



SPRING TIME SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR PET

Post these items on your website, write an article for a local newspaper or use throughout the spring as postings on Facebook.



ID/ Microchip your pets

When the weather gets warmer, we spend more time outdoors and so do our pets. Doors are open more often, windows open and people eat outside.

Spring cleaning

Spring is the time when most people will spruce up but remind your clients about the dangers of cleaning products and chemicals. Almost all commercially sold cleaning products contain chemicals that are harmful to animals. Post your vets and an emergency hotline in a prominent place. Springtime can be muddy in some locations. Get some synthetic, rubber backed mats for the door, pet doors, and under your pet's food dishes to avoid slipping and falling.

Gardening

Fertilizers and insecticides are great for a pretty lawns and garden, but their ingredients aren't meant for animal consumption and can be fatal if your pet ingests them. Always read the labels and heed the recommended waiting period before allowing your pet back on the lawn. If your pet ingest them, call the ASPCA poison control hotline.



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Grass

With Springtime comes green lush grass. Don't be alarmed if your pet munches on grass now and again; for the most part, it's completely normal. For whatever reason, most dogs nibble on grass from time to time.

If your dog makes a habit of eating grass in large quantities, it's best to have your pet looked at by your veterinarian. Eating grass can be a sign of an upset stomach, so if your dog has eaten something that isn't settling, it might turn to grass as a natural remedy.

Toxic Plants

Eating poisonous plants is one of the most common ways that many pets, especially dogs, cats, rabbits, turtles and tortoises, ingest toxic substances. And since there are few effective treatments for toxic plant ingestion, a small mistake in the garden can be catastrophic to your pet and your family.

Plants That Are Reported To Be Toxic to Dogs, Cats or Rabbits

- Azalea
- Bittersweet
- Caladium
- Clematis
- Crocus
- Day Lily
- Death Camas
- Easter Lily
- Ferns
- Foxglove
- Hyacinth
- Iris
- Lily of the Valley
- Morning Glory
- Oleander
- Rhododendron
- Tiger Lily
- Tulips



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Fertilizers and Pesticides

No garden would be complete without fertilizers and weed killers. Though these products can make your plants healthier, they can injure (even kill) your pets.

Choose pet-safe options for substances like snail bait and weed and feed products, or go organic and try planting flowers like Mexican marigold, which naturally repel insects without harming animals. When all else fails, check the label and ask a gardening professional. If there's a doubt about the product's safety for your pet, don't use it!

Artificial Plants

Before you decide to forego flowers and plants and instead use artificial flowers, consider that some pets might find silk flowers just as tasty. A curious puppy or kitten with a sweet tooth for silk flowers can lead to intestinal blockage. Most will at least act as an emetic, which means your pet will vomit soon after eating. Other plants can lead to kidney or liver failure, seizures, or even death.

In order to protect your pet from possible poisoning, it's important to make sure you keep known poisonous plants and toxic items out of reach, watch for plants and toxic items that have been chewed on, keep an eye on your pet for symptoms of poisoning, and take your pet — along with a sample of the plant/toxic item — with you to your veterinarian immediately if you suspect a poisonous item has been consumed.

Car seats for your pets

While it is adorable to see a dog with his head out the window with the wind in his floppy ears, this can be dangerous. Debris can get in their eyes, ears or lungs and cause injury or infection. Your pet should always be secure in a car seat, crate or seatbelt harness when riding in the car.



Heartworm/ Flea & Tick

Make sure your pet is up-to-date on its medications, including flea and tick medication and heartworm preventative. These medications should be taken monthly to keep your pet safe from these pesky insects and parasites.

Heartworm Prevention: One of the single, largest dangers to the health of household pets is *Dirofilaria immitis*, or heartworms. Spread through mosquito bites, these parasitic worms can significantly harm the health of any animal infected.

With the peak of mosquito season coming with warmer weather, owners should be proactive and get their pets back on heartworm prevention medications if they were taken off them during the winter months.

