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CUSTOMIZED FOR YOUR BUSINESS  
ISSUE #27

# THE PawStreet JOURNAL

**Please don't give pets as gifts!**

## Our Passion is Pets

Each new year begins with hope and promise. At ABC Family Pet Care, our hope is that your family enjoys health and happiness in the new year. Our promise is to deliver the best of care to your dearly loved pets.

We can always count on one thing – the companionship of our pets. They are always there for us, helping to celebrate good times with laughter and love, and offering a soft shoulder to cry on during the bad times.

What better way to reward such unselfish devotion than to make the lives of our pets as happy as possible? At ABC Family Pet Care, we're grateful to be your partners in helping to ensure that your pets are healthy, comfortable and contented for many years to come.



If you're thinking about giving a pet as a gift for the holidays or other special event, think again. Though we believe companion pets are rewarding additions to a home and family, we believe in ownership responsibility even more.

A pet is not the latest novelty toy that a child, or adult for that matter, loses interest in once the batteries run out. That adorable kitten or puppy wearing a big, red bow around his neck, comes with a commitment that requires a thoughtful discussion with the entire family before he is brought into the home.

Who will walk the dog on those cold, winter mornings? Whose job will it be to change the litter box or bird cage? What are the health-maintenance requirements and costs of caring for the pet responsibly? How will the pet be trained? Does anyone



in the family have animal allergies?

This doesn't mean that pets can't make great gifts for a loved one, but that the receiver should be involved in the process. We suggest waiting until after the hectic holiday season, and the reality of a 10-to-20-year commitment to pet ownership is agreed upon with those involved.



## Clean, healthy and fresh – behold the tooth

**They can chew through plastic, rubber and leather but they need a good, regular tooth brushing for their overall health**

Your pet's bite may be strong and sharp but it's not too tough to care for with effective, preventative maintenance. Just like you, your cat or dog needs regular den-

Examine his mouth -- normal teeth should be clean, white and smooth with firm, pink gum tissue. It's also important that you schedule an annual visit with your veterinarian for a thorough exam and professional cleaning.



tal care. Without it, they can suffer from bad breath, bleeding gums and tooth decay or loss. Infections from severe gum disease can even lead to life-threatening illness. Not to fret, though; daily flossing need not apply!

February is National Pet Dental Health Month, but any time is a good time to begin an oral-care program for your dog or cat. According to the American Veterinary Dental Society, oral disease is the leading health problem in cats and dogs, affecting more than 80 percent of them by the time they're four years old. To keep your pet's smile healthy, practice good dental hygiene every day.

### SEE YOUR VET IF YOU NOTICE THESE SIGNS OF PERIODONTAL DISEASE:

- Brownish crust near the gum line**
- Loose or missing teeth**
- Swollen, red or bleeding gums**
- Pus between the gums and teeth**
- Any unusual growth in the mouth**
- Reluctance to eat, play with chew toys or drink cold water**
- Persistent bad breath**

In between exams, try your hand at brushing your pet's teeth at least once a week. It may be easier than you think, especially if you start when he's young. Some pets may never take to it, but there are many products available to help make the job more pleasant, including special toothbrushes and chicken- or beef-flavored toothpastes, Yum!

Your vet can also give you tips on the right way to brush. After you get the hang of it, you may find that both you and your pet look forward to a daily tooth brushing. Let the face-licking begin!

Take our Whole Tooth Quiz on page 3!

