibiting inappropriate behavior, consult your veterinarian. He or she will help you develop an appropriate behavior modification program that focuses on using positive reinforcement or will refer you to someone with extensive experience in developing such behavior modification programs.



# 7 fun—and not-so-fun—facts about mosquitoes

Head straight to No. 7 for the fact that scares veterinarians the most and makes them worry for the health of your cats and dogs.



## 1. Mosquito means “little fly” in Spanish

We would argue that mosquitoes are bigger than flies. And more annoying. You be the judge.

## 2. Mosquitoes have been around a long time

The oldest fossil of their current form is dated at 79 million years old. Persistent pests, aren't they?

## 3. Mosquito saliva is what makes your bites itch

Mosquitoes dose you up with a menu of special proteins, keeping your blood from clotting and fighting back your immune system's response to their blood-sucking invasion. Your unique allergic response to that saliva is what makes you a little itchy, moderately itchy or painfully itchy.

## 4. Mosquitoes spend three of their four life cycle stages in the water

That's right—mosquito eggs, larvae and pupae mostly stick to the water. Bet you wish they'd stay there too.

## 5. The mosquito's enemy is your friend

If you hate mosquitoes, get rid of standing water, keep the bug spray on, and try to be nice to some predators that love eating them: birds, fish, frogs (and tadpoles), turtles, dragonflies, spiders and bats (just make sure your bat friends aren't rabid).

## 6. Mosquitoes love to spread the love

And by love, we mean diseases—yellow fever, malaria, West Nile and Zika, to name a few. They pick those diseases up from one victim and share them with their next victim. Worst of all, for dogs, is our final fact ...

## 7. Mosquitoes spread heartworm disease to dogs

Did you know adult heartworms can invade the chambers of your dog's heart and your cat's lungs? And once they're fully grown, it can be very expensive and difficult to treat. Yikes. And where do they get it? Eggs spread by mosquitoes who've picked them up from other infected cats and dogs. Heartworm disease is a vicious circle, and mosquitoes play a crucial role in it. Luckily, your veterinarian has the tools to prevent. Ask about it today.

## Feeding Your New Puppy

Few things in life are more irresistible than the image of a roly-poly puppy running through the house. While that picture may be cute, however, it isn't always healthy.

When deciding what to feed your new puppy, make sure you get reliable, professional veterinary advice on:

- What type of diet to choose
- How much food to feed
- How to adjust your puppy's diet as your puppy grows into adulthood

Veterinarians are your best source of information to help you make more informed choices about which brand of food to feed or what kinds of rewarding treats to give your little friend for good behavior.

### Eating Right—Nutrition Basics

Puppies should eat a diet that contains protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and water in the proper proportions. Commercially produced puppy foods must meet AAFCO (Association of



Every puppy is different, and no single diet will work best for all pups.

American Feed Control Officials) nutritional standards. Pet foods that meet AAFCO standards are marked with the phrase “complete and balanced” and, in the case of puppy foods, should be formulated for growth. Any diets that meet these guidelines won't require any additional supplementation—the diet will include all necessary vitamins and minerals. Don't forget to also make sure your puppy has a continuous supply of fresh, clean water!

There are many commercial puppy foods on the market, but if you need help making a selection, ask a veterinary professional for advice on what products offer the right nutritional mix for your pet.

### How Much and When?

Typically, tiny puppies—those under 12 weeks of age—should eat three to four times a day. Once a puppy is 3 months old, he or she can generally make the switch to eating two to three times a day. The frequency of feedings, however, will depend on the puppy's breed, size, and individual needs. This frequency should continue until the puppy has reached adulthood.

Growing puppies require significantly more food for their size than adult dogs. The feeding guidelines listed on your pet

### Read the Label

Under federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations, every puppy food must include a label listing its ingredients and a guaranteed analysis of how much protein, fat, and other important nutrients are in it. Reading the percentages can get complicated, so one of the best quick ways to assess the quality of a diet is to look at the ingredient list. By law, the pet food manufacturer must list the ingredients by weight. For more information on reading pet food labels, visit [www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/ResourcesforYou](http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/ResourcesforYou) and click on “Pet Food Labels—General” under “Information for Consumers Fliers.”

## Feeding Your New Puppy

food bag are a good place to start, but you should monitor how well those amounts seem to be meeting your puppy's needs. A puppy that is leaving food in the bowl at mealtimes or becoming too pudgy may be eating too much; a puppy that seems lethargic or excessively thin may not be getting enough.

It's also important to set a regular schedule for feeding your puppy. A good schedule helps prevent stomach upsets and supports house-training of your young pup.

### Large Breed vs. Small Breed

Just picture a huge Great Dane puppy standing next to a tiny Chihuahua puppy. They're

### Body Condition

When you visit your veterinarian, he or she can weigh and examine your puppy to help you determine if things are "on track." In between those appointments, which become less frequent as your puppy ages, you should be able to monitor your puppy's progress on your own. Many veterinarians and nutritionists use a *body condition score* to determine whether an animal is overweight or underweight. These scores usually rank a pet on a five- or nine-point scale. In general, your dog should score a 4 on a nine-point scale or a 3 on a five-point scale throughout his or her life.

For optimal health, it's best for all dogs—puppies and adults—to be a little on the lean side. That doesn't mean your pet should be abnormally skinny. It means you should be able to feel—but not see—ribs when you run your hands down your pet's sides. Your puppy should also have a definite "waist" when viewed from above. If you have any concerns about your puppy's growth rate, condition, or eating habits, schedule a weight check.

both dogs—and members of the exact same species—but their nutritional needs during puppyhood and young adulthood are completely different.

Veterinarians are your best source of information about what to feed your new puppy.

Small-breed dogs mature faster, typically have faster metabolisms, and have tiny mouths and teeth. They often need puppy diets that are easy for them to eat and chew and that are more "energy dense" to help keep up activity levels and encourage proper growth and development. In addition, small, toy, or teacup breeds may need to eat more often.

Large-breed dogs, on the other hand, often mature at a slower rate and are prone to developing joint (e.g., elbow and hip) problems if they eat too much and grow too rapidly. Excess body weight can also stress developing bones. For these reasons, it is vitally important not to overfeed large-breed puppies.

Thankfully, there are a number of commercial diets specifically for dog breeds of different sizes. Diets designed for large-breed puppies, for example, are typically less energy dense and, therefore, are less likely to be overfed. Ask a veterinary professional for advice if your puppy belongs to a particularly large or small breed.

### Feed by the Puppy, Not by the Package

The key point to remember is that every puppy is different, and no single diet will work best for all pups. To ensure a healthy adulthood for your puppy, seek professional advice, educate yourself about good puppy nutrition, and carefully monitor your puppy's growth rate, activity level, and body condition as he or she grows.

# The pet food guessing game?

Once you get past the marketing and product claims, what are you *really* feeding your pet?

**W**hen it comes to the best nutrition for your dog or cat, always start at your veterinary clinic. There isn't one right food for every pet, but your veterinary team can guide you to what's best for you and your pet. Then use this quick guide to help decipher the vast array of marketing claims that often overwhelm the pet food aisle so you can make an informed decision about your pet's nutrition.



