

Puppy Safety

What you need to know to protect your puppy.

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You've undoubtedly been giving a lot of thought to your puppy which breed to get, what gender, and, of course, what to name the new member of the family. But as you plan for your puppy, there's something vital you need to keep in mind—something that may affect your pup's health and welfare. Your heart may be ready for your puppy, but is your house?

Puppy-proofing the house before the pup's arrival is easy to overlook in the excitement of adopting a new pup, but around it are hidden hazards that could spell trouble. Here's an A to Z primer for getting your home in shape for your puppy.

A - Appliances. You'd be amazed at how badly your puppy wants to find out what's inside the refrigerator, the stove, the dishwasher, and the washer and dryer! It's easy to unwittingly shut the door of an appliance and trap your puppy inside. Before you close anything, check to make sure your pup is safe and sound and outside.

B - Barricades. Don't give your pup the run of the house. Keep it safe by keeping it contained. Barriers, such as baby gates, are effective at keeping little paws out of harm's way. For example, using a barrier to keep your pup out of the kitchen while you're cooking reduces the chances of it getting stepped on or burned. An X-pen or crate will keep it safely out of mischief when you're away at work or any other time when you can't watch puppy. Crate training is also invaluable when housetraining and to help teach pup when to be calm. Also, put safety latches on off-limits cabinets.

C - Chemicals. Take a look under your kitchen sink and in your cabinets—you'll be amazed at the variety of chemicals you keep around the house. Household cleaners, dishwashing and laundry detergents, mothballs, drain cleaners and insecticides can all spell trouble for a puppy that ingests them. Some chemicals, such as detergents, are irritants that will burn delicate tissues in the mouth and digestive system, if ingested. Others, such as rodent poison, are potent killers that can cause internal bleeding if swallowed. Each year, antifreeze kills thousands of dogs and cats. Worse yet, ethylene glycol—the chemical found in antifreeze—tastes sweet to them. Unfortunately, manufacturers don't have to include animal warning labels on their products. Here's a good guideline: If the product's label says Keep away from children, keep it away from your puppy, too. To keep your pup safe, store household chemicals in a cabinet or on a high shelf where it can't reach, and clean up any spills immediately. In your car or toilet, use an antifreeze that contains propylene glycol, rather than ethylene glycol. Still toxic, propylene glycol does not cause the fatal liver damage that ethylene glycol does. Most importantly, always clean up any car fluid drips immediately. It's not just your pets that need protecting, but neighborhood pets and wild animals, as well.