



Keep Pets Away From These Common OTC Supplements

by Dr. Tina Wismer DVM, DABVT, DABT

As over-the-counter (OTC) supplements have become more popular, more cats and dogs are getting into them. In 2015, the ASPCA (Animal Poison Control Center) received 28,523 calls regarding over-the-counter supplements compared to 18,260 calls in 2013 — that's a whopping 56 percent increase. When these incidents occur, pets may be eating a dropped pill or ingesting the contents of the entire bottle. In some cases, pet owners also might be giving these supplements to their pets on purpose to "self-treat" a disorder. Some OTC products are similar to products we give our pets, or, as in the case of vitamin D, may actually be safely prescribed by a veterinarian for your pet when given at proper dosages, but others can be deadly. For that reason, never give your pet any supplement without talking to your veterinarian first. Animal doses can vary greatly when compared to people.

5-HTP

The metabolite of tryptophan called 5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) is one of the most dangerous supplements for pets to get into. The big problem with 5-HTP is that it is absorbed into the central nervous system very rapidly, while tryptophan must be metabolized first and is absorbed more slowly. 5-HTP is used as an alternative supplement to address a variety of disorders in humans including obesity, depression, anxiety, insomnia, premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and compulsive gambling. 5-HTP increases serotonin concentrations in the brain. When there is too much serotonin, serotonin syndrome can develop.

Signs of serotonin syndrome in pets include: lethargy, high heart rate, dilated pupils, agitation, vomiting, high body temperature, vocalizing, tremors, seizures and death. Signs can start as early as 15 minutes after ingestion and last 24 to 48 hours. These animals need to see the veterinarian immediately for treatment. Medication can be given to help control seizures and agitation and reduce the amount of serotonin in the brain. The prognosis is generally good if rapid and aggressive care is instituted.

Vitamin D

While your veterinarian may sometimes prescribe vitamin D for your pet to help with certain disorders, those ↗

(*"Keep Pets Away From..." cont.*)

dosages will be calibrated to be safe. When intended for humans, vitamin D can be found as a single ingredient supplement or in most multivitamins. The amount of vitamin D in these human supplements can vary widely from as little as 100 IU to 5,000 IU, and prescription strength can be up to 50,000 IU. Vitamin D is important for bone strength and reducing inflammation in both pets and humans.

Vitamin D overdoses can cause vomiting, calcification of organs and kidney failure, which can lead to increased drinking and urination. The supplement does this by pulling more calcium out of the intestinal tract and bone and decreasing urinary output of calcium. Gastrointestinal signs are thought to be related to the effects of excess calcium on stomach muscle action and stomach acid secretion.

Vomiting can start within a few hours after ingestion. Animals need to see the veterinarian for treatment as soon as possible. Keep in mind that what might seem like a small dose to you might be a huge dose if the pet is a Chihuahua or of a similar small size. If calcification of organs occurs, it is not reversible. Kidney failure can begin in 24 to 48 hours.

Treatment is based on administering fluids and medications to help lower the calcium in the body. Treatment may be prolonged for several weeks. Prognosis is good if caught early.

Iron

Iron is another supplement that can be fatal to pets if given at the wrong dosage. Iron can cause vomiting, stomach ulcers and liver failure. It is most commonly found in OTC prenatal or women's formula vitamins. The amounts will also vary depending on the supplement.

Signs in pets usually start one to six hours after ingestion. Simple stomach upset seen at lower doses usually resolves within six to 24 hours. With larger doses, the iron is deposited in the liver and signs may persist days to weeks.

If you suspect your pet has ingested this supplement, you should see a veterinarian immediately. There is an antidote that is a specific iron chelator (binder), which helps remove iron from the body. This may be most effective within the first 24 hours. Iron levels can be checked via blood sample to determine if the antidote is needed. Your pet may also need anti-vomiting medications and stomach protectants.

Final Tips

Keep in mind that even some of the supposedly "safer" supplements can be dangerous if they are sweetened with xylitol, which is commonly used in chewable human vitamins and supplements to make them more palatable. Xylitol can cause low blood sugar, liver failure and seizures in dogs.

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(*"Keep Pets Away From..." cont.*)

Please remember to keep all of your OTC products safely away from your pets and be aware that dose determines the level of poisoning. Make sure you have the bottle when you call your veterinarian, as amounts and ingredients can really vary from product to product. —Vetstreet



Five Things Your Dog Wishes You Knew About Picking Him Up

by Dr. Jessica Vogelsang, D.V.M.