## THE NAME GAME

### What's in a name?

- > If an ingredient is used in the name of the pet food, such as "Salmon Dog Food," at least 95 percent of the product must be that ingredient. It should be the first ingredient that appears on the label's ingredient list.
- > If the name includes a combination of ingredients, such as "Chicken n' Liver Dog Food," the two ingredients must total 95 percent of the product, and there is always a higher percentage of the first ingredient included than the second.
- > If it's not an ingredient of animal origin, it doesn't count. Products such as "Lamb and Rice Dog Food" must still contain at least 95 percent lamb.



### Ring the dinner bell!

- > When a pet food name reads "Beef Dinner for Dogs" or any fancy-sounding title that includes "dinner," "platter," "entrée," "nuggets" or "formula," the named ingredients must comprise at least 25 percent of the product.
- > A combination of ingredients, such as "Chicken n' Fish Dinner Cat Food," must equal a combined 25 percent. However, the second ingredient named only has to make up 3 percent of that total.
- > The "dinner rule" includes all ingredients, so if a pet food name is "Lamb and Rice Formula for Cats," lamb may be the predominant ingredient, but at least 25 percent is made up of both lamb and rice.
- > An ingredient named in pet food "dinners" may be the third or fourth ingredient on the product's ingredient list. Read the label to ensure the primary ingredients are ingredients you want to feed your pet.

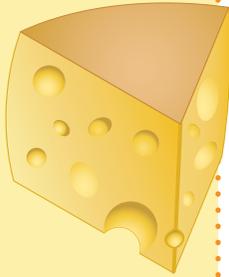


## FROM YOUR VETERINARIAN

### With cheese!

> When a pet food name includes “with,” the ingredient that follows, such as “Beef Dinner for Dogs—with cheese,” only has to be 3 percent of the product.

> Buyer beware: A can of “Cat Food—with Tuna” means tuna may only be 3 percent of the product, whereas “Tuna Cat Food” must contain at least 95 percent tuna.



### Super-ultra-premium

> Label claims including the words “premium,” “super-premium,” even “ultra-premium” or “gourmet” are not required to contain any different or higher quality ingredients.

> “Natural” is usually assumed to mean a lack of artificial flavors, colors or preservatives, but it too is not required to contain any different or higher quality ingredients.

> Currently, there are also no official rules governing the use of the word “organic” in pet food labels.



### Packed with flavor

> The use of the word “flavored” in a pet food means very little. As in, a pet food named “Chicken Flavored Cat Food,” only must have chicken “detectable” in the product. No specific percentage of the named flavor is required.

> Digests (materials treated with heat, enzymes and/or acids to form concentrated natural flavors), stocks and broths and whey are often used to flavor pet foods.



## When in doubt, ask

### ✓CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN

Talk to your veterinary team about your nutrition questions and how to appropriately transition your pet to a new food. If you think your pet is showing signs of illness related to his or her pet food, call your veterinarian.

### ✓CALL THE MANUFACTURER

The “manufactured by” label statement identifies the party responsible for the quality and safety of the product, along with contact information. Don’t hesitate to contact the company with questions or complaints about a product.

# All about microchipping *Information from your veterinarian*

## What is a microchip?

The microchip is a tiny computer chip, about the size of a grain of rice, programmed with an identification number. The chip is enclosed in biocompatible glass and is small enough to fit into a hypodermic needle. Once an animal is injected with a chip, it can be identified throughout its life with this one-of-a-kind number.

## What's the benefit of microchipping my pet?

Microchips are permanent and can't be lost, altered, or destroyed. Pet owners have been reunited with chipped pets that have been missing for years or that have traveled thousands of miles.

## How does microchip identification work?

A special scanner is used to send a radio signal to the chip to read the identification number. The pet feels nothing when the scanner is placed over it. The number is displayed on the scanner, and the person reading the scanner can contact a national registry to find out who the pet belongs to.

## How is the microchip implanted?

Microchips are implanted with a needle beneath the skin between the shoulder blades. They can't be felt or seen.

## How early can puppies or kittens be injected with a microchip?

Young pets can be microchipped as early as 6 to 8 weeks of age.

## How long does the microchip last?

The microchip has no power supply, battery, or moving parts, and it's designed to last the life of the pet. Once injected, the microchip is anchored in place as a thin layer of connective tissue forms around it. It requires no care and will not pass through or out of the body.

## Does implanting the microchip hurt my pet?

Most pets react the same way to this shot as they do to any other. The microchip contains nothing that will burn or irritate tissue; it's completely biocompatible.

## Does my pet have to be sedated to be implanted with a microchip?

No. Injecting a microchip is just like any other injection or vaccination. Anesthesia is not required or recommended.

## Could my pet be allergic to the microchip?

The microchip is inert, smooth, nontoxic, and non-allergenic. Microchip companies say there is virtually no chance of the body developing an allergy or trying to reject the microchip.

## If a veterinary clinic or animal shelter finds a microchip, how will they know who to call?

Animal shelters and veterinarians are finding chips in more and more pets. They are aware of the national registries and routinely contact them to obtain owner information regarding the pet. They then contact owners to advise them their pet has been found.

## I have tiny toy breeds—can I still have them implanted?

Absolutely. The same size microchip and needle are used in pets even smaller than puppies and toy breeds, including mice, baby birds, and even fish.

## How do I update information in the registration?

After your pet is chipped, you will be given information about how to contact the national registry to update your information. Remember to do this whenever you change your address or telephone number.

## Do shelters scan animals for microchips?

Yes, scanning pets for microchips has become standard practice in animal shelters. Some municipalities, such as Los Angeles County in California, are even requiring pets to be microchipped, so local governments can cooperate with shelters to reunite pets and owners.

*Source: Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control*

# SPAYING or NEUTERING *your dog*



Part of being conscientious dog owner is considering the importance of spaying or neutering your pup. Read on for more info on this surgery and the truth behind some common myths.

## **Spaying and neutering your dog**

If you've ever visited an animal shelter, you've seen some of the thousands of pets each year who are homeless. And many of those pets run out of time for adoption and are euthanized. You can't save them all, but you can help prevent pet overpopulation by spaying or neutering your dog.

Need more reasons to "fix" your pet? Besides preventing unwanted litters, spaying or neutering helps prevent many life-threatening diseases and can head off some irritating behaviors.

## **Spaying**

Although it's commonly referred to as a spay, this surgery is actually a complete ovariectomy, or the removal of both ovaries and the uterus. Spayed dogs are at much lower risk for ovarian cancers and cysts, mammary gland tumors, and uterine infections.

## **Neutering**

Neutering is the removal of both testicles. It sounds worse than it is—and no, he won't miss them! Neu-

tered males are less susceptible to prostate disease and testicular cancer. They're also less likely to act aggressive or to wander away from home, so neuter your pet before his heart leads him into the path of an oncoming car.

## **Common myths**

Often people worry that their spayed or neutered pet will get fat. However, the aging process probably affects weight gain more than anything—as many of us are painfully aware from our human experience. It's true that lowered hormone levels may decrease your pet's activity. The key to this problem is simple—give your pet less food and more exercise.

It's also a myth that females need to complete a heat cycle before being spayed. There is no medical reason for this old wives' tale. In fact, the fewer heat cycles your pet goes through before getting spayed, the better her protection against mammary cancer.

Worried that your male dog may lose his personality or "spunk" after being neutered? Don't! If he loses anything, it'll be the potential for bad behavior.

# HELP! My pet hates nail trims!

Advice for pooch-loving people for whom nail trims can be a real nail-biter.

