

Kitten Proofing Your Home

How can I make my home safe for my pet?

Kittens and puppies are naturally inquisitive, which can often lead to serious injury. Here are some tips on how you can make your house safer for the new arrival.

That's shocking: Young animals love to chew when they're teething. Keep electrical wires out of reach, or use a pet repellent spray.

They'd die for some chocolate: Chocolate can be dangerous. It contains theobromine, a powerful stimulant that is toxic to pets. Sweets, cakes and cookies can also upset a young animal's G.I. tract and lead to diarrhea and vomiting, which can be serious.

Treats can be threats: Never give turkey, chicken or rib bones as a treat. They can splinter and cause serious injury.

Common household killers: Cleaning agents, bleach, ammonia, disinfectants, drain cleaners, oven cleaners, paint, gasoline, rat poison. Keep them locked up.

Check the antifreeze: Pets are attracted to the odor and the sweet taste of antifreeze. Store it high and tightly sealed, wiping up any spills on the garage floor. Window washing solution also contains antifreeze. And remember, engine warmth promotes catnaps, so honk your horn to wake pets under the hood.

Killer houseplants: Poisonous plants include lilies, philodendron, dieffenbachia, elephant ear, eucalyptus, spider plants, azalea, ivy, amaryllis, pyracantha, oleander, boxwood, Jerusalem Cherry and plant bulbs. For a more complete list and symptoms go to the following web site. www.narfrescue.org/animals/cats/cat_pdfs/plants.pdf

Keep off the grass: If you treat your lawn with chemicals, keep pets away. Read and follow label directions carefully.

It fit yesterday: Puppies and kittens grow rapidly. Collars and harnesses can be rapidly outgrown, leading to serious wounds.

Take care of personal items and medications: Cosmetics, shampoos, skin creams, hair "perm" solutions, depilatories, suntan lotions, sleeping pills, antihistamines, aspirin and acetaminophen can all be lethal to pets.

It's not a toy: Don't leave plastic bags out. Inquisitive young animals, especially kittens can suffocate.

The heat is on: Watch out for hot irons, coffee pots, and space heaters. Kittens and puppies will suddenly be able to jump to new heights.

A dip tip: Keep covers on hot tubs and swimming pools. Kittens and even young puppies can fall in and not be able to get out.

Tis the season: Keep holly, mistletoe and especially Christmas tree tinsel out of reach.

Cozy up: Always use a fireplace screen.

Do you eat with that mouth?: Rule of thumb: If any or all of something will fit in a mouth, it's dangerous. Watch out for cigarette butts, rubber bands, balloons, sewing needles, thread, string, ribbons and yes, even pantyhose. Because what goes in must come out, often via surgery.