

# Pet-Proofing Your Home

Dogs are completely dependent on you for everything, and their safety should be your No. 1 priority. It is a hefty responsibility, but most definitely worth it. Dogs can be very curious. Keep your house as safe as you would for a child. Remember, keeping a safe home is a lifelong commitment and takes constant work. It is important for your whole family to recognize what is harmful and how to keep those objects out of reach.

If you keep your dog in a safe house, the entire family can enjoy more stress-free time with your canine companion. Here is how to keep your companion animal safe in your home.

## CHECKLIST FOR DOG PROOFING INDOORS

### KITCHENS/BATHROOMS

- Use childproof latches to keep little paws from prying open cabinets
- Place medications, cleaners, chemicals, and laundry supplies on high shelves. Avoid keeping medications, even in pill bottles or dispensers, on low tables, bathroom counters, or night tables, where the dog can easily get to them.
- Keep trash cans covered or inside a latched cabinet. Dogs are attracted to the smells coming from garbage, which can upset their tummies or even be poisonous.
- Keep foods out of reach (even if the food isn't harmful, the wrapper could be)
- Avoid feeding food from the table. Pups may look adorable as they beg for food but many human foods are not good for them. Pay special attention to sugarless gum, chocolate, raisins, and other foods that are especially poisonous to dogs.
- Keep the toilet lid closed to prevent falling in or drinking of harmful cleaning chemicals
- Keep cleaning supplies in high cabinets or secured behind doors with childproof latches. When using them, make sure that the puppy is kept out of the area, so he won't be affected by the vapors given off by chemicals.

### LIVING/FAMILY ROOM

- Place dangling wires out of reach. These chewing hazards can cause burns to the mouth or electrical shock.
- Put away children's toys and games
- Put away knick-knacks
- Put away small items that are choking hazards — such as coins, paper clips, rubber bands, and jewelry — to prevent the puppy from choking on them.
- Check all those places where your vacuum cleaner doesn't fit, but your dog does, for dangerous items
- Move common house plants that may be poisonous, out of reach. Don't forget hanging plants that can be jumped onto from nearby surfaces
- Make sure all heating/air vents have covers

- Put away all sewing and craft notions, especially thread
- Keep doors and windows closed, so the dog can't escape or fall out, and secure the cords that raise blinds, so they won't get caught around the dog's neck.

## **GARAGE**

- Move all chemicals to high shelves or behind secure doors
- Keep cleaning supplies in high cabinets or secured behind doors with childproof latches. When using them, make sure that the dog is kept out of the area, so he won't be affected by the vapors given off by chemicals.
- Clean all antifreeze from the floor and driveway, as one taste can be lethal to animals
- Keep all sharp objects and tools out of reach. This includes knives, scissors and razors.

## **BEDROOMS**

- Keep laundry and shoes behind closed doors (drawstrings and buttons can cause major problems if swallowed)
- Keep any medications, lotions, or cosmetics off accessible surfaces (like the bedside table)
- Move electrical wires out of reach of chewing
- And look out for paws, noses, and tails when you shut doors behind you or scoot chairs.

## **CHECKLIST FOR DOG PROOFING OUTDOORS**

When you take your dog outside, you need to take precautions there, too. Your backyard is going to be your puppy's playground (and bathroom), so it's important that it is also clear of all hazards.

- Fence the yard, if possible. It's best to have a fence that is high enough to prevent the dog from jumping over it, with no holes to crawl through.
- Remove toxic plants in your yard to prevent your dog from mistaking them for a snack.
- Put a fence around in-ground pools. Pools are a big hazard for dogs. A fence surrounding the pool will prevent the dog from accidentally falling in.
- Designate a dog area. Set aside a portion of the yard for the dog to use as his bathroom area.
- Keep the lawn trimmed and brush under control. Ticks are more likely to hide in tall grasses and latch onto your dog.
- Keep your dog away from the yard if it has recently been treated with fertilizers, pesticides, or insecticides. Try to avoid using insecticides because the chemicals can be very harmful to your dog.
- Be wary of heat. Avoid keeping your dog outside when it is hot, and always have shade and cool water available

- Clean up after your dog to be sure he won't try to eat his own feces.
- Supervise your dog. Dogs should not be left outside alone. This is the time to play with them and train them, and to protect them from predators, heatstroke, and other hazards.