

Puppy Safety

What you need to know to protect your puppy.

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U - Under the bathroom and kitchen sink. These are great places to store many of the items found on this list, from household chemicals and cleaning agents, to medications and plastic wrap, but for puppys sake, move these items to higher cabinets. If theres no other space, buy and use cabinet locks. If they can keep human babies out, they can do the same for your canine baby.

V - Vacuum cleaners. Upright vacuums, floor lamps and other large, freestanding objects can easily be tipped over by a frisky puppy. An object such as this can hurt the pup if it falls on it. Make sure that your pup plays in a safe area free of any large, heavy objects that might come crashing down. Or, secure the object to the wall. This is especially important for very heavy things, such as bookshelves and wardrobes, which can be tipped by rough play or come crashing down in an earthquake. Upright lamps can cause fires if tipped over onto clothing, drapes or newspaper. Lamps should be well away from flammable items.

W - Water. Puppies love to play in water, but its very easy for them to fall in and drown. Close the toilet lid and don't leave full tubs unattended. If you have a pool, hot tub or fishpond, be sure it is fenced off or otherwise made inaccessible to your puppy.

X - X-men and other action figures and childrens toys. What's right for your child may not be right for puppy. Toys for older children can have small parts that are easily choked on. Your pup should have plenty of its own safe and sturdy dog toys to play with.

Y - Yard. In addition to making sure your fence is secure, look around your yard for possible trouble spots. Check the garden for potential hazards-many people foods can be dangerous to dogs. The tomato plant, for example, is a member of the nightshade family and bears leaves that can cause gastric distress in dogs. Many plants, including digitalis and lilies are poisonous to dogs. Consider planting those only in garden areas off limits to pupan unfenced front yard, for example. If you use pesticides or herbicides, nows a good time to go cold turkey. There are plenty of ways to keep your garden growing without danger to puppy or the earth. Don't forget to keep sharp gardening and lawn-maintenance tools in a safe area.

Z - Zero hazards. While it may be impossible to make your home a place of zero hazards for your new puppy, by following this checklist you can eliminate most common household hazards. When you know that chemicals are safely stored away and that you aren't going to walk in and find your puppy chewing on your cell phone, you'll be able to get on with the most important business at hand-learning about and loving each other!