Nothing warms my heart more than seeing a family welcome a new dog into their home. Growing up with a dog is one of the great joys of childhood—the bonding, the long walks after school, the shared distaste for green vegetables.

On the other hand, nothing chills me more than seeing a young child grab a nervous pet and drag him by the paw to draw him close. I'm fortunate to be in a position where I feel very comfortable correcting this behavior and bringing it to the parents' attention, but it's shocking how often the parent will respond, "It's OK; he doesn't bite."

In so many ways, animal care professionals do a great job of teaching new pet parents the ins and outs of dog ownership, from the vaccine regimen to choosing the right time to spay or neuter. But in other ways, particularly when it comes to safe pet-handling skills, many would argue that we're still playing catch-up. Safe dog handling is vital to the safety of both the pet and the person. Fortunately, good handling is a teachable skill. Here are five things your dog wishes you knew about picking him up.

1. My Limbs Are More Delicate Than You Think

Dog limbs are a wonder of form and function, meant to propel pups forward with speed and agility. They aren't designed to support the entire weight of the dog when he's suspended in the air, however. The most common form of dangerous pet handling I see, particularly with young children, is when they lift a pet by the front limbs as if it were a doll. Adults tend to put their hands under the armpits of the dog and

lift, as one would a human child. Both techniques are incorrect.

When a dog is lifted by his front limbs, instead of properly supported by the chest and pelvis, it puts unnatural force on the elbows, shoulders, front toes and even spine as the pet dangles in the air. This can strain the muscles that support the front limbs and spine, tear ligaments, and potentially even dislocate a shoulder or elbow. In the worst-case scenarios, it can damage the bones and cartilage, particularly if the pet struggles and is dropped. The pain and risk of injury is compounded in older dogs who may already experience degenerative changes in these joints, such as arthritis.

2. It Hurts, Even If You Think It Doesn't

One of the greatest myths I hear dog owners repeating is, "If he isn't yelping, he isn't hurting." Like people, some dogs are more dramatic than others and will waste no time letting you know if something bothers them. But other dogs are quite stoic and will tolerate discomfort to a much higher degree before protesting—assuming they protest at all.

Clearly, yelping or growling are obvious signs of discomfort in a pet. But there are plenty more. All dog owners should know the basic signs of anxiety in a dog: avoidance, struggling, averting his gaze, licking his lips, "half-moon eye" or showing the whites of his eyes, and yawning are just a few. These signs are indicative of a dog who is uncomfortable, and that means you need to stop what you are doing and reassess the situation.



Is It Safe To Give My Dog A Rawhide?

by Dr. Marty Becker, D.V.M.

Chewing — it's what dogs do. And rawhides are classic chew toys for dogs. Made from the inner layer of cowhides that are cleaned, cut, shaped, sometimes flavored and then dried, rawhides can give dogs hours of chewing pleasure. Or they can be gulped down practically whole by dogs who are more eager for the eating experience than the chewing experience.

So when clients ask me if it's safe to give their dogs rawhides, I have to say that it depends on the individual dog. Labrador Retrievers

(*"Is It Safe To Give My Dog A Rawhide?" cont.*)

and Pit Bulls, for instance, tend to be heavy-duty chewers and gulpers. They are among the dogs who are most likely to bite off and swallow large pieces of rawhide. Those chunks can become stuck in the esophagus, stomach or intestinal tract and may pose a choking risk or require emergency surgery or endoscopic removal. Other dogs, though, may be content to gnaw on them for hours or days.

That's just one of the reasons why everyone, including veterinarians, has a different opinion on whether it's okay to give your dog a rawhide. I asked two of my colleagues, Tony Johnson,

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("Is It Safe To Give My Dog A Rawhide?." cont.)

DVM, and Tina Wismer, DVM, to weigh in with their experiences.

Know the Hazards

There's a small but real risk of a blockage if a dog swallows a piece of rawhide, says Dr. Johnson, an emergency and critical-care specialist in Indianapolis. "I have seen many esophageal foreign bodies in smaller dogs with rawhides," he says. He'd rather not give rawhides to dogs at all. In his opinion, the ideal dog treat or toy should be either completely consumable in 30 seconds or as inedible and difficult to consume as possible.

At home, though, his wife (who is also a veterinarian) gives rawhides to their three dogs with no problem.

