

1 Real Estate Advisor

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Protect your four-legged friends

Your furry friend is part of the family, and needs a safe and comfortable home just like you do. It takes just a few easy steps to proof your house. Keep Chairman Meow and Kenny Doggins happy and healthy!

Kitchen

Use childproof latches to keep your pet from prying open cabinets. Cover trash cans securely. If pets get into the trash, they can chew chicken bones into shards, eat toxic coffee grounds, or find choking hazards like fruit seeds and cores. Avoid giving your pet "people food." Milk, grapes, raisins, chocolate, sugar-free foods, nutmeg, Macadamia nuts, and avocados can cause serious health problems or even death. Visit www.asPCA.org (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) for a list of foods you should never give your pet.

Bathroom

Keep your toilet lid down to prevent your pet from drowning or drinking harmful cleaning chemicals. Place medications, toothpaste, and cleaners on high shelves or in securely latched cabinets. Sharp objects like fingernail clippers and hair scissors should also be kept in a drawer.

Laundry room

Block off any small spaces inside cabinets or behind washer/dryer units. Keep detergents secure—and most importantly—make sure your pet hasn't jumped into the dryer before you turn it on!

Garage

Move all pesticides, fertilizers, and other hazardous items behind secure doors or to high shelves. Keep all sharp objects and tools out of the way. Be careful with antifreeze—the smell and taste is appealing to both cats and dogs. Thousands of pets die every year as a result of antifreeze poisoning. Use it carefully and clean up any drips or spills right away.

Bedroom

Cover the laundry (drawstrings and buttons can be a choking hazard). Medications, lotions, or cosmetics should be put away, not kept on the night stand. Move electrical and phone wires where they can't be chewed. And check your closets and drawers before you close them—cats love to hide in these spots.

Yard

If your pet spends time in the yard, check often for fleas and ticks. Consider installing invisible fences. Make sure your mulch, plants, and fertilizer are all safe for pets—you might even think about organic gardening.

Be prepared for emergencies

If something does go wrong, post your veterinarian's telephone number in a convenient location. You should also post the address and number of a nearby emergency clinic, along with the 24/7 number for The National Animal Poison Control Center of the ASPCA (1-888-426-4435). Put pet decals prominently in your front windows to alert first responders to the fact that you have pets inside. You can get these at your pet store, from your alarm company, or online. If your pet gets sick, administer only medications prescribed or approved by your veterinarian.

Last but not least—look out for paws, noses, and tails when you shut the door!

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