**B**y relieving your pup's nail trim stress, you're more likely to have a calm, cooperative canine on your hands rather than one that flails and fights to get away. Transition the attitude of nail care from stressful to restful by following these tactful trimming tips:

**1. Pair with pawsitives.** Provide ample and super-flavorful treats throughout the entire nail trim. Treats are optimally given continuously with the licking of a tasty soft treat or delivered in fast repetition. (Hint: Cut the treats into pea-sized pieces).

**2. Don't force the issue.** Holding your dog down against his will for a nail trim can increase fear and resistance. Instead, build your canine's confidence gradually by earning trust and associating paw and nail handling with good things the dog enjoys.

**3. Make it manageable.** Divide the nail trim into smaller segments. Start with a spot on the dog that's well within your dog's comfort zone. Make sure that your pooch's body language is happy, relaxed and loose, and that he's readily accepting treats before continuing.

**4. Don't start with clippers.** Handle your dog's paws and nails with your fingers. Then move to other items, like the closed end of a ballpoint pen or a spoon, to mimic the sensation of something touching the nail.

**5. Reintroduce trimmers as a friend, not a foe.** Hold nail trimmers in hand and allow the dog to approach, instead of bringing the trimmers to your dog. Encourage approach by placing a soft, spreadable treat like dog-safe peanut butter on the handle. Or place clippers on the ground with a Hansel-and-Gretel-like trail of treats leading up to and around them.

**6. Take it one nail at a time.** Rather than doing it all at once, trim one to three nails a day. You'd be surprised at how much easier the task becomes for you and your dog.





# Behind closed doors: Top 5 indoor plants poisonous to dogs and cats

As spring and summer finally approach, so do the risks of dogs and cats being accidentally poisoned by potentially dangerous plants. According to the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center outdoor and indoor plants represented almost 5% of the calls to ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center in 2015. Here's what you need to know to keep your pets safe.

## INSOLUBLE CALCIUM OXALATES

One of the most common plant poisonings in dogs and cats involves plants from the Araceae family.<sup>1</sup> These common houseplants contain insoluble calcium oxalate



crystals and typically include the *Dieffenbachia* genus of plants. Examples include philodendron, pothos, peace lily, calla lily, dumb cane, arrowhead vine, mother-in-law's tongue, sweetheart vine, devil's ivy, umbrella plant and elephant ear.

When dogs or cats chew into these plants, the insoluble crystals result in severe mouth pain. Signs of drooling, pawing at the mouth, swelling of the muzzle or lips and occasional vomiting can be seen. Thankfully, this poisonous plant—while commonly encountered—isn't too dangerous, and simply offering some milk or yogurt to your dog or cat can help minimize the injury from the insoluble calcium oxalate crystals. If signs continue or worsen, seek veterinary attention.

## SOLUBLE CALCIUM OXALATES

The English shamrock is a beautiful, popular houseplant. These houseplants contain soluble oxalate-containing plants, which are very different from insoluble oxalate plants. Other examples of this type of poisonous plant include rhubarb (leaves) and the tropical star fruit.<sup>2</sup> While this is a rare cause of poisoning in dogs and cats, it can result in a life-threateningly low calcium concentration when ingested. It can also cause calcium oxalate crystals to form in the kidneys, resulting in acute kidney injury.<sup>2</sup> Clinical signs of poisoning include drooling, not eating, vomiting, lethargy, tremors (from a low calcium concentration) and abnormal urination. If your dog or cat ingests this houseplant, visit a veterinarian for blood work and intravenous fluids.





## KALANCHOE

You may have purchased this common and beautiful houseplant in a supermarket or gift store. The thick succulent leaves and beautiful bunches of small flowers, which come in pink, red, yellow, and more, can be very



poisonous when ingested by cats and dogs as they contain cardiac glycosides. Signs of poisoning include gastrointestinal signs (nausea, drooling, vomiting), profound cardiovascular signs (a very slow or rapid heart rate, arrhythmias), electrolyte abnormalities (a high potassium concentration) or central nervous

system signs (dilated pupils, tremors, seizures).<sup>3</sup> Treatment includes decontamination, if appropriate, along with intravenous fluids, heart and blood pressure monitoring, heart medications and supportive care.

## CORN PLANT/DAGON TREE



This plant from the *Dracaena* species contains saponins. When ingested by dogs and cats, it can result in signs of gastroenteritis (vomiting, drooling and diarrhea), lethargy and dilated pupils. Thankfully, this plant poses a minor poisoning risk to your dog or cat, but it is still best to keep it out of reach.



## SPRING FLOWERS

You might be looking for a bit of color in the house during the spring and plant spring bulbs as houseplants. Certain spring bulbs (such as daffodils, hyacinth and tulips) can result in mild vomiting or diarrhea. With massive ingestions, the bulbs can get stuck in a dog's stomach or intestines, causing a foreign body obstruction. Less commonly, with large ingestions, elevated heart and respiratory rates can occur. Rarely, low blood pressure and neurologic signs (tremors, seizures) can be seen. Thankfully, the greens and flowers are generally considered to be safe; it's the bulb itself that is the most poisonous. Spring bulb poisonings can be easily treated with decontamination, fluid therapy and anti-vomiting medication.

When in doubt, if you suspect your cat or dog got into a poisonous plant, contact the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at **888-426-4435**. You can also download their free app. While most plant ingestions in dogs and cats typically just result in mild gastrointestinal signs, some plant ingestions can be deadly without treatment and immediate attention by a veterinarian is important for best outcome.

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# Out in the open: Top 4 outdoor plants poisonous to dogs and cats

**A**s spring and summer finally approach, so do the risks of dogs and cats being accidentally poisoned by potentially dangerous plants. According to the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center outdoor and indoor plants represented almost 5% of the calls to ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center in 2015. Here's what you need to know to keep your pets safe.

## SAGO PALM

This outdoor landscaping plant is often found growing in the hot, humid temperatures of the southern United States. This plant can also be found in the house



as small bonsai plants or houseplants. All parts of the plant are poisonous, with the seed being the most dangerous. Unfortunately, as little as one to two seeds of a female sago palm plant can result in clinical signs of poisoning.<sup>1</sup> Exposure to sago palm can cause damage to the gastrointestinal tract (seen as anorexia, vomiting, diarrhea), the central nervous system (seen as an unsteady wobbly walk, tremors, seizures, coma) and the liver (seen as jaundice, black tarry stool, elevated liver enzyme activities).<sup>1</sup> This plant is considered potentially deadly in dogs, and immediate treatment is necessary. That treatment includes decontamination (inducing vomiting and administering activated charcoal to bind the poison) and hospitalization for intravenous fluids and administration of liver protectants, medication and supportive care.<sup>1</sup>

## LILIES

These beauties lurk outside, but you also might bring them into the house as fresh cut flowers from the garden or from a florist bouquet. Unfortunately, "true" lilies (from *Lilium* and *Hermercallis* species) are deadly to cats.<sup>2</sup> Examples of true lilies include the common Easter, tiger, Japanese show, stargazer, rubrum and day lily. As little as two to three leaves or petals (even the pollen or water from the vase) can be deadly to cats, resulting in severe acute kidney injury.<sup>2</sup> Clinical signs of poisoning include vomiting, not eating, abnormal urination, lethargy and progressive kidney damage. Treatment includes aggressive decontamination (inducing vomiting, which can only be safely done by a veterinarian; administering activated charcoal to bind the poison), anti-vomiting medication and aggressive intravenous fluids and hospitalization for 48 hours for successful treatment. Recent studies have found a 100% survival rate with aggressive decontamination and fluid diuresis if treated early.<sup>3</sup>



Source: Justine Lee, DVM, DACVECC, DABT



## CARDIAC GLYCOSIDE-CONTAINING PLANTS

Several types of plants contain chemicals called cardiac glycosides, including dogbane, foxglove, milkweed, kalanchoe, lily of the valley and oleander.<sup>4</sup> In fact, these plants led to the discovery of important heart medications that are used in both human and veterinary medicine.