"Stomach acid will break down small pieces of rawhide," says Dr. Wismer, a veterinary toxicologist and medical director of the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center. "That's not a problem. The issue is if they ingest a piece that's big enough to leave the stomach whole, and then it gets stuck in the intestinal tract."

Some dogs break teeth when chewing rawhides. There's a higher risk of that with pressed rawhides because they are more dense, Dr. Wismer says.

Rawhide Safety

The way rawhides are prepared can also be a concern. In the United States, rawhides are washed with degreasers and detergents, sterilized with hydrogen peroxide and then thoroughly rinsed. The hides are refrigerated until they are processed to keep them fresh. But rawhides made in other countries may be produced under less stringent practices. Dr. Wismer notes, however, that there has been only a single documented incident of imported rawhides contaminated with toxins. "This dates to the early 1980s, when there was one shipment of rawhides that was contaminated with arsenic," she says.

The Food and Drug Administration does not regulate the manufacture of rawhides in this country. It's up to consumers to call U.S. manufacturers and ask about their practices. That's a heck of a lot easier to do with a manufacturer in the U.S. than one in China. ☐

The Best Home Remedies For Fleas

by Rita Hogan

The main goal of natural flea prevention? Make it through flea season without an infestation, keep flea populations at a minimum and a happy itch-free dog.

Once fleas are in your house and on your dog, you've got a whole lot of crappy work ahead of you...weekly flea baths for your dog, washing every bit of fabric in your house, vacuuming everything under your roof Several times over, in fact, to make sure the infestation is completely gone.

Flea prevention is a whole lot easier than trying to get rid of them once they've taken over.

How do you prevent flea infestations and keep them off your dog? ↗

("The Best Home Remedies For Fleas" cont.)

Follow these tips and home remedies for fleas and make natural flea prevention simple and easy.

But first, let's start with the outdoors and try to keep the fleas out of your home and off of your dog so you'll never have to use my remedies.

1. Keeping Fleas Out Of Your Yard

When soil temperatures rise above 45 degrees for at least two to three weeks (spring, summer and fall in most areas), use nematodes to minimize flea populations.

Nematodes are your best friends when it comes to keeping your yard flea-free. If fleas aren't in your yard, they're less likely to find their way onto your dog.

What Are Nematodes?

Nematodes are tiny wormlike multicellular animals found in the soil. There are a lot of different kinds of nematodes, good and bad. The good ones I'm talking about here are beneficial in controlling many garden pests like ants, termites and grubs, but they also eat fleas!

They can be found at many garden centers and online. I pre-order mine from Arbico Organics to ensure they arrive in early spring.

They come ready to use; you just add water as directed on the package. Spray them throughout your yard using a hose sprayer or a watering can.

Since nematodes are living organisms, you'll need to use them quickly after they arrive. Apply them in the spring, summer and fall for effective coverage.

Mowing

Most people who know me will tell you I'm not a fan of mowing or lawns in general. However if you live in a flea prolific area, you need to keep your lawn cut short.

Plants That Guard

Keep pots of lemon balm, sage, rosemary, catnip, lemongrass, basil and mint outside of your main "potty" doors and throughout your yard. These plants help repel fleas through the natural oils that they secrete and deter fleas from entering the house.

Diatomaceous Earth (DE)

Diatomaceous earth is a non-toxic powder made up of fossilized organisms called diatoms that break apart flea eggs and dry them out before they can grow into adult fleas.

You can purchase DE at most holistic dog supply stores, health stores and garden centers. *Make sure you're buying food grade DE only.* Industrial grade DE is chemically treated and used for pools and manufacturing.

Spread food grade diatomaceous earth outside in your yard wherever your dog spends most of his time. Look for places where the earth or grass is worn down from your dog's extensive napping or relaxing schedule.

CAUTION: DE can irritate your lungs so wear a mask and make sure your dogs and animals aren't breathing the dust. After the dust has settled, DE is safe.

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(“The Best Home Remedies For Fleas” cont.)

Garlic

Fleas don't like garlic, so it's a natural flea repellent that's safe to use in the yard and with your pets.

Here's a recipe (below) you can make to spray in your yard when flea populations are reaching epic proportions.

Want all of this information and more in one helpful download? You can grab our Flea Checklist (<http://get.dogsnatural-lymagazine.com/2017-funnel/the-free-flea-checklist-lm/>). It's a simple and free download you can keep and follow to rid your dog and home of fleas, for good!

Garlic Water For Your Yard

Garlic Water For Your Yard

What you need:

- 8 heads of chopped garlic (there's no need to peel it for this recipe)
- 1 gallon of almost boiling water

How to make it:

- Place the garlic in an extra large soup pan and pour the water over the top
- Cover and let the mixture steep for 12 hours
- Pour through a strainer into a garden sprayer
- Lightly spray your lawn and garden area

Note: When treating your yard with garlic, just give everything one light spray. If you use it too heavily, garlic might harm some of those beneficial bugs you do want in your yard, so just give everything a light spray and don't soak your grass or plants in the liquid.

You can also make small changes in your house to keep fleas away.

2. Protect Your Home

The best thing I ever did was remove all the carpet from my home, especially pile carpet. If carpet is a must, choose berber. Berber is the best choice for carpet when you have dogs because the weave is unfriendly to pests.

If you have carpets, follow these steps.

Steam clean your carpets at least once or twice a year. This can really get you off to a good start in protecting your home from fleas. Fleas love to hide in carpets, especially where the carpet meets the wall.

Vacuum at least once a week in all areas. Immediately empty the vacuum bags or throw out canister debris in an outside garbage container.

Once a month during flea season, spread diatomaceous earth all over and vacuum after 48 hours.

Reminder: DE can irritate your lungs so wear a mask when you're applying it and keep your pets out of the room until the dust has settled.

3. Protect Your Dog

These are some of my favorite ways to prevent fleas on your dog. ↗

(“The Best Home Remedies For Fleas” cont.)

Feed Garlic

You can use small amounts of garlic as an internal flea preventative.

Now you might be screaming, "No, I'll hurt my dog!"

Yes, garlic can be harmful if you use really huge amounts (equivalent to 75 cloves of garlic for a 70 lb dog) but garlic is safe to use if you use freshly chopped organic garlic and feed the right amount.

So always use organic fresh whole clove garlic and avoid garlic supplements.

You can safely give your pet ¼ clove of garlic per ten pounds (use regular sized garlic, not jumbo). If your pet weighs less than ten pounds, cut a ¼ clove of garlic in half and give 1/8 clove.

No matter how big your dog is, I prefer not to give more than two cloves of garlic per day. So if you have a hundred pound dog, still give him only two cloves of garlic.

Start feeding garlic one month before the start of flea season and you'll find it's an effective deterrent in your flea prevention tool kit.

Read my article on garlic for more in-depth information on how garlic can help your dog.

Apple Cider Vinegar — Inside And Out

Fleas don't like a dog who's pH balanced.

Raw unfiltered apple cider vinegar (ACV) creates a more acidic environment outside and balanced alkalinity on the inside, making it a must-have for flea season success.

Feed your dog ½ teaspoon of ACV per day per 25 lbs. ACV contains important nutrients, vitamins, minerals, vital acids and potassium.

Tip: Test your dog's urine with pH strips before adding ACV to their food or water. Dogs should have a pH between 6.2 and 6.5.

Apple Cider Vinegar Recipe

Your dog's skin and coat should be slightly acidic for fleas to find him inhospitable. You can easily achieve this by spraying your dog each week with the following solution.

Apple Cider Vinegar Recipe

What you need:

- 4 oz. warm water
- 6 oz. ACV, unfiltered and preferably organic
- ¼ tsp. of sea salt or pink Himalayan salt

How to make it:

- Mix the ingredients in a small spray bottle and spray your dog's coat and underbelly weekly, avoiding the eyes or any open wounds.

Essential Oils

Unless you're willing to mix your essential oils with a carrier oil (a vegetable oil used for dilution), don't use them.

Many people, blogs and companies advocate water-suspend-

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(*"The Best Home Remedies For Fleas" cont.*)

ed essential oils for fleas. This practice is dangerous. Water can't safely disperse essential oils because essential oils are NOT water-soluble unless they've been diluted with a solvent.

Chemistry is chemistry and anyone who tells you otherwise is misinformed.

There are some natural substances that dissolve essential oils, but for do-it-yourself flea and tick sprays, I suggest using a thin carrier oil like grape seed oil or fractionated coconut oil. Mix one drop of essential oil to one milliliter of carrier oil.

Here are a few flea repelling essential oils: Lavender, Lemon, Palmarosa, Cedar (atlantica), Eucalyptus (radiata), Clary sage and Peppermint.

Avoid making or purchasing flea repellent that contain essential oils of wintergreen, pennyroyal and clove. These oils are dangerous for your dog and should not be used for any reason.

A note about bandanas or collars infused with essential oils: While this may be a useful idea to protect your dog when he's outdoors, make sure you dilute the essential oils...and, please take off the bandana after your dog comes inside.

Everyday Flea Repellent

Here's my favorite everyday flea spray that's lightly scented and very effective if you spray your dog each day when he goes outside. Pay special attention to the belly, tail, legs and ears.

What you need:

- 1 organic lemon
- 2 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- 1 sprig of garden sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
- 1 quart of filtered water
 - Optional: 1 sprig of lavender

How to make it:

- Slice the lemon into thin rounds
- Place the lemon, rosemary and sage in a large stainless steel or glass bowl
- Add a quart of almost boiling water
- Cover and let steep overnight
- In the morning strain the liquid into a spray bottle
- Refrigerate (lasts 1 to 2 weeks)

Chemical Free Tags

I live near salt water where fleas are prolific. Joy. As part of my all-natural flea prevention regimen I have been testing out two different chemical-free collar tags. So far, I'm amazed at how well they work.

The first is a ultrasonic tag that lasts a year. The cost is approximately \$45.

The second tag is priced at \$60 and is much smaller than the ultrasonic tag. It works with your pet's energetic field to deter fleas. The only catch is it takes up to two weeks to reach full strength so it's a good idea to purchase these tags in the winter to prepare for spring.

Both tags are working well and I'm pleased with the ↗

(*"The Best Home Remedies For Fleas" cont.*)

results. The great thing is they don't contain chemicals and I can use them on my cat, too.

Raw Baltic Amber Resin

Amber is a resin that formed millions of years ago. Think the mosquito in the movie Jurassic Park. I have yet to try this method but I do know people that swear by Baltic amber resin necklaces for flea and tick prevention.

Amber has electrostatic properties which help repel fleas and ticks along with its unique smell. The amber must be raw and not polished like you see in jewelry stores. Electrostatic electricity makes it impossible for fleas, ticks and other bugs to remain on your pet's coat.

You can buy amber resin collars for your dog at Amberstone Pets.

Adding the foods and vitamins you'll read about below are great ways to boost your dog's nutrition and foster an unwelcome home for fleas. But starting with a fresh, raw diet is key. Dried dog food goes through high heating and processing which kills the natural nutrients your dog requires to thrive.

4. Health Is The Best Defense

This last recommendation is probably the most important of all.

Fleas are parasites and parasites seek out the weak and unhealthy. This means if your dog is healthy, fleas will be more inclined to leave his alone and jump on your neighbor's dog instead!

Good diet is the foundation of good health. The most important way to keep your dog glowing with good health is to feed him a diet full of fresh whole foods and unprocessed proteins.

In particular, supply him with plenty of B vitamins (found in most meats, organ meats, oily fish and eggs), probiotics (such as goat kefir or fermented vegetables), sulphur rich foods (eggs, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and brussels sprouts) as well as omega-6 fatty acids (poultry, eggs, flaxseed and hempseed) and omega-3 fatty acids (mackerel, freshly ground hemp and flaxseed).

Read more about food sources of vitamins and minerals for your dog.

Does Your Dog Have Fleas?

If you suspect your dog might have fleas despite your best prevention efforts, here's how you can find out:

Stand your dog on moistened paper towels or a damp white bath towel. Brush him. If little specks of dirt fall onto the towels and turn red or brown, your dog has fleas.

Visit (<http://get.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/2017-funnel/the-free-flea-checklist-lm/>) to grab Dogs Naturally's Emergency Flea Checklist. It's free and you can download it and keep it.

Steps For Treating Your Dog For Fleas

During an active flea attack, wash your dog with citrus Castile soap each week followed by a final rinse with ACV. For this rinse, use one part vinegar to ten parts water.

Keeping your dog's coat clean and using a flea comb is es-

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(*"The Best Home Remedies For Fleas" cont.*)

sential to natural flea prevention. Comb from top of head to the underside of the tail, neck, underbelly and legs.

Once a week, wash all of your dog's bedding in hot water with a natural, unscented detergent. If your dog sleeps with you, make sure you throw your own bedding in the washer once a week too.

Each week vacuum your carpets and floors, paying special attention to any places your dog hangs out (along with his little flea companions). An extra diatomaceous earth carpet treatment or two can also help keep fleas from multiplying.