Continue Flea and Tick Prevention:

Once the ground thaws, the bugs begin to emerge. In wintertime, fleas are dormant outside, but when it gets warmer outside, they will come back out. Once they are present, they are exceedingly hard to get rid of, as they infest the animal then can jump to humans. Within five minutes of landing on an animal, fleas and ticks will start eating and reproducing. Other than the direct effects of flea bites on both animals and people, the parasite can also carry a slew of diseases including the Bubonic Plague.

Similar to fleas, ticks are a major concern for the spring season as the peak activity of the blood-sucking arachnid approaches. Ticks breeding season is late April, May and June. Ticks can also be vectors for diseases including Lyme Disease and Rocky Mountain Fever.

If your pet does get a tick, follow these steps to ensure quick and painless removal:

1. Wearing gloves and using a pair of tweezers, grab the tick as close to your pet's skin as you can. Pull straight up in a swift movement, making sure not to grip too hard.
2. Place the tick in a screw-top jar containing some rubbing alcohol. Screw on the lid.
3. Disinfect the bite site on your pet. Wash your hands thoroughly, and disinfect all tools that came in contact with the tick.
4. Monitor the bite site. If it is still inflamed after a week or so, bring your pet and the tick in to the veterinarian for examination.

Seasonal Allergies

With grasses, flowers and trees abloom in the spring season, like people, pets can suffer from seasonal allergies too. Pets manifest allergies through the skin instead of people with their respiratory systems.

Grass and Other Summer Allergies in Dogs



While there is typically no way to prevent seasonal allergies in pets, owners can keep an eye out for excessive scratching or ear troubles in their animal, as these can be classic signs of allergies.

Exercise Slowly to Shed Winter Weight

Due to a family's change in activity level during the winter months, pets tend to gain weight. The warmer weather of the spring months present multiple opportunities for animals to shed that winter weight.

If owners themselves start exercising and include the animal, start slowly and work up to an exercise regimen

However, owners should beware of increasing exercise too quickly, as animals can develop injuries from jumping into an exercise regimen too fast.



Bees and Butterflies

Your pet will be eager to get outside and start exploring as the weather gets warmer. Be cautious of buzzing insects; curious cats and dogs can be stung by bees if they stick their nose a little too close. If your cat or dog gets stung, your best bet is to call your veterinarian and describe your pet's symptoms. Like humans, animals' allergic reactions differ in severity, so as soon as you notice that your pet has been stung

Birds

Spring is often signaled by returning songbirds, and with the birds come hatching eggs throughout the neighborhood and nearby parks. For these birds and their fledglings, cats pose a serious threat. If your cat is allowed outdoors, here are a few tips to keep your kitty from bringing a 'present' to your doorstep.

Fasten a bell to your cat's collar. The noise will warn birds before it's too late.

Feed your cat. It sounds simple, but making sure your cat is well-fed can help reduce its hunting urges.



Corral your cat during feeding hours. The times that birds are most active—around sunset and sunrise, or after bad weather—are prime feeding times for your cat. Make sure your cat is inside during these times to avoid a feeding frenzy.

Elevate bird feeders. Avoid feeding birds on the ground. Place seed up in a feeder or on elevated ground. Even if Kitty is a climber, it will take more work for your cat and possibly give the birds enough time to see the imposing threat.

Also your dogs may find birds fallen on the ground and ingest them. In most cases, this won't be a problem but monitor them to watch for signs of discomfort or pain.



License and Registration

If your dog enjoys the dog park, proper registration and a permit for the park are often required, as well as an up-to-date license for the city that the dog park is



Leashes

Remember to always keep your dog on a leash when they are outside. Make sure all leashes and collars fit appropriately for your animal, and are not too worn from usage. Keeping your dog on a leash can prevent them from being hit by a car or getting bit by another dog. Bite wounds are common emergencies; make sure to always keep your pets rabies vaccinations up to date.

Easter

With Easter coming up your house is probably fill up with flowers, Easter baskets and chocolate! While these are fun and delicious for humans, they can be potentially dangerous for your pets.

Items specific to Easter that need special attention for your pets:

- **Lilies**
Lilies are toxic to cats and can cause kidney failure. Even small amounts of lilies can be lethal. Lily of the valley can affect the heart as well.
- **Easter Grass**
Just like string, dental floss, and tinsel, Easter Grass can cause vomiting and an intestinal obstruction. This is a surgical emergency.