Unfortunately, when accidentally ingested by dogs or cats, these glycoside-containing plants can potentially result in life-threatening poisoning.

Signs of poisoning include gastrointestinal signs (nausea, drooling, vomiting), profound cardiovascular signs (a very slow or rapid heart rate, arrhythmias), electrolyte abnormalities or central nervous system signs (dilated pupils, tremors, seizures).<sup>4</sup> Treatment includes decontamination, if appropriate, along with intravenous fluids, heart and blood pressure monitoring, heart medications and supportive care.

## BLUE-GREEN ALGAE

While blue-green algae is a rare plant poisoning in dogs, it can be fatal with just a few licks. Cyanobacteria (known as blue-green algae), are microscopic bacteria that are found growing on top of freshwater or brackish pools of water.<sup>5-7</sup> This type of algae blossoms during humid, hot summer conditions.<sup>5-7</sup> Thankfully, most algae blooms are nontoxic; however, the toxic type is impossible to identify without analysis by a diagnostic laboratory.



Cyanobacteria contains the toxins microcystins and anatoxins that can result in severe liver failure and neurologic signs, resulting in acute death within hours of exposure.<sup>5-7</sup> As a result, always be careful to keep your pets away from any water with algae on top. Even with aggressive treatment (including fluid therapy, plasma transfusions, liver support, dextrose supplementation and anti-seizure medication, etc.),<sup>5-7</sup> the prognosis is grave to poor with this terrible toxicant.

When in doubt, if you suspect your cat or dog got into a poisonous plant, contact the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at **888-426-4435**. You can also download their free app. While most plant ingestions in dogs and cats typically just result in mild gastrointestinal signs, some plant ingestions can be deadly without treatment and immediate attention by a veterinarian is important for best outcome.

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# Common Household Poisons

## Home, Toxic Home!

Home is the place where we feel the most safe. However, for the four-footed members of your family, your home can also hold a lot of unrecognized dangers. For instance, did you know that many common food items or household products can sicken or even kill pets? Don't panic! A few simple precautions can help keep your pet safe.

## Frightening Foods

You probably know that chocolate can be poisonous to pets, but what about grapes, raisins, onions, garlic, macadamia nuts, avocados, coffee, alcohol, yeast, and the common sugar-free sweetener, xylitol (often found in chewing gum and baked goods)? All of these items can also be

## Sweets That Are Not So Sweet

If you suspect that your pet has consumed any amount of any chocolate, you should call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center's hotline (888-426-4435). However, not all chocolates are equally dangerous to pets. In general, the darker the chocolate, the more toxic it is to animals. Baker's chocolate is the most dangerous of all because it contains the highest concentration of the responsible chemical, called *methylxanthine*. Pets that eat too much of this substance can have vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst and urination, hyperactivity, and, in severe cases, abnormal heart rhythms, tremors, and seizures.

Another "sweet" substance of growing concern is xylitol. This is an artificial sweetener that is found in many sugar-free items, such as candy, gum, beverages, and desserts. It can be very toxic to pets, causing life-threatening liver failure in some cases.



Store all chemicals out of reach of your pet, just as you would for children.

dangerous to pets, so it's important not to give them to your pet as treats or to store them or leave them out where your pet may be able to get to them. Take special care during holiday seasons and festive occasions. It is all too easy to start cooking and forget that you left a package of baker's chocolate on the counter, or to start socializing with guests and leave an alcoholic drink on a coffee table.

Even food that isn't actually poisonous can be a problem. Many people foods are too fatty for pets and can cause digestive upset, which can be severe. It's generally not a good idea to give your pet table food as a treat.

## Pets Are Not "Mini People"

It's important to keep in mind that pets are not "mini people." They react to substances in food and medicines completely differently than we do, so just because something doesn't make us sick doesn't mean it is okay for our pets. Also, pets are generally much smaller than people, so what we might think is a tiny, harmless amount of a food or drug can make them ill.

For these reasons, you should never give your pet a medicine meant for people unless you've been told to by a veterinary professional. Many common over-the-counter drugs can be extremely toxic to pets. Don't leave medicine bot-

## Common Household Poisons

bles out where pets can reach them (a determined dog can chew through a childproof cap!), and be careful to pick up any dropped pills immediately. Use the same caution with dietary supplements or with products you buy at the health-food store.

### Be on Guard in the Yard

Vigilance shouldn't stop at your front door, either. If you have a garage, shed, or garden, chances are that you have at least some of the following:

- **Plants:** If you have pets, you have a responsibility to know which plants can be toxic to pets and under what circumstances. Tomatoes, for example, are in the nightshade family. Many lilies, flowers, and common ornamental shrubs can be toxic. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) maintains a comprehensive

online list ([www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/](http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/)).

- **Pest poisons:** Whether you're wiping out rats, mice, bugs, or weeds, be careful how you apply and store any poisons around your home. Remember, these products are meant to kill! Rodenticides, pesticides, and herbicides are very common causes of poisoning in pets.

Pets are generally much smaller than people, so what we might think is a tiny, harmless amount of a food or drug can make them ill.

- **Garden products:** Cocoa mulch, fertilizers, and compost piles are also unsafe for pets. Make sure any mulch or fertilizer you apply to your yard is safe for pets to play in (and possibly eat). Keep your pet out of areas treated with toxic products. Compost piles can grow bacteria and fungi that are highly toxic to pets, so if you have a compost pile, make sure your pet cannot get into it, and don't compost dairy or meat items.
- **Garage chemicals:** Any chemical in your garage can be dangerous to pets. Antifreeze, in particular, can be deadly. Store all chemicals out of reach of your pet (just as you would for children), and carefully mop up any spills.

Remember, pets are curious. If something smells good, they'll eat it. If they can get into a container, they will. Be aware of what substances may be toxic to your pet, and store and use them safely.

### In an Emergency...

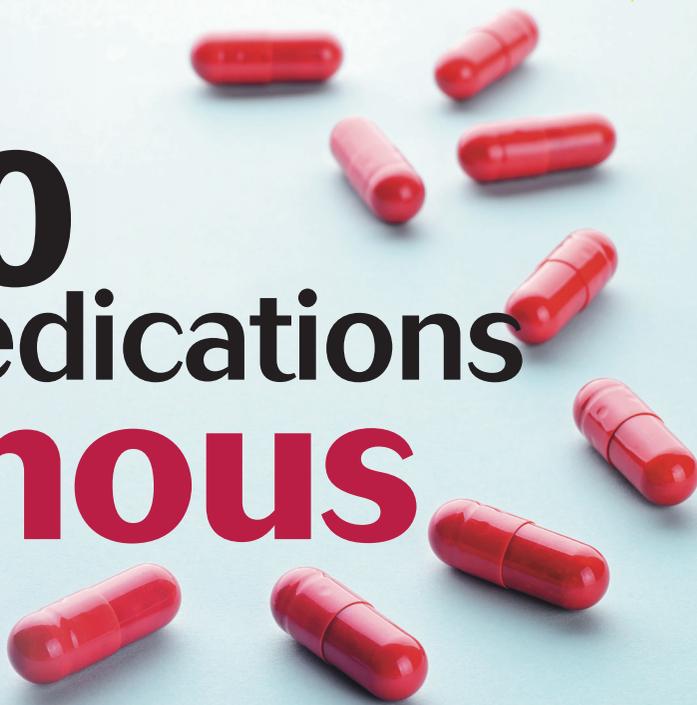
If your pet does eat something he or she shouldn't, time is of the essence! Call your veterinarian's office or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center's hotline (888-426-4435) immediately and be prepared to describe what your pet ate, how long ago, and how much. If possible, bring some of the substance, including any label information available, with you if you are asked to bring your pet in for an exam.

