Cleaning Strategies When Pets Are in the Household

Having a pet in the household frequently poses some special cleaning challenges, particularly if family members or friends have pets or allergies. The American Cleaning Institute offers some suggestions to help you manage your pet control.

Vacuum regularly to keep up with the pet hair. An upright vacuum or a canister style with a power nozzle will pick up 2–6 times as much dust from a rug as canisters without a power nozzle. Be sure to move the pet to another space when you vacuum; otherwise, the noise may upset them. If possible, use a vacuum with a HEPA filter and/or exhaust filter, or use a special bag that holds allergens inside.

Brush your pet frequently. This advice is not just for dog owners! Cats, particularly elderly ones who may have trouble grooming themselves, can be benefited from regular brushing. If possible, do it outside, away from those with allergies. After brushing, comb the fur, then brush the fur, and wash your hands with soap and water.

Pet-proof the environment. Tuck electrical cords out of the way. Install safety latches in lower kitchen cabinets. Don’t leave small items around that might be mistaken for chew toys. And don’t leave any type of cleaning liquid out where pets might be tempted to take a drink.

Wash pet food dishes daily. They can be a magnet for ants and other crumbs. Store dry food in a securely closed container. This keeps out bugs, exploring toddlers and four-legged friends.

Keep bedding clean. Choose a pet bed with washable, removable cushions to make cleaning easier. Dust mites love to eat pet dander, so consider dust mite covers for your pet’s bedding.

Towels or blankets on furniture are easy to wash. Protect the furniture. Put a towel or a washable blanket or throw over your pet’s favorite chair or corner of the sofa. Having multiple covers on one area is available while the other is in the wash. Change and wash the covers weekly.

Keep the outdoors out. Keeping cats indoors prolongs their lives and lessens how they might bring you small wildlife as “prey” or drag in dirt and dust. But dogs, city cats, and dog and cat outdoors. Keep a few old towels near the door. Teach them to wash their paws before entering. Be asthma-aware. Many people are surprised to learn it isn’t the pet’s hair itself that trig- gers an allergy or asthma attack. Rather, it’s the interaction of pet hair, dander and saliva. Dander consists of tiny scales that shed from the pet’s skin. During self-grooming, the pet’s saliva causes the dander to stick to the hair. It is actually the protein in the saliva that is the true source of the asthma attack.

While the above advice makes sense, there’s a frequent problem where a person has an allergic or asthmatic reaction to a pet, discuss the problem with both your physician and veterinarian. Together, they may have some solutions to minimize the reaction.

Source: American Cleaning Institute

Sensationalized Food Articles from preceding page

The Author Has Little to No Specialized Training in Nutrition

What are the author’s credentials? If he or she has an advanced degree, what type is it? Is it from a recognized college or university? How was it obtained? There are several examples of animals whose owners obtained PhD’s for them through diploma mills. One of the most famous animals with a doctorate degree was “Dr. Doolittle,” a housecat.

If the person has an authentic degree, what is their practice- tice within the realm of generally accepted science? Or, do they operate on the fringe with little or no scientific research to support their claims?

Check the “about us” page or link to see if they have an editorial board. Are these people with recognized credentials?

Supporting Information for the Food Claim is “Cherry-Picked”

Only positive studies are cited to support the food claim or negative studies as to why you shouldn’t eat a specific food. Information is Based on Just One Study or a Limited Number of Studies

If promising results are obtained from a study, scien- tists will follow up with more research to gather additional information and determine if the results of the first study can be replicated. Scientists also will examine whether there may be any harmful side effects.

Look for dates on cited studies. Science is constantly evolving — recommendations based on old studies may no longer provide the latest information. If there are many broken links on a site, it may not be kept up to date.

Consider the Source

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach advises checking the web address.

• Those with .gov are funded by a government agency, such as www.cdc.gov.

• An educational institution is indicated by .edu such as www.extension.iu.edu.

• Professional organizations, such as scientific and medical societies, are indicated by .org such as www.heart.org.

• Commercial sites use .com and may be funded by a company. They commonly promote and/or sell a product. Follow the guidelines above to evaluate the quality of their information.

Still confused? Get a second opinion from a recognized nutrition professional. Colorado State University Extension gives these recommendations:

• Receive a referral from a personal doctor or local health department.

• Check with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) website to find a referral for a dietitian in your area: www.eatright.org.

• Contact your local public health department, Extension Service or nutrition depart- ment of a state or local university.

References:


• SAVE THE DATE! “Make-Ahead Freezer Meals in Bags,” presented by Alice Hanneman. Thursday, Nov. 19, 6:30 p.m. at Bryan Health East Campus

Question: Is carbon monoxide harmful? Should I install a carbon monoxide detector?

Answer: Carbon monoxide (CO) is a deadly, colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. It is produced by the incomplete burning of various fuels, including coal, wood, charcoal, oil, kerosene, propane and natural gas. Products and equipment powered by internal combustion engines such as portable generators, cars, lawn mowers and power washers also produce CO. Symptoms of low to moderate CO poisoning are flu like symptoms including;

• Mental confusion
• Vomiting
• Loss of muscular coordination
• Loss of consciousness
• Ultimately death

To prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

• Make sure appliances are installed and operated according to the manufacturer’s instructions and local building codes.

• Never operate a portable generator or any other gasoline engine powered tool either in or near an enclosed space such as a garage, house or other building. Even with open doors and windows, these spaces can trap CO and allow it to quickly build to lethal levels.

• Install a CO alarm that meets the requirements of the current UL 2034 safety standard.

• Never use portable fuel burning camping equipment inside a home, garage, vehicle or tent unless it is specifically designed for use in an enclosed space and provides instructions for safe use in an enclosed area.

• Never burn charcoal inside a home, garage, vehicle or tent.

• Never leave a car running in an attached garage, even with the garage door open.

• Never operate unvented fuel-burning appliances in any room where people are sleeping.

• Do not cover the bottom of natural gas or propane ovens with aluminum foil. Doing so blocks the combustion air flow through the appliance and can produce CO.

CO alarms should be installed according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends one CO alarm be installed in the hallway outside the bedrooms in which sleeping occurs. CO alarms may be installed into a plug-in receptacle or high on the wall. Hard wired or plug-in CO alarms should have battery backup. Avoid locations near heating vents or covered by furniture or draperies. CPSC does not recommend installing CO alarms in kitchens or above fuel-burning appliances.

Source: Consumer Product Safety Commission

Stepping On Workshop to Reduce Falls, Sept. 14–Oct. 26

What is Stepping On? Stepping On is a program that has been designed to provide research proven strategies to reduce falls in older people. It consists of a workshop that meets for two hours a week for seven weeks. Workshop participants are led by a health professional and a peer leader — someone who, like the participants, is concerned about falls. In addition, local guest experts provide information on exercise, vision, safety and medications.

Aging Partners and Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County will present the workshop on Mondays, Sept. 14–Oct. 26, 1–3 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road, Lincoln. Call 402-441-7575 to register. $3 per class suggested contribution. You’ll learn exercises and strategies to help prevent you from falling.

Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator