



Pet-Proof Your Home: 7 Things Your Dog Should Avoid

Your new dog is very smart, but moving to a new home is a big change for them and it takes some time to adjust. Plus, adult rescue dogs come from a wide variety of different experiences.

Some come from previous homes where they've learned 'manners' training and what is or isn't off-limits in a home, while others may not have had this experience.

With time, they can learn. In the beginning, pet proofing can help your new pup avoid any accidents or other safety concerns, and give you peace of mind, especially if you need to leave them alone for any period of time.

Try these tips to maximize your pet's safety:

1. Know Which Foods Dogs Should Avoid

Many foods that are perfectly safe for humans are NOT safe for dogs. Some people foods to avoid include:

- Chocolates (especially dark and bakers chocolate)
- Coffee
- Sugar-free gums and mints (or any food or drink containing the artificial sweetener Xylitol)
- Grapes and raisins
- Onions
- Macadamia nuts
- Yeast dough



In general, it's best to check with your veterinarian prior to offering any occasional people food or table scraps.

2. Lock Up the Garbage Can

Your dog has an amazing nose—in fact, while human beings only have about 6 million olfactory (smell) receptors, dogs have up to 300 million!

So, your pup will probably smell all sorts of food scraps and other tempting things in your garbage can. The trash may hold some things you wouldn't want your dog getting into—like spoiled food, bones, or even plastic bags that could be swallowed or get stuck on their head (a suffocation risk).

Fortunately, this problem is easy to avoid, just close the can in a cabinet with child proof locks or get a trash can with a securely closing lid.

3. Keep Medicines and Chemicals Out of Reach

Just like your garbage can, you'll want to keep medications and chemicals (such as cleaning substances, antifreeze, pest control products, and even spare batteries) far away from your curious dog's mouth.



Some dogs view a pill bottle as a toy—and plastic bottles and child-proof caps are no match for dog teeth. In the course of a dog playing with a bottle, the medicine can fall out and be swallowed.

While we're talking about medicine, remember—many human medications aren't safe for pets, so always check with your veterinarian prior to giving medicine for any reason. You'll want to keep your toilet lids closed so your dog doesn't develop the habit of drinking from them—especially if your toilet bowls have automatic cleaners or any other chemicals.

4. Check Your Dog's Toys

It's good to have a variety of toys for your new dog, both for indoor and outdoor use.

Especially in the beginning, it's important to do safety checks on these toys—examining them at least once daily for missing or loose pieces, holes where stuffing could be pulled out, and loose or unraveling strings.

The reason is, you want to be sure your dog doesn't accidentally swallow small pieces that could cause an intestinal blockage. Supervised playtime is best. However, if you need to leave a toy with them while you're out, look for sturdy toys, and supervise them the first few times they use it.

Also, keep small items that could be swallowed—like coins, rubber bands, pens, lipstick, socks, etc.—out of reach. The same goes for valuable items you don't want chewed up, such as shoes or purses.

5. Secure Electrical Cords

Electrical cords don't make good toys—if chewed, they can cause electric shocks and mouth burns. Avoid these issues by finding sturdy cord covers (such as PVC tubes), or rerouting cords along the wall and out of your dog's reach.

6. Have a Plan for Houseplants

Some plants, such as lilies, are toxic for pets and best avoided altogether.

Even "safe" plants can cause a lot of tummy upset if ingested. You probably don't want your playful pup to dig or chew up your flowers. Be sure to place houseplants out of your dog's reach. And check with your veterinarian if you're not sure which plants are safe for pets.

7. Safety Check the Backyard

If you have a backyard, it's best to leash walk your dog rather than letting them run free—unless you have a sturdy fence (even then, supervision is best in the beginning).

Some things you'll want to avoid outside include:

Chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides (follow all instructions for how long to keep pets away after use).

- Mulches and compost piles (avoid ingestion by blocking your dog's access to these).
- Certain plants such as sago palms (plan a pet-safe yard).
- Swimming pools (not all dogs are natural swimmers, and supervision is ALWAYS required when your dog uses the pool).

Use Safe Spaces and Supervision at First

Until they're more settled and you feel comfortable letting them roam the house, it's probably best to keep your dog in their crate or room when you're at work or sleeping.

That way, they can't get into anything they shouldn't and you can rest easy knowing your new friend is safe, healthy, and ready to greet you with a wagging tail and sloppy kisses soon.

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