- **Chocolate**

Chocolate contains theobromine, a xanthine compound which is in the same family as caffeine and theophylline- and is toxic to dogs and cats. At low doses chocolate can cause vomiting and diarrhea. At higher doses it can cause a high heart rate, an irregular heart rhythm and seizures.



Fishing Hooks and Lines

It is important to keep all fishing hooks away from your pet. They can get stuck in your pet's mouth or paws. Fishing lines can cause an obstruction in your pet's intestines.

Fences

It is important to make sure your fences are safe and secure for your pets. High winds during storms can open gates and fences can fall down.

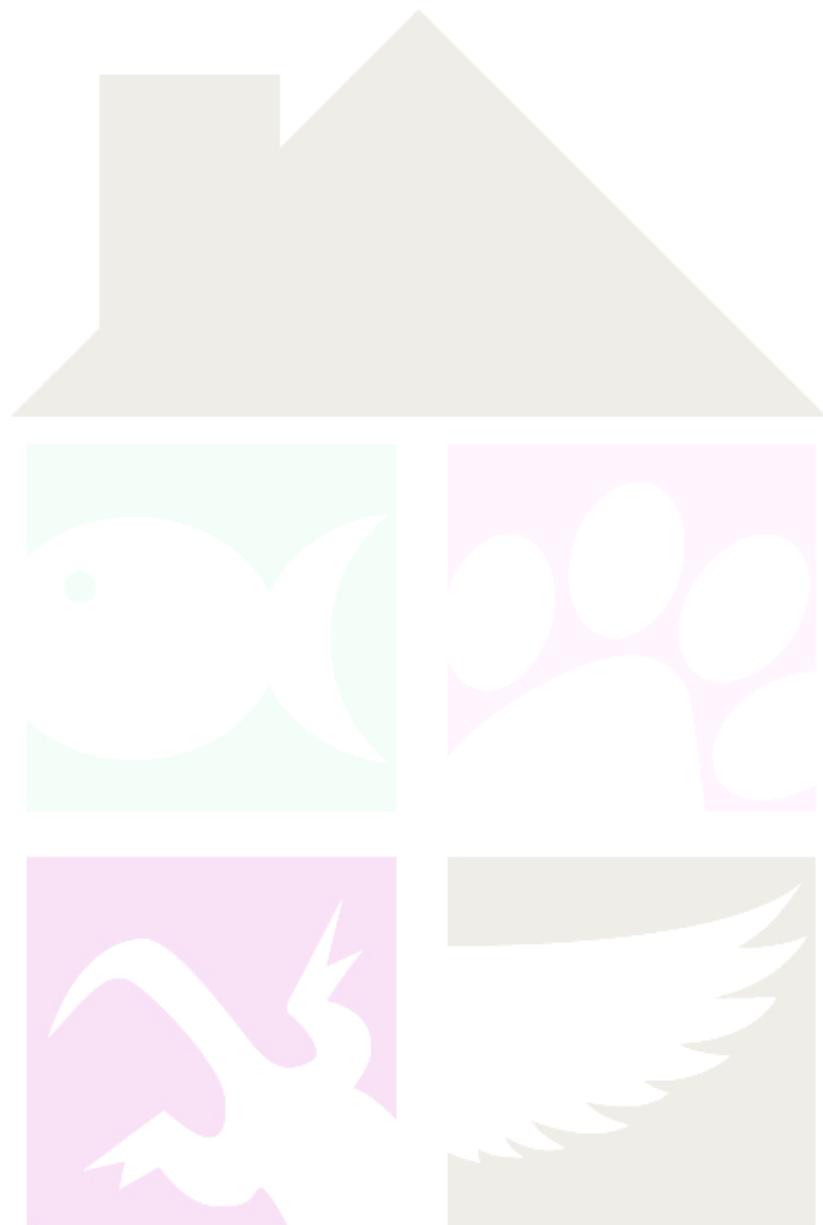
Pools

As weather gets warmer, pool covers come off and pets are subject to falling into pools. Make sure precautions are made to protect your pets from falling in.



Spring can be a wonderful time to go outside and bond with your pets. Make sure they have a safe environment.

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