Because the flea's entire life cycle, from eggs to larvae to pupae to adults, can be as long as several months, you'll need to keep repeating these steps to make sure the flea infestation is completely gone.

Living the All Natural Lifestyle takes a special effort especially when it comes to your sweet pooch. With a bit of planning, you can be well on your way to a successful flea-free season without resorting to toxic chemicals.

If your pet has fleas and you are going through hell trying to remove them from your dog and your home, download this free and simple checklist (<http://get.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/2017-funnel/the-free-flea-checklist-lm/>) we put together for times like these. Even if your dog is flea-free, grab this checklist to keep on hand, just in case!

About the author: Rita Hogan is a canine herbalist and co-founder of Farm Dog Naturals, an herbal remedy company for the All-Natural Dog. Rita combines nature with her love for dogs by offering consulting that focuses on dogs as individuals: mind, body and spirit. Her practice incorporates herbal medicine, complementary therapies and environmental stewardship to help dogs and people find balance and partnership with nature. Connect with Rita through her website: www.canineherbalist.com. □



Study: Which Crates and Carriers Will Keep Your Pets Safe?

by *Lindsay Deutsch, USA TODAY Network*

Planning a summer road trip with your pet? An eye-opening series of tests hopes to clarify products to keep you and your furry friend safe.

The 2015 Crate and Carrier Crashworthiness Studies, a collaborative effort between the non-profit Center for Pet Safety and pet-friendly carmaker Subaru, announced its findings Friday, including top performing products as well as ones that failed tests despite marketing claims of safety.

"If you're a dog owner like me, you want to protect your pet in the worst case scenario," Lindsey Wolko, founder and CEO of Center for Pet Safety said. When it comes to pet-safety products for ↗

(*"Crates and Carriers...?" cont.*)

cars, "the words 'safe' and 'crash-tested' are often just marketing claims. It's very subjective, so this is working to bring oversight and accountability," she told the USA TODAY Network.

There are currently no test protocols or performance standards in the U.S. when it comes to automobile pet safety products. This study is a follow-up to the non-profit's 2011 testing of harnesses.

What are the top-performing products, according to the study? For crates, it's the Gunner Kennels G1 Intermediate with 8' Tie Down Straps as the 2015 Top Performing Crate. For carriers (for smaller dogs and cats), both the PetEgo Forma Frame Jet Set Carrier with ISOFIX-Latch Connection and Sleepypod Mobile Pet Bed with PPRS Handilock got top marks.

Wolko said that when it comes to car safety, there are products that are distraction prevention tools (which will help prevent a crash) and products that will protect the pet if there is an actual crash. For example, metal crates are simply a distraction prevention tool and do not help in the case of a collision.

"In the event of a crash, it is important for pet crates and carriers to contain the dog and prevent the animal from becoming a projectile. It is also important for the containment device to remain fully secured at the connection points. If a pet is unrestrained, or the structural integrity should fail, the dog can potentially strike and injure a human passenger," according to the Center for Pet Safety.

Subaru, which funded the study, is a company in which more than half of drivers are pet owners, and of that group, 69% own at least one dog.

Other tips for pet travel:

- Make sure your pet has the right size crate. They should fit snugly with just enough room to be comfortable.
- Secure crates and carriers using strength-rated cargo area anchor straps. Wolko says that elastic or rubber bungee cords "do absolutely no good."
- Assess your dog's shape, size and personality before deciding whether to use a crate, carrier or harness when traveling. □



Dog Barking — The Good Bark and The Bad Bark

— *PetPav*

Our dogs will bark as a way to communicate with us as it is their only means of vocal communication. Dogs don't bark to annoy us or anyone else, nor for spite or to be vengeful. Dogs don't bark just because they can but because they are usually trying to tell us something. Certain dog breeds bark more than other as it is inherent in their breed. However, if your dog is barking excessively, the best way to control the barking is to figure out why your dog is barking in the first place.

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("Dog Barking — The Good Bark and The Bad Bark" cont.)

Below are some of the reasons your dog might be barking and what the bark sounds like:

Your dog might bark as a warning, protective instinct

It is natural for your dog to bark when someone is at the door or when strangers pass the house or car. Many will bark if they sense some type of threat, proclaiming that they are protecting you. The sound of this bark is usually sharp, loud and authoritative.

Your dog might bark if he is anxious

Anxious barking often seems to be an act of relaxation for many dogs. It is often high-pitched and sometimes accompanied by whining. This type of barking is common for dogs with separation anxiety as your pup is trying to calm himself down.

