

Cleaning 101 For Dog Owners

How to deal with common canine messes to maintain a clean and happy home.

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Whether its an upset stomach or a houstraining accident, pets will, at some point, make a mess in the house. The good news: Many of todays new products not only make cleaning easier, but remove any trace that an accident ever occurred. Heres how to clean up some common dog messes step by step.

Urine: If you own a puppy, senior, or ill dog, you've likely dealt with puddles. Follow these tips for effective cleanup: Don't use steam cleaners to remove urine from carpet, since heat bonds urine protein to the carpets fibers. Instead, use a hand-held wet-dry vacuum to absorb the liquid. Avoid using ammonia-based cleaners. A byproduct of decomposing waste, ammonia will smell like urine to your dog, attracting him back to the same spot. Use cleaning products specially designed to clean pet messes. These products use a variety of technologies to remove stains and neutralize odors. Don't have any special pet cleaning products? Then gather some paper towels, water, dishwashing liquid, and vinegar. Blot the stain with paper towels. Clean the spot with a few drops of dishwashing liquid and one cup of warm water. Rinse with fresh water, and blot dry. Next, add one third cup of white vinegar to two-thirds cup of water, and dab on stain. Vinegar neutralizes odors. Rinse with water, and blot dry. Then sprinkle carpet with baking soda or rug deodorizer and vacuum. Never scrub or wipe the stain, as this distorts the carpet fibers. Always blot and press. What happens if you smell the accident, but don't see it? Turn off the lights and shine a UV light (black light), available at pet-supply stores, onto the carpet or furniture to locate both old and new stains.

Vomit and feces: These pose challenges, since the dyes in pet foods and medicines can stain carpets. Pick up as much of the solid material as you can, using a dustpan or spatula. Use a hand-held or upright steam cleaner to extract remaining soiled material. For fecal matter, apply a stain and odor remover designed for this purpose. If vomit or blood is present, use a cleaning agent specifically designed to treat stains on carpet, not fabric. If the cleaning agent involves using water, use cool water, not hot.