



Paw Prints

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Columnist

Indoor and outdoor threats to your pet

Much like human kids, your pet kids tend to put everything in their mouths.

Dogs are surprisingly adept at opening cupboard doors and drawers. Once your pet gains access to these areas, he could consume a variety of food, medications or garden supplies that are poisonous to him.

It's a dream of a lot of pet parents to have a place with a nice fenced-in yard where their furry friends can play and explore, but just because that yard is closed off doesn't mean that it can't be a dangerous place. There are potential risks that every pet parent should be

aware of.

So before Rover heads out to play in your fenced yard you should make sure that it is a safe place for your furry friend.

Make sure your fence structure is secure by checking for loose areas around it that your dog could sneak through, or get hurt by jagged edges.

Certain breeds are known for digging under or climbing over fences. No matter what type of fence you use, make sure that your pet always has some form of identification in case he does get out of the yard. Look around the yard for anything that might entice your furry pal. If your dog is a "chewer," be sure to keep your garden hose out of the way.

Another danger can be growing right in your own backyard. Many outdoor plants can make your dog very sick. Check the ASPCA website to find out which plants can be toxic. And the safest approach is elimination and to replace them with non-toxic plants. Also check your yard regularly for any mushrooms, toadstools, or fungus that may have started growing, and remove them immediately,

because they are poisonous for your pet!

If your dog has access to the garage, make sure any dangerous equipment is put away safely. Don't let your pet come in contact with hazardous chemicals such as insecticides or antifreeze. Keep these kinds of materials locked up in storage areas.

Another threat in your own backyard is ticks. They often wait in tall grasses before attaching themselves to dogs or cats. Regular mowing can help.

Don't use poisonous lawn-care chemicals, like insecticides or fertilizers in your yard; they are toxic to your pet.

Every summer there are tragic stories about dogs that suffer from heat stroke. Often what seems like a tolerable temperature to us is far too warm for your dogs. Always provide shade for your dog when outside. Dogs should always have a shady spot to get out of the sun, like a sturdy dog house. Keep fresh, cool water available at all times.

For a pet-friendly environment indoors it's also important to make sure that all safety hazards around the home are addressed before



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Autumn loves being outdoors – it's up to the dog's person to keep her safe out there.

allowing your furry friend to roam free.

Keep dangerous items in areas that your pet cannot reach, even if it means adapting childproof locks on your cabinets.

A dog has a "superman" sense of smell and uses it to see their world. Many dogs show an avid interest in kitchen garbage, and who could blame them? It's full of enticing food scraps along with plenty of bacteria and toxin-producing molds from spoiled foods.

Wastepaper baskets in your bathroom can also draw attention to your curious

canine and often contain hazards like razor blades, dental floss and expired medications.

Remove dangerous food that will make your dog ill from low counters or tables. Many types of "people food" can be deadly to your pet. Onions, grapes and chocolate are just a few poisonous foods that can potentially harm your dog.

Look around your home for items that could be a choking hazard. Anything small enough for your pup to chew up and swallow like shoelaces, socks, children's toys and sewing supplies.



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