Your dog might bark because he is excited

This type of barking is especially common in puppies and young dogs. Many dogs will bark while playing with people or other dogs. Even the sound of the bark tends to sound upbeat and lyrical. Some dogs will bark excitedly when they know they are about to go for a walk or car ride.

Your dog might bark because he is bored

he bark of a bored dog sounds like a dog that barks just to hear his or her own voice. Though it tends to be annoying, it is also kind of sad. Bored dogs often bark to release excess energy, and sometimes bark out of loneliness. They usually need an activity and perhaps even a companion, and it usually is a series of barking.

Your dog is barking in response to other dogs

You know the scenario. If one dog down the street starts barking, and one by one the rest of your block joins in or, at least, your dog. And, this can also be heard if a fire truck or siren is driving by and one dog whines and all the others jump on the 'whine' wagon.

How to stop the excessive barking

Once you determine the cause of your dog's excessive barking, you can begin to control the behavior. The best way to prevent excessive barking in the first place is to try and remove any potential sources that cause the barking.

First and foremost, when your dog is barking, say "quiet" in a calm, firm voice. Wait until your dog stops barking, even if it's just to take a breath, then praise your dog and give him a treat. Just be careful to never reward him while he's barking. Eventually your dog will figure out that if he stops barking at the word "quiet" he gets a treat (and make it a high level treat, such as cheese or chicken bits to make it worth more than the barking.)

Try to make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise so there is not as much pent-up energy to burn by barking.

Avoid leaving a lonely dog alone for long periods of time if possible.

Never comfort, pet, hug or feed your dog when he is barking for attention or out of anxiety as that would be rewarding the behavior, thus encouraging it.

Conversely, shouting at your dog to stop barking does not help. It may actually cause him to bark even more. Punishment is never effective.

Don't let your dog bark constantly outside, regardless of the reason. Bring your dog inside if this is the case and hopefully this will end the barking. Make sure your dog does get out at some point during the day.

For indoor dogs, make sure your dog has something to keep him occupied during the day. Try leaving out a couple of food-dispensing toys, which come in different shapes and sizes. These can keep him busy for several hours, ↗

("Dog Barking — The Good Bark and The Bad Bark"

then he'll probably take a nap or a great chew toy.

If your dog goes into a barking frenzy every time you come home or the doorbell rings, you'll need to teach him other behaviors. One way is to train your dog to go to a spot and stay there when the door opens. It's best if your dog can see the door, but not be too close to it. Pick a spot and practice getting your dog to go there and stay, but don't touch the door yet. Use lots of treats and praise, making it a game.

If after trying the above, your dog continues to bark, you should first take your dog to the veterinarian to make sure there isn't an underlying medical issue. If your dog is okay, then consider hiring a dog trainer to help stop the barking. ☐



**Ten Steps For Starting
A Relationship
With A Cat**

— New York City, NY NearSay

Most of my life has been spent with dogs. I never needed nor wanted a cat until the last few years, and I probably would not have made the choice to get one had I not been tricked...er...convinced...that I actually needed one to function effectively in this world.

The main problem I ran into was finding an easy manual. I mean, why can't instructions for controlling a cat be as simple as the one you get when you buy a GPS for the first time? If so, the handbook might look something like this:

Welcome, and congratulations on your recent feline acquisition. Our limited warranty is virtually worthless so get over your silly human expectations, and get on with the business of trial and error. Especially the error.

1. **Your cat owns you**, not the other way around. He put out his invisible, magical claws one day and hooked you. You might have been bathing, eating, working or sleeping at the time. No matter, once selected, you were reeled in, and eventually the two of you were brought together. You probably were too entranced to hear your cat's relatively inaudible victory chant, "Gotcha!"

2. **Introducing your new cat to your home:** When you first enter your home with your cat, don't say things like, "This is YOUR room, Fluffy!" You will only convince your cat that he's right about you being a total idiot. Simply let her loose and he will tell YOU which rooms are hers. Be prepared to find out that YOUR room is now shared quarters. Give in quickly and save yourself much aggravation.

3. **First (and every) veterinarian visit:** Make the cat carrier a home away from home: blanket, food, catnip,

(continued on next page)



BARK BACK

IF YOU WANT TO "BARK BACK" WITH CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
OR SIMPLY SHARE A THOUGHT WITH OUR READERS...PLEASE DON'T HESITATE—SEND THEM IN!