### Top 10 Pet Poisons

The ASPCA maintains a 24-hour poison control hotline, which handles more than 100,000 cases of pet poisonings every year. Based on those cases, the top offenders are:

- Human medicines
- Insecticides
- People food
- Rodenticides
- Veterinary medicines that are given incorrectly (e.g., wrong medicine, wrong amount)
- Plants
- Chemicals (e.g., antifreeze, pool/spa chemicals)
- Household cleaners (e.g., bleach, detergent)
- Heavy metals (e.g., lead paint chips, linoleum)
- Fertilizer

The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center's hotline number is 888-426-4435. (Note: Callers will be charged a consultation fee.)



# TOP 10 human medications poisonous to pets

**T**he reality: Nearly 50% of the poisoning cases managed by Pet Poison Helpline involve human medications—both over-the-counter and prescription drugs. Often, the culprit is a curious canine that chewed into a bottle of pills, but cats can get into their share of trouble as well.

In fact, cats appear extremely attracted to certain types of human medications, notably a few antidepressants. Other poisonings involve mix-ups when pet owners accidentally give their pets their own medications or try to self-medicate pets with drugs that are safe for people but toxic to pets. How-

ever pet poisonings from human medications occur, they can result in serious illness or death.

Awareness is half the battle, so here is a list of the top 10 human medications pets most frequently ingest to make sure you keep your pets safely separated from these drugs in your home.

## **1. NSAIDs (e.g. ibuprofen, naproxen)**

Topping this list are common household medications called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, which include common names such as ibuprofen (e.g. Advil and some types of Motrin) and naproxen (e.g. Aleve). While these medications are safe for people, even one or two pills can cause serious harm to a pet. Dogs, cats, birds and other small mammals including ferrets, gerbils and hamsters may develop serious stomach and intestinal ulcers as well as kidney failure and potentially fall into a coma.

## **2. Acetaminophen, alone or in combination with cold and flu products**

When it comes to pain medications, acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol) is popular. Even though this drug is safe for children, it is not safe for pets—especially cats. One regular strength tablet of acetaminophen may be fatal to a cat by causing irreversible damage to their red blood cells, limiting their ability to carry oxygen. In dogs, acetaminophen leads to liver failure and, in large doses, red blood cell damage. Be sure to also look out for acetaminophen in medications designed to treat “cold & flu” symptoms.

### 3. Antidepressants (e.g. Celexa, Cymbalta, Effexor, Lexapro, Pristiq)

While some antidepressant drugs are occasionally used in pets, overdoses can lead to serious neurologic problems such as sedation, incoordination, tremors and seizures. Some antidepressants also have a stimulant effect, leading to a dangerously elevated heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature. Pets, especially cats, appear to enjoy the taste of Effexor and often eat entire pills. Unfortunately, just one pill can cause serious poisoning.

### 4. ADD/ADHD medications (e.g. Adderall, Concerta, Focalin, Strattera, Vyvanse)

Medications used to treat attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often contain potent stimulants such as amphetamines and methylphenidate. Even minimal ingestions of these medications by pets can cause life-threatening tremors, seizures, elevated body temperature and heart problems.

### 5. Thyroid hormones (e.g. Armour thyroid, Synthroid)

Pets—especially dogs—get underactive thyroid glands too. Interestingly, the dose of thyroid hormone needed to treat dogs is much higher than a person's dose. Therefore, if dogs accidentally get into thyroid hormones at home, it rarely results in problems. However, large acute overdoses in cats and dogs can cause muscle tremors, nervousness, panting, a rapid heart rate and aggression.

### 6. Beta-blockers (e.g. Coreg, Sektal, Tenormin, Toprol, Zebeta)

Beta-blockers may also be used to treat high blood pressure in pets; however, given their potent effect on blood vessels and the heart, the same doses given to people may cause life-threatening decreases in blood pressure and a very slow heart rate in pets.

### 7. Benzodiazepines (e.g. Ativan, Klonopin, Restoril, Valium, Xanax)

These medications are designed to reduce anxiety and help people sleep better. However, in pets, they may have the opposite effect. About half of dogs that ingest drugs like this become agitated instead of sedate. Severe lethargy, incoordination and slowed breathing in pets can also occur. In cats, some types of benzodiazepines can cause liver failure when ingested.

### 8. Albuterol

Dogs puncturing albuterol inhalers with their teeth results in the most common cause of albuterol poisoning in pets since a massive dose of drug gets delivered all at once. Albuterol, while helpful in appropriate doses, can cause vomiting, a dangerously elevated heart rate and severe weakness due to an intracellular shift of potassium in overdoses.

### 9. ACE inhibitors (e.g. Altace, Lotensin, Prinivil, Vasotec, Zestril)

Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors are commonly used to treat high blood pressure in people and, occasionally, pets. Although overdoses can cause low blood pressure, dizziness and weakness, this category of medication is typically safer than many other heart medications. Pets ingesting small amounts of this medication can potentially be monitored at home, unless they have kidney failure or heart disease.

### 10. Birth control and other estrogen-based drugs

Birth control pills often come in packages that dogs find irresistible. Thankfully, small ingestions of most birth-control medications typically do not cause trouble. Large ingestions of estrogen and estradiol, especially those formulated as topical creams, can cause bone marrow suppression.



# Check your pet for ticks at home

**D**on't be fooled by the size of ticks – even these small bugs can cause big problems for your pet. Because ticks feed on blood, they can transmit diseases such as Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Here are a few tips to help protect your pet from these dangerous pests.

## Prevention:

- Talk to your veterinarian about starting a preventive product that is effective against ticks as well as fleas. It is important to use these products year-round, as ticks are often able to survive throughout the cooler months. Although tick-borne diseases are less common in cats, it is still important to use year-round preventatives to protect them from tick bites and infestations. However, be sure to check that the product is labeled for cats, as they can have severe reactions to products intended for dogs.
- There are several canine vaccines available to help prevent Lyme disease. These vaccines should be given even if you are using a preventive product. They can also be used to help prevent new infections in dogs that have already been treated for the disease.

## Manual scanning:

- Even when using a preventative product, manually checking for ticks is highly recommended. Some products are made to kill ticks, but not to repel them. This means they can hitch a ride on your pet and into your home. It is best to check for ticks daily, but it is especially important after your pet has been in a grassy or wooded area.
- The most efficient way to check for ticks is to start at one end of your pet and work your way down their body. Use your fingers to comb through their fur, paying special attention to their head as this is a favorite spot for ticks to hang out. Be sure to check their ears, between their toes and inside their limbs. Apply enough pressure to feel for any bumps or scabbed areas, especially on pets with longer fur. Remember that ticks can range in size, from a grain of sand to a large blueberry. The size can depend on their age, type, and whether or not they have had a recent blood meal.