## SPAY DAY USA

**THE 15TH ANNUAL SPAY DAY USA WILL BE ON TUESDAY, FEB. 24, 2009, WITH EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES IN HONOR OF SPAY DAY TAKING PLACE THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF SPAY DAY USA IS TO INSPIRE AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE TO HAVE THEIR PETS—OR OTHER ANIMALS IN NEED—SPAYED OR NEUTERED. ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES INCLUDE INFORMING PEOPLE OF THE URGENCY, SAFETY AND NECESSITY OF SPAYING OR NEUTERING THEIR PETS.**



# 10

## OF THE MOST COMMON HOUSEHOLD PET POISONS

*Where are they stored in your home?*

Prescription and non-prescription human medications

Household cleaners

Antifreeze and windshield wiper fluid

Rat and mouse poisons

Gardening supplies

Paint and paint solvents

House plants

Chocolate

Garbage

Batteries

# Pretty Poisons

Keep your pets **SAFE** from these common household hazards

Pets are marvelous creatures, offering us companionship, protection and unqualified love. In return, we make them a cherished part of our families and homes. Unfortunately, our loving homes can actually be harmful, because many items found around the house are poisonous to pets. Here are a few items to be aware of:

## Indoor Hazards

**Chocolate** (baker's, semi-sweet, milk chocolate) is poisonous to dogs, cats and ferrets because of the ingredient theobromine. A small amount can cause vomiting and restlessness – and a larger dose may be fatal.

**Human medications**, such as pain relievers, cold medicines, vitamins and diet pills, can be lethal to animals. Keep medication containers and tubes away from pets, and be vigilant about finding any pills you accidentally drop on the floor.

**Human foods** may taste great to your pet, but some can be very dangerous. Keep pets away from: onions and onion powder, alcohol, yeast dough, coffee grounds and beans, salt, macadamia nuts, tomatoes, raisins, grapes, potato and rhubarb leaves and stems, avocados (toxic to birds, mice, rabbits, horses, cattle and dairy goats), and anything with mold growing on it. In addition, chicken bones can easily splinter and choke your pet, so it's better not to give your good dog a bone.

**Household plants** can be appealing snacks, especially to cats, but the foliage may be poisonous. Steer your pets clear of: azalea, geranium, dieffenbachia (dumb cane), lily, holly, mistletoe, philodendron and poinsettia..

**Batteries** might look like great chew toys to your puppy, but they contain corrosives that can cause

painful ulceration to the mouth, tongue and gastrointestinal tract.

## Outdoor Hazards

**Pesticides, lawn chemicals and rodent poisons** are hazardous.

Keep your pets away from lawns or gardens treated with fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides until the time recommended by the manufacturer has elapsed. And be sure to store these products in areas that are inaccessible to your pets.

**Antifreeze** has a sweet taste that attracts animals, but it is deadly even in small quantities. If you suspect your pet has ingested antifreeze, immediate treatment is imperative. Otherwise, your pet may suffer severe kidney damage, lapse into a coma and die – all within 24 hours.

## Recognize the Signs

Signs of poisoning include listlessness, abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, diarrhea, muscle tremors, lack of coordination, and fever. Knowing what your pet has ingested and getting help rapidly can mean the difference between life and death. Keep a pet first-aid kit and manual readily available and, if you think your pet has ingested poison, contact your veterinarian immediately.

It's really not so hard to keep your beloved pet safe from household harm. Simply use common sense and take the same precautions you would with a child. After all, this is the baby of the family we're talking about!

For more information on poisons you may have in your home, visit the ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center web site at [aspc.org/site/PageServer](http://aspc.org/site/PageServer), or call:

(888) 426-4435

## The Healthy Pet Recipe

We've cooked up a fresh batch of tips for a happier, healthier pet.

**NUTRITION.** A balanced diet, with optimum nutrition for your pet's age and weight, is vital. All foods should conform to the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) standards.

**GROOMING.** More than just for appearances, routine brushing and combing stimulates blood supply for a shiny and healthy coat. Don't overlook areas such as ears and nails; ask your veterinarian for a cleaning demonstration.

**TEETH.** The most common ailment of small animals is periodontal

disease. Your vet can perform an oral exam, but regular maintenance of teeth and gums is an owner's obligation.

**IDENTIFICATION.** An estimated 30 percent of euthanized dogs and cats are lost pets that end up in shelters. In addition to collar ID and license tags, consider a microchip, a safe and effective pet identification system.

