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Puppy or Kitten Proof Your House

- Provide your pet with proper identification. In an effort to help facilitate treatment in the event of an emergency, an identification tag should provide both the owner's contact information and the veterinarian's contact information. You might also consider a form of permanent identification such as the microchip (collars can be removed or lost).
- Properly dispose of antifreeze!
- Never use snail bait, rat poison, or ant/roach traps.
- In the summer: provide your pet with shade and fresh water to guard against heat stress or heat stroke. If your pet spends time in a garage or shed - good ventilation is essential.
- In the winter: provide your pet with warm shelter away from drafts and dampness. Wet or soiled bedding should be removed and replaced immediately. Make the shelter just big enough to lie down or to stand. Too much height, width, or depth does not promote heat conservation. Move your pet inside when the temp falls below freezing.
- Since pets tend to eat grass, keep pets off of lawns that have recently been treated with pesticides or fertilizers. Chemicals can be poisonous to your pet and some cause chemical burns to the feet.
- Dogs and cats are curious by nature. Due to the many hazards outdoors, pets should, ideally, be confined to the house or a secured yard. For example, unconfined pets are at higher risk of disease due to increased exposure. They are also at risk for injury by cars or someone else's aggressive pets.

Accident-Proof Your Home

- Keep telephone cords, electrical cords, and drapery cords out of reach. Electrical cords can cause severe burns or death if the pet chews through the insulation. Other cords pose a risk of strangulation.
- Toys should be constructed so that the pet cannot eat portions that may be non-digestible. Any toy with pieces missing should be removed and replaced. Do not give toys with strings. Ingested string can cut through the intestine. Do not provide socks, hose, or shoes as toys. If the pet is given rawhide, give a piece that is too large to be swallowed and replace it when it reaches a size that can be swallowed.
- Do not decorate the Christmas tree with tinsel. This can damage the intestine or cause a blockage if swallowed.
- Keep all utensils, foils, wraps, scrub pads, etc. that may contain food smells out of reach of your pet. These items are very destructive to the intestinal tract. Keep medications out of reach. Tylenol (acetaminophen) and Ibuprofen are **LETHAL** to pets. Give medications only with the advice of your veterinarian.
- Identify toxic plants or flowers and either remove them or keep them out of reach.

- Keep pets out of rooms that have recently been treated with pesticides.
- Keep windows at least partially closed. Screens are not secure enough to prevent escape.
- Never use continual-release toilet disinfectants.
- Keep trash containers securely closed.

Preventative Medicine

- Keep your pet up-to-date on vaccinations and physical exams.
- Get an annual Heartworm test and place your pet on Heartworm preventative.
- Never use a flea product on puppies or kittens that is labeled for adults only. Read the instructions carefully before use. Flea products used improperly can cause seizures or death.
- Spay or neuter your pet!

Additional Measures

- Never leave a pet alone in a vehicle with the windows up or without sufficient shade.
- Keep hair coat free of mats to prevent skin sores.
- Secure your pet in the vehicle using a pet carrier, crate, or seat belt designed for pets. Unsecured pets can be distracting to the driver and place you at risk. Also, do not transport pets in the back of an open pick-up truck.
- Do not permit your pet to put his/her entire head out the window while driving. Debris blown up by passing cars can injure the eyes.
- Keep paws free of ice, mud, and salt: wash and dry the paws.
- Never call your pet to come if the pet must cross a road. Instead, cross the road yourself and then bring the pet back with you.
- Post your veterinarian's phone number (as well as the phone number for an after-hours veterinarian in the event that your regular vet is unavailable) next to your telephone.
- Post the number for Poison Control next to your telephone. (In the Louisville area the Poison Control number is 589-8222.)

Preventative Nutrition

- Never feed milk to your pets. Cow's milk can cause digestive upset and diarrhea.
- Do not supplement your pet's diet without your veterinarian's advice. Wrong supplementation can cause urinary tract problems, metabolic problems, and even the mineralization of the kidneys.
- Never feed a dog raw fish. This causes a thiamine deficiency which could lead to loss of appetite, a hunched and painful posture, and convulsions.
- Never feed a pet food containing rancid fats. This could lead to Vitamin E deficiency and muscle diseases.
- Never over supplement your dog's diet with Vitamin D or fish liver oil. This can lead to bone disease and digestive upset.
- Provide your pet with fresh food and water daily

- Never feed your pet chocolate, grapes, onions, table scraps, or bones. Chocolate is poisonous because pets cannot metabolize the theobromine it contains. Table scraps can predispose your pet to pancreatitis and cause digestive upset. Bones can cause intestinal blockage or perforation (which can cause peritonitis). Grapes and raisins can cause kidney failure. Onions and garlic can cause a blood disorder called hemolytic anemia.