**If you find a tick, call your veterinarian for advice on tick removal.**

## Client handout: 7 myths about Lyme disease

Consider this list of common myths about Lyme disease and learn the facts to protect your pet:

### **Myth 1: I don't live in a wooded area, so my pet can't get ticks.**

Even if you think your pets don't visit areas where ticks are commonly found, such as wooded areas and places with high grass or brush, remember that ticks are actually able to live out their entire life cycle within your home. Woodpiles near or inside a home provide the perfect environment for ticks to survive. And when your pets are inside, this improves the environment for a tick's survival because ticks need readily available hosts.

It's also important to know that when small rodents such as mice are infested with ticks, they can enter the house, assisting the tick's transportation indoors. Even if ticks don't make their way into your home, they can still live in low grass and trees—such as the back yards of most suburban homes. When pets play in these areas, they are at risk of tick infestation.

### **Myth 2: I haven't seen any ticks on my pets, so they aren't at risk.**

You may find ticks on your pets once they're engorged and visible to the naked eye. However, the tick's life cycle includes two stages, larva and nymph, where they're not as easily noticed. While you can remove adult ticks from their pets, you can't be sure that ticks haven't already laid eggs on the pets, continuing the tick infestation. Ticks in the larva and nymph stage need blood meals to grow into adult ticks, and the pet's coat is the perfect place to grow.

### **Myth 3: I've only found a few ticks on my pet, so I'm sure he's fine.**

The phrase "it only takes one" fits perfectly to describe the risk of Lyme dis-

ease. While you may be diligent about checking for and removing ticks, it still only takes one tick bite for a pet to contract Lyme disease. When you find ticks on your pet, there's a good chance the pet has had other ticks you've missed. And even if you only find one tick, your veterinary team wants to protect the pet's well-being by testing for tick-borne diseases in the months following the bite.

### **Myth 4: I apply a flea and tick preventive to my pet monthly, so I don't need to worry about Lyme disease.**

That's fantastic! Just remember, no product guarantees absolute protection. Depending on the pet's habits and environment, you may need to take additional steps to prevent Lyme disease.

For example, because each product is different, the doctor may recommend different application schedules, depending on the product and the pet. The veterinarian may also advise reapplying the product if the pet has been swimming or bathed, so it's a good idea to check with the veterinary team if your pet gets wet after an application. And the doctor may also suggest routine testing for tick-borne diseases and vaccinations against Lyme disease.

### **Myth 5: During the colder seasons, I don't need to worry about applying flea and tick prevention.**

Because most insect populations decrease once cold weather sets in, you may assume ticks will follow suit. In reality, ticks are much hardier—and their population even peaks during the fall season. Ticks can also survive through the entire winter even when frozen in the ground. And occasional



thaws during winter may release these frozen ticks for another blood meal. For the best protection, continuously apply preventives throughout the year, including the colder months.

### **Myth 6: My pet was treated for Lyme disease, so now she's cured.**

Once a pet is diagnosed with Lyme disease, the doctor usually prescribes an antibiotic. Once the antibiotic course is finished, this doesn't guarantee the Lyme disease is cured and the pet is no longer at risk of experiencing Lyme disease symptoms. The infection in many pets is widespread, and in some cases it may take multiple courses of the antibiotic to successfully treat the Lyme disease. When the doctor diagnoses Lyme disease, he or she may require quantitative tests after treatment to ensure complete treatment. Your pet should also continue to be routinely screened for tick-borne diseases every year.

### **Myth 7: My pet has already contracted Lyme disease, so he can't receive a Lyme disease vaccination.**

Pets that have been treated for Lyme disease run the risk of reinfection. So it's important to continue applying preventives and check your pets for ticks.

Another way to prevent Lyme disease is to administer Lyme disease vaccination. Although there are more benefits to giving the vaccine before exposure occurs, such as with puppies, adult or seropositive dogs can receive the vaccination to help prevent the pet reinfection.

*Source: Ciera Miller, CVT*

# Why flea preventives are just worth it?

Four reasons to question whether your pet needs flea preventive—and why the healthy answer is usually YES.



itcheeee!



**1** **It's *not* a commentary on your cleanliness.** When we mention fleas, we don't mean your house is less-than-clean. Even the cleanest home can be the target of a flea infestation. In fact, infestations usually start because the fleas were picked up outside of the home and brought inside unknowingly. If a pet has access to a yard, dog parks, nature areas or kennels, he is at risk of picking up these pesky hitchhikers who make your home their next bed and breakfast.

**2** **"Indoors-only" doesn't always work.** Your dog may almost always stay indoors, but unless he strictly uses pee pads and never goes on a single trip outside your home, he really isn't an "inside" dog. And even if this is the case, an indoor pet (whether dog or cat), is still at risk for a flea infestation. The chance is obviously lower, but there's no such thing as zero risk.

**3** **"Seeing no fleas" doesn't mean "no worries."** When you never see a flea on your cat or dog, you might think a flea preventive just isn't necessary. But flea preventives do just that—prevent fleas. These products should be used before a flea infestation is seen so that it stays that way. Unfortunately, a flea problem can manifest before a single flea is even seen on a pet.

In the case of cats—who are notorious for their fastidious grooming—you might never see evidence of fleas. However, this doesn't change the statistics. A single adult flea can lay up to 50 eggs a day, so it's easy to see how fast an infestation can start. Once an infestation is present, each pet must be treated along with the home and yard. It's so much easier to prevent fleas than dealing with their consequences!

**4** **We can find a perfect match.** We know you might have a bad experience with a preventive you've tried in the past, and that might turn you off to the whole idea of preventives. But now it's up to us to let you know the advantages and disadvantages of each product and find one that *will* work for your pet.

Don't want to use a "greasy" topical? We can recommend an oral product instead. Trouble remembering to apply preventives monthly? Many products are good for several months. Cat or dog have a sensitive stomach? Maybe you would like to go with a topical. There are even products with active ingredients that affect only the parasites themselves and are never absorbed by the pet. In most situations, at least one product can fit the individual needs of you and your pet.

Please ask us what flea preventive would work best for you, your pet and your home!

# TRAINING TIP 1:

## *Down stay* on a mat

### HOW to train

**1** **Start by tossing treats** to get your dog interested in the mat area. When she puts any paw on the mat, mark with a word like “yes” or a click, and then toss a treat onto the mat.

**2** **Over time**, work to get the dog into a down position. Either ask for the down once she’s on the mat or wait for it to naturally happen and place treats onto the mat when she does.

**3** **Eventually add a cue** like “mat” to the behavior when your dog reliably goes to lie down in the space. Reward your dog intermittently for resting on her mat so she never anticipates how long it will be. Gradually build up distractions and duration.

### HOW it helps

The mat serves as a security blanket, going along with your dog from the home, to the car, to a waiting area and into the exam. The mat gives your dog a designated area to rest instead of pacing restlessly.

### QUICK TIP:

#### Choose the right mat

The best mats are those with an anti-slip bottom to prevent slipping on slick surfaces. You can place the mat on the floor, scale and exam table to provide a familiar and comfortable space for your dog when she’s weighed and examined.