**SAFETY IN THE HOME.** Like a small child, your pet can and will go where you can't. Attach safety latches to cupboard doors. Fasten

window screens and close toilet lids. Pick up objects such as paper clips and coins. Keep all medicines out of sight. During application of lawn and garden products, confine your pet indoors or at a safe distance. Keep products stored carefully and out of reach. In case of exposure, contact your vet immediately.

**VACCINATIONS.** As pet diseases are especially contagious, vaccines are an important part of preventative health care. Have your veterinarian formulate

a customized immunization program.

**REGULAR EXAMINATIONS.** Skipping one annual exam is like losing 5-10 years of health maintenance for a human. Periodic physicals can detect diseases and other problems in their early stages, giving your pet a greater chance for a longer and healthier life.

**TLC.** There's just no substitute for Tender Loving Care. Measure it out in large, regular doses. You'll find that love is contagious, too.



# Did You Know...

Human-animal bonding is something very special, something very real. And measurable. Sociologists and psychologists can document its amazing and undeniable effects, while archaeologists can trace its considerable roots.

Domestication of the canine was long thought to date back some 14,000 years. Recent research at the University of Southern California indicates that dogs were first domesticated from wolves as early as 100,000 years ago (that's human years, of course). Cats seem to have made the choice to spend time with us over their wild feline cousins only 4,000 years ago.

## OUR PRECIOUS PETS HELP US IN MANY WAYS

- Increase laughter
- Decrease loneliness
- Lower blood pressure
- Encourage touch
- Enhance physical health

## THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

Cats have better memories than dogs. Tests conducted by the University of Michigan concluded that while a dog's memory lasts no more than 5 minutes, a cat's may last as long as 16 hours - exceeding even that of monkeys and orangutans. Cats have more than one hundred vocal sounds, while dogs only have about ten. This may explain why your cat seems to hold a grudge while your dog is more forgiving!

## THE WHOLE TOOTH QUIZ

Take this short quiz to find out how much you know about teeth. If you get all the answers right, your pet just might have a million-dollar smile.

### 1. Which one has the most teeth?

- A. Cats
- B. Dogs
- C. Humans

### 2. True or false – Canine teeth are found strictly in dogs.

3. True or false – When it comes to keeping your pet's teeth healthy, dry food is better than canned food.

### 4. Which one has the fewest molars because it doesn't need to chew its food?

- A. Dogs
- B. Humans
- C. Cats

### 5. Dogs, cats and humans have at least one thing in common when it comes to teeth – we're diphyodonts. That means:

- A. We can eat both meat and vegetables
- B. We have two sets of teeth: baby teeth and permanent teeth
- C. We have two of each kind of tooth

### Whole Tooth Quiz Answers:

1. B. Dogs have 42 teeth, humans have 32 and cats have 30.
2. False – Cats and humans have canine teeth, too. They are meant to hold and tear food. Cats have the sharpest canine teeth.
3. A trick question! It's both true and false. Dry food can act as an abrasive and reduce the amount of tartar on teeth. But studies show that dry foods don't always promote decreased plaque and tartar build-up. Neither dry nor canned food is better at preventing periodontal disease.
4. C. Cats are true carnivores and their teeth are intended for tearing and ripping. Whereas humans have 12 molars and dogs have 10, cats have only 4.
5. B. All mammals have baby teeth and permanent teeth. Dogs and cats get their adult teeth at 6-7 months old, while humans get theirs from 8-12 years of age.

# What kind of animal are you?

Just for fun, see if your furry friend fits the mold of these astrological wonders

## Capricorn

Dec 22 – Jan 20

Your Capricorn's reserved, melancholy nature hides a craving for affection and praise. They are intelligent, responsible, patient and true, but like quiet routine – you'll be ready for playtime before they will. Determined to make you happy, they need to feel needed.

