

Heartland Animal Hospital



How to Puppy and Kitten Proof Your House

They say, “Curiosity killed the cat,” for young puppies and kittens, this saying is sometimes only too true. Young animals are very curious, and this curiosity can lead to serious injury. Here are some tips to prepare for your new pet.

Think of your pet as a perpetual toddler: Get down on your hands and knees and look at things from their perspective. From this point you may see some nooks and crannies that your pet will soon find. Block off any holes and vents that small animals could crawl into. Remember that cats and kittens can get into any space they can fit their head through. Keep household cleaners and any other chemicals locked up. Young animals soon learn how to open cupboards.

Teething and Chewing: At about 4 months of age, puppies and kittens start losing their baby teeth and they start teething. At this time, they will chew on everything! Electrical cords can cause serious shock when chewed so keep them out of reach or use pet repellent spray (like Bitter Apple). Anything that will fit in your pet’s mouth can be dangerous. Anything that can be chewed up and swallowed can cause a blockage of the stomach or intestines and may need surgery to be removed. Keep small toys and other things off the floor and have plenty of appropriate “chew toys” for your puppy available.

Chocolate: Chocolate can cause serious problems. It contains a strong stimulant called theobromine that is toxic to pets. Bakers chocolate is more dangerous than other types. Only 2.5 oz can kill a 20 lb. Dog. Milk chocolate isn’t as much of a danger—it would take 9-10 times as much to kill the same size dog. However, it will cause serious upset to the GI system and cause diarrhea. Call your veterinarian with any questions if your pet ingests chocolate.



Bones and Table-scrap are a No-No: Most bones will splinter when chewed and can cause injury to the esophagus and GI tract. Grapes and raisins can be fatal in some dogs and cause kidney failure. Table scraps are high in fat and can lead to pancreatitis or obesity. Your pets should be fed a high quality pet food and a limited amount of appropriate treats. Chewing on compressed rawhides for 15 minutes twice a day not only helps to keep teeth clean, but also curbs their chewing instinct.

Pesticides: If a product is used to kill something, it is probably not good for your pet! Keep all herbicides, pesticides, and insecticides locked up. Be especially aware of rat poisons and ant poisons. Use them only in areas where your pet can’t easily get into.

Not all Flea Treatments are Created Equal: Cats are not small dogs, so do not use a flea treatment marketed for dogs on cats. An adult product may be harmful to puppies and kittens. Make sure the product is safe for younger animals. We recommend Frontline or Revolution. Not collars or other topical treatments.

Antifreeze: Antifreeze is very sweet tasting and is attractive to pets. Ingestions of antifreeze causes kidney failure if not treated immediately. Keep it locked up and clean up any spills immediately.

Puppies and Kittens Grow Rapidly: What fit yesterday may not fit today. Improperly fitting collars and harnesses can cut into skin and cause severe wounds. Check collars and harnesses daily to make sure you can fit at least 1-2 fingers under it.

Over-The-Counter Drugs: Acetaminophen (Tylenol), Ibuprofen (Advil), and Naproxen (Aleve) can be lethal for your pet. Even aspirin can be lethal in high doses. Keep all medicines stored out of reach (realizing that puppies and kittens will soon be able to jump to new heights). Never give your pet any sort of drug without consulting your veterinarian first.