# Tips for a quiet *car ride*

Noise is a major anxiety trigger for pets during car travel. Here's how you can help reduce your pet's stress.



**W**hat pets hear on their car ride influences their anxiety level before they ever enter the veterinary practice. You may not be able to avoid some car noises, such as highway noise—rumble strips are especially bad—and other environmental sounds, including sirens, construction equipment and dogs barking. Even so, if you can keep your pet calm on the drive to the hospital, your pet may be an easier patient than if she's already feeling amped up.

## 1. Use a matter-of-fact approach

It may feel natural to try to reassure your pet. For example:

*"It's going to be OK... Momma (or Daddy) loves you."*

*"We're going to go see your veterinarian. It's not so bad. Don't be scared!"*

While your pet may not understand your words, your pet may have learned to associate your tone and type of talk, along with body language, with the idea that something bad is about to happen.

To soothe your pet, use a matter-of-fact tone and relay instructions with confidence. For example:

*"Bella, chew on your food puzzle."*

*"Champ, get in your crate."*

Then offer a reward for the good behavior.

## 2. Distract with calming noise

You may also try playing calming music in the car to ease tension for you and your pet. Consider music designed for pets or classical music that offers calming qualities and drowns out excess road noise that may be nerve-racking for your pet.

# Rabies: Know the facts



An overview of the disease's signs and symptoms, how it's diagnosed and how you can keep your pets safe.

## Signs and symptoms

In humans, symptoms of headache, fever and general weakness progress into insomnia, anxiety, confusion and hallucinations. As the disease advances, partial paralysis and difficulty swallowing become common. Once symptoms become apparent, death usually occurs within days.

Pets exhibit slightly different signs than humans. Most infected dogs develop clinical signs within 21 to 80 days after exposure. The disease has two main forms in animals: paralytic form and furious form.

### Paralytic form

These pets will typically hypersalivate, lose the ability to swallow and may exhibit a dropped jaw. Animals with this form of rabies are typically nonaggressive and will not attempt to bite. Based on the clinical signs, owners may think the pet has something lodged in its mouth and conduct an examination, exposing themselves to saliva and increasing their risk of exposure.

Once signs begin to appear, they rapidly progress to paralysis in all parts of the body. Coma and death quickly follow.

### Furious form

This is often what people think of when they hear the term rabies: a Cujo-style mad dog that froths at the mouth and lunges at terrified bystanders.

Paralysis is not the issue in this form. These animals may viciously attack with little provocation or warning. Infected animals become hypervigilant and anxious. Wild animals may lose their fear of humans, and nocturnal

species may be seen wandering around in the daylight. Ataxia and a change in vocal tone become apparent, as well as a change in temperament—quiet dogs become aggressive and rambunctious dogs become docile.

## Diagnosis

An animal must be euthanized in order for rabies testing to confirm diagnosis. Tissue from the cerebellum and brain stem must be sent to a lab for analysis. The test itself only takes about two hours, but it can take as long as 24 to 72 hours to collect and euthanize the animal and to prepare and send the tissue samples to the lab. At the lab, immunofluorescence microscopy is used to look for antibody-antigen reactions specific to the rabies virus.

## Prevention

Rabies vaccinations for dogs are required by most municipalities. Required rabies vaccinations for cats are on the rise, and with good reason. Cats account for approximately three times the number of rabies cases as dogs.

Pets should receive their first rabies vaccination at 12 to 16 weeks old, followed by a second vaccination a year later. After that point, pets should be vaccinated at one- or three-year intervals, based on local public health recommendations.

Pet owners can also cut down on rabies risk by monitoring their pets when outdoors, by calling animal control to remove potentially unvaccinated stray animals from the neighborhood and by avoiding leaving food and water and easily accessible garbage cans outside where they could attract wild animals.



# What To Expect After Your Pet's Vaccination



***Congratulations. By vaccinating your pet, you have taken an important step toward protecting your pet and your family.***

Vaccination is the most common veterinary preventive measure in history. It's a safe and effective way to protect pets and people from serious disease.

It's common for your pet to experience mild side effects from vaccination. Typically starting within hours of vaccination, any symptoms are most often mild and usually do not persist for more than a few days. This is a normal response by your pet's immune system during the process of developing protective immunity.

## ***Common symptoms your pet may experience***

- Mild fever
- Decrease in social behavior
- Diminished appetite or activity
- Sneezing or other respiratory signs with intranasal vaccines
- Discomfort or mild swelling at the injection site

Rare side effects, such as an allergic reaction, may occur. Your pet may experience symptoms of a more serious reaction to the vaccine within minutes or hours of the vaccination.

## ***Rare symptoms could include***

- Swelling to face and legs
- Repeated vomiting or diarrhea
- Whole body itching
- Difficulty breathing
- Collapse

If your pet experiences any of these rare symptoms, you should contact your veterinarian immediately, as your pet may require additional medical treatment.

[BeVaccineSMART.com](http://BeVaccineSMART.com)

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# What you should know about vaccines in your pets

The virtual eradication of polio in people is just one example of the vital power provided by vaccinations. And vaccinations are just as important in pets. Throughout their lives, your pets will likely be exposed to several infectious diseases that can cause severe illness or even death. But if you've taken steps to prevent infection through vaccination, you will greatly extend the life of your pets.

## Which vaccines should my pet receive?

The veterinarian will recommend several core vaccines that all pets should receive in order to maintain their health and prevent serious disease. For dogs, these vaccines may include rabies, parvovirus, adenovirus, and distemper. For cats, core vaccinations may include rabies, panleukopenia virus, herpesvirus, and calicivirus. If you are boarding a pet, the facility may require vaccination against *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, a bacteria that causes a common and highly contagious disease known as kennel cough. The veterinarian may recommend other vaccines as well, depending on where you live, your pet's lifestyle and level of health, and the risk of your pet passing on disease to other pets or even you.

## What should I be on the lookout for after my pet has been vaccinated?

Vaccines can cause side effects, but they are very mild in most cases. Your pet may experience a mild fever, have a decreased appetite, or be a bit sluggish for a day or two after the vaccination. In addition, you may note slight swelling or pain at the vaccination site. These are all normal reactions and do not require medical attention.

However, rarely, more severe reactions to vaccination can occur that may result in swelling in the face or limbs, generalized itching, difficulty breathing, vomiting, diarrhea, or collapse. If any of these more serious signs develop or you are concerned about any reaction in your pet, don't hesitate to contact the veterinary clinic immediately to schedule an appointment.

## How often does my pet need to be vaccinated?

The frequency of vaccination will vary depending on where you live. For example, some states require a rabies vaccine once a year in all dogs and cats, while other states may allow less frequent rabies vaccination. The veterinarian can inform you about your state's regulations and the best timing of other vaccinations as well.





# Welcome to Brodheadsville Veterinary Clinic

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Co-owner/Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) (State) (Zip)

Previous Veterinarian: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about our clinic? \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Recommendation? \_\_\_\_\_ Who can we thank? \_\_\_\_\_

We occasionally feature our patients on our Facebook page and other social media sites. Please check here to authorize Brodheadsville Veterinary Clinic to share your pet's photo in this way.