## Aquarius

Jan 21 – Feb 18

Sweet and agreeable Aquarian pets will also make you tear your hair over their stubborn quirks. They're intelligent, but won't easily accept discipline or training – they'd rather train you! Although sometimes aloof and independent, their warm, loving nature makes them devoted to you... and brokenhearted if that devotion isn't returned.

## Pisces

Feb 19 – March 20

Gentle, warm, compassionate and intuitive, Pisces pets are in touch with your every mood. They are quite sensitive and become emotional and hurt if scolded. Although happiest at home, they will become your faithful shadow, wanting to share the journey wherever you may go.

## Aries

March 21 – April 20

Your aggressive and energetic Aries pet will jump for joy if you provide plenty of exercise. Brave, friendly, loyal and trusting, they walk proud, crave respect and can be impulsive. Obedience school is a plus for them. Guide them gently, praise their successes and you'll receive their boundless love.

## Taurus

April 21 – May 20

Tolerant, cuddly Taureans are creatures of habit and stubbornly resist change. Their favorite activities are eating and napping. Lounging is the name of their game, so schedule regular exercise and playtime. Although quiet and passive, watch out if they become provoked.

## Gemini

May 21 – June 20

Highly vocal Gemini pets are great communicators. Their lively, inquisitive and restless natures make them great adventure seekers and keen observers. They're also extremely sociable with people and other animals. They don't play favorites – they just love everyone!

## Cancer

June 21 – July 21

Cancer pets crave tranquility, home and family. Their sensitive, insecure natures can cause crabbiness if confronted with strangers and they'll retreat to a quiet corner. If you're feeling blue, this loyal friend will sense it and be the first to try to comfort and charm you.

## Leo

July 22 – Aug 21

Your Leo pet may be spoiled rotten – but how else to treat this regal beast? Loyal, sociable, affectionate and playful, they need attention and love to entertain and show off new tricks. They'll also appreciate a compliment about their considerable beauty.

## Virgo

Aug 22 – Sep 21

Your Virgo has two priorities – family and home. They are extremely finicky about their food and living space – even their grooming. Easy to train and discipline, they'll expect you to conform to their schedule, then reward you with quiet devotion.

## Libra

Sep 22 – Oct 21

Inconsistent, indecisive Libras look to you to provide the balance they need. Sociable and people-loving, they make great companions, but become depressed when left alone. Good food, pampering, grooming routines and even soft music can keep them from singing the blues.

## Scorpio

Oct 22 – Nov 21

The sensitive Scorpio has a keen sixth sense, whether for finding a lost toy or tuning in to your emotions. Their excellent memories make them slow to forgive past hurts, but they are fiercely loyal and possessive – any other pets in the house may get their paws stepped on!

## Sagittarius

Nov 22 – Dec 21

Saggies are clever, adaptable and extremely dependable – but they insist on having a good time. These fun-loving clowns are explorers by nature and make ideal traveling companions. Frisky and impulsive, they're a bit clumsy at times, but always eager to please.





**YOUR PRACTICE**  
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Appointment Hours  
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**TALK TO  
THE  
Paw**

Advice from the Top Dog

**Dear Paw,**  
**How do I keep my dog's skin soft and fluffy in the winter?**

**– Itchy Mitch**

Dear Itchy,

**Know how your skin gets dry and itchy in winter? Your dog's skin struggles with cold weather, overheated houses, and low humidity, too. Here's how to keep your pooch itch-free:**

- Brush her often. Even shorthaired dogs need help sloughing off dead skin cells. Brushing stimulates circulation and kicks up production of natural moisturizers from oil glands.
- Shampoo less often. Experts warn that weekly baths remove much-needed lubricating oils.

- Keep your own shampoo – even the gentle one – on the shelf, and use a moisturizing doggie-formulated one.
- If dry skin persists, take Fluffy to the vet. Itching can be a sign of something more serious.
- Pets love to lie in front of heat vents for extra warmth. Keep a cozy bed with their favorite blanket and toy in a spot that doesn't expose them directly to the heat. You may also consider using a humidifier in the room where your pet sleeps.

**– Your Paw**

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