Dear Nancy Lee,

Reading this "Bark Back" column sure makes me miss the **Sheltie Pacesetter**!!!!!! You did such a fantastic job with that breed magazine!! Getting this sort of important feedback from intelligent readers was, and still is, crucial.

I can't imagine any other breed magazine comparing to the quality that you and your staff used to put out. I loved getting it, reading it, sharing it and was proud to be published in it. It is SO "good" of you to take on the responsibility of continuing to send out wonderful information with your free "Sheltie Telegram Newsletter"!!

Sincerely,
Gail Duff

Winterlace Shelties

Hi, Nancy Lee...

Once again thank you for the "Sheltie Newsletter" which had an interesting article on Pet Food. I am forwarding it to my husband who also enjoys your newsletter.

I have never liked the food offered in the stores for dogs, especially the dry cereal. Two years ago we adopted another Sheltie ("Riley"). He was emaciated and his coat was very thin

when we got him. In fact, he got Canine Influenza and went down even more in weight. I thought we were going to lose him because he didn't eat for five days. The last owner said she fed him dry cereal, and he didn't like to eat much....I didn't blame him!!! Well, I took him off the dry food and started feeding him what my other dogs eat which is my home-cooked food. He's gained seven pounds and his coat has become very thick. She wouldn't recognize him today. Every week I cook up a small turkey or chicken hindquarters, skin the meat, then shred it, along with cooked carrots, sweet potato, green beans and brown rice. The only dog who doesn't get my home-cooked food is our diabetic Chihuahua as he's on a low fat diet.

Carole Wolfram

Hi, Nancy Lee,

Great newsletter! Lots of good information. Thank you.

Sharon Brown
Karahill Shelties

Dear Nancy Lee,

Thank you, Nancy Lee, for the "Bark Back" column...very informative.

Carole Wolfram

(“Ten Steps For Starting A Relationship With A Cat” cont.)

water and toys. He needs to believe he is simply going on a comfy vacation. Do not, under any circumstances, change your tone of voice when you put him in the carrier. He will make your life a living hell for the time it takes you to finally get him inside. In the car ride over, he will change his usual voice to something you never heard from him. If his usual sound is a high pitched "Meh," it will become a baritone "Me-yowooooo." This is to make you feel horrendously guilty. You should.

4. **Teaching him to get along** with other beings in the household: Your first error is the word "Teaching." He'll teach THEM how to get along with HIM (and, you're included in "them"). There is no reward great enough to manipulate her around this issue, so once again, acceptance will be key to your sense of well-being.

5. **Showing your cat love:** He will show you how to love him This is where trial and error comes in. You may have to try things out because he just sits there and looks at you. If you end up with a scratch or bite, probably don't do that one again. He may be more demonstrative, but don't make assumptions. Sitting on your lap ↗

(“Ten Steps For Starting A Relationship With A Cat” cont.)

does not necessarily mean "pet me." Head butting does not necessarily mean "kiss me."

6. **Ask not what your cat can do for you**, ask what you can do for your cat.

7. **Remember that your cat chose you:** Try daily to understand WHY your cat chose you. You will very likely learn that it was always in your interest, and your life will only get better.

8. **Practice gratitude:** Enjoy the benefits of having a cat in your family. You will smile and laugh more, be comforted when you are anxious, be warm when you are cold, and have a strong companion and ally.

9. **Be prepared:** Make sure your phone has a good camera, and that you know how to use it, quickly!

10. **Make new friends:** Don't expect that your friends who are not attached to a cat will understand your new obsession. They won't. They will just shake their heads and find ways to avoid you. From here on out, be on the lookout for crazy cat people with

(continued on page 10)





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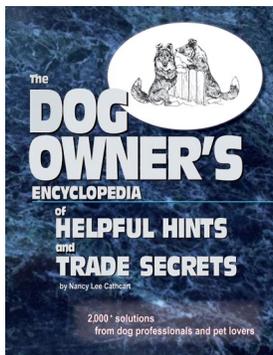




("Ten Steps ...With A Cat" cont.)

whom to fill your social calendar. They will understand you, and will make you feel like you belong.

Should you find yourself having regrets, remember, the cat is working fine, so there are no refunds. There are no defective cats, just ineffective humans. Reach out for counseling and training. Classes are for changing people behavior, not cat behavior. (Hint...the one will automatically change the other.) Cats get this. ☐



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Nancy Lee Cathcart —
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