Yes  No

## Pet Information

Pet's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Feline  Canine

Breed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth/Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Spayed/Neutered? Yes No Is your pet primarily: Indoors Outdoors

Does your pet have any allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Has your pet ever had any vaccine reactions? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your pet currently on any Medications? \_\_\_\_\_

List any behavior problems you would like us to be aware of: \_\_\_\_\_

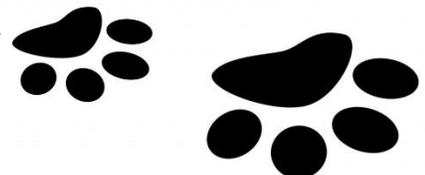
Before my appointment I prefer to wait in the:  Lobby  Car  Exam Room  Outside

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

My Favorite Treats are: \_\_\_\_\_

**All payments are due at time of service.** Please feel free to ask for an estimate prior to providing services. We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, CareCredit, Cash and check.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





# Welcome to Brodheadsville Veterinary Clinic

## Pet Information

Pet's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Feline     Canine

Breed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Spayed/Neutered? Yes    No            Is your pet primarily:    Indoors    Outdoors

Does your pet have any allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Has your pet ever had any vaccine reactions? \_\_\_\_\_

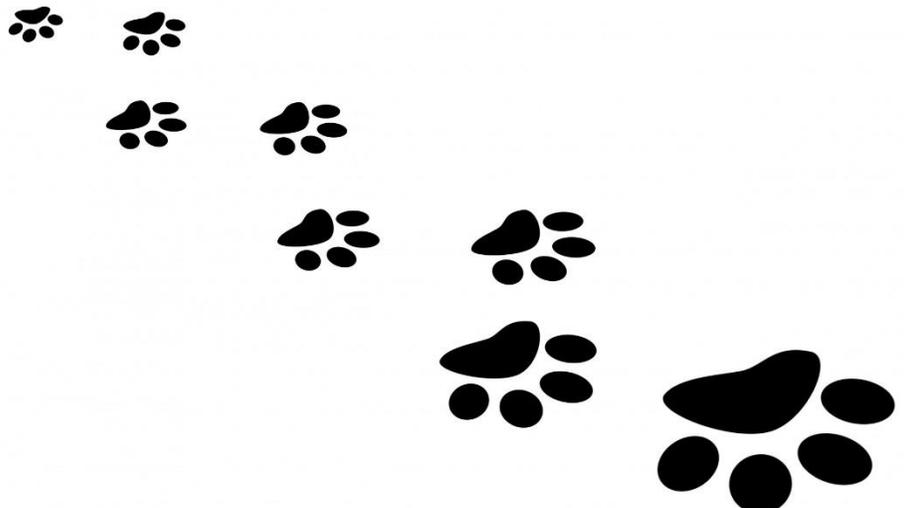
Is your pet currently on any Medicatons? \_\_\_\_\_

List any behavior problems you would like us to be aware of: \_\_\_\_\_

Before my appointment I prefer to wait in the:     Lobby     Car     Exam Room     Outside

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

My Favorite Treats are: \_\_\_\_\_



# MEET THE STAFF AT BRODHEADSVILLE VETERINARY CLINIC



## Janine Gusztaw, DVM

Dr. Janine Gusztaw comes to us with more than 20 years' experience serving pets and their owners in the Poconos and Lehigh Valley. She is a 1991 graduate of the University of Georgia Veterinary School. Excited to be part of the knowledgeable and compassionate family of Brodheadsville Veterinary Clinic. Dr. Gusztaw began working with us in the fall of 2013. Dr. Gusztaw shares her home with two high-energy rescue dogs and one interesting cat.



## Stephanie Goldstein, DVM

Dr. Stephanie Goldstein was born and raised New York. She has wanted to become a veterinarian since she was seven years old. After going to college at the University of Connecticut in 2011, she received her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Tennessee in 2015. She has many interests, which include weight management, dental care, behavior and geriatric care. She firmly believes that preventive medicine is the best medicine! Dr. Goldstein also enjoys giving back, by working with various local rescue organizations and shelters. When she is not working, she loves spending time with her two Dobermans, Peyton and Colt, and her cats, Bella and Duke. Her hobbies include doing puzzles, making candles, hiking and spending time with her family.



## Jeremy Wentz, VMD

Medical Director Dr. Jeremy Wentz graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 2003 and purchased Barton Heights Veterinary Hospital in 2009. Following closely after Dr. Jeremy Wentz purchased Brodheadsville Veterinary Clinic in 2013. He lives in the Poconos with his wife, Nicole, and their four kids, Jackson, Brielle, Colton, and Caleena (Colton and Caleena are twins) and their Golden retriever, Champ. When Dr. Wentz's children ask where he is going, he enjoys responding with, "To fix animals." He finds great satisfaction in helping pets recover and from the obvious appreciation shown by the pets and their owners. Since he was a young child, Dr. Wentz wanted to practice medicine. He is fascinated by how the body systems work and how we can alter or improve the

body by medicine or surgery. Dr. Wentz plans to continue to bring new and advanced services and specialists to the Pocono region. He explains, "My goal is to continue to offer the best veterinary care to our clients."



## Phil Zeltzman, Board-Certified Surgeon

Dr. Phil Zeltzman is a traveling board-certified veterinary surgeon, serving Eastern Pennsylvania and Western New Jersey. Specializing in orthopedic, neurology, cancer, and soft tissue surgeries for dogs, cats, and small exotics, Dr. Zeltzman offers the best surgical care, safest anesthesia, and utmost pain management to all his patients. Dr. Zeltzman has been involved in mobile surgery since 1997, traveling full time to clinics since 2010. He is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, a Certified Veterinary Journalist, a frequent speaker and an award-winning writer. He considers himself a life-long student who is always looking for new ways to improve patient care and surgical techniques. His website is [www.DrPhilZeltzman.com](http://www.DrPhilZeltzman.com).

**Michelle Bishop, DVM**  
**What attracted you to vet medicine?**



I was that kid who found the injured birds, chipmunks, and squirrels and brought them home to nurse them back to health. But I knew I wanted to be a vet when I found my grandparent's cat injured from a fishhook she was playing within the garage. My dad helped me remove the hook from the cat's foot and we nursed it until it was healed. I knew then it would be my lifelong ambition to help animals that were unable to help themselves.

**What do you love most about your profession?**

Of course, I love animals, but I also love people when they are with their animals. Somehow, they are softer and kinder. It is a joy to meet new people and their furry family members.

**Do you have any special interests?**

I am certified Fear Free which I believe is so important to the practice of veterinary medicine.

Most people understand what is happening to

them when they visit the doctor's office, but our pets do not. Making their experience a happy one, one that is as stress-free and as pain-free as possible, is a top priority during my exams.

**Do you have other areas of vet medicine you love?** I have special interests in ophthalmology and pain management. I am certified in canine rehabilitation, which can be helpful for those pets recovering from surgery and especially those older dogs whose mobility is starting to decline.

**What are your goals when you meet clients and patients?**

I strive to create a solid veterinary/client/patient bond that will begin at that first puppy/kitten visit and last throughout their lifetime.

**What do you bring to Brodheadsville?**

I bring 31 years of experience in Veterinary medicine, ranging from small animal medicine, surgery, ophthalmology, and canine rehabilitation,

**What pets do you have?**

My husband and I are the proud pet parents of a yellow Labrador Retriever, Aubrey, and a beautiful, rescued feline (the love of my life), Selah—which means “to Pause (paws) and give Praise”!