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Medical insurance for the life of your pet.

Spring Safety Tips for Dogs & Cats

SIMPLE SAFETY TIPS TO ENJOY
A STRESS-FREE SPRING





SLY AS A FOXTAIL

It's that time of year again: foxtail season. Foxtails, a tall grass with elongated, bristly spikes at the ends of each blade resembling a fox's tail, can sneak up on your pet and cause serious problems. Once they embed in your pet's fur, they can cause serious damage like ruptured eardrums and infections. Prevent foxtail problems by regularly examining your pet's coat after they've spent time outside.

MORE THAN 60% OF FOXTAILS ARE EMBEDDED IN THE EAR, NOSE, OR PAW.

SPRING (DENTAL) CLEANING

I bet you didn't know that February is National Pet Dental Health Month! In case you missed it, it's a good time to get your dog or cat's teeth cleaned. Periodontal disease is the most common disorder that affects cats and dogs. Dental disease can cause much more than just bad breath for your pet; it can cause tooth, bone, and gum loss and lead to heart disease.

PERIODONTAL DISEASE IS IRREVERSIBLE — BUT ALSO COMPLETELY PREVENTABLE.

SPRINGTIME SLIMDOWN

It's hard to keep up on exercise when it's cold out, but staying cozy inside can lead to extra winter weight on your pet. Overweight pets are more likely to develop serious conditions like diabetes, respiratory and heart diseases, and joint problems. Check with your veterinarian if you suspect your pet has gained weight. They'll help you create a weight loss plan, which may include more exercise and watching food portions.

DIABETES TREATMENT COSTS ON AVERAGE \$1,900 FOR CATS AND \$2,600 FOR DOGS PER YEAR.

TOXIC TEMPTATIONS

It's spring cleaning time, but household cleaning products introduce a number of toxins to the home. Soaps, bleach, polishes, and cleaners can irritate your pet's skin and damage their gastrointestinal tract. Cleaning supplies, like a sponge or pipe cleaner, can also present problems when ingested by a curious pet. To thwart troubles before they start, opt for pet-safe cleaning supplies, store unsafe chemicals out of paws' reach, and keep your pet away from where you're cleaning.

IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

Now that it's warmer out, it's time to show off that beautiful green lawn! Unfortunately, having the greenest grass on the block can mean using fertilizer that is poisonous and potentially fatal to pets. Keep your furry friend off the grass and away from any treated areas for at least 24 hours or opt for pet-safe products. Be cautious of organic fertilizer too — its captivating scent might tempt your dog to make a meal out of manure.





APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS

Most pet owners know that certain plants are poisonous to pets, but even your pet-safe blossoms can be troublesome. When ingested, bone meal, often used as a fertilizer, and bulbs can make for a very, very sick dog. If you dilute most fertilizers with plenty of dirt or water, it's often safe to use around pets (unless you have a small dog). Cat lovers, remember that lilies can cause kidney failure if ingested by cats.

STICK IT TO SLUGS

Slugs are hard critters to love, especially when their slimy trails cut through your yard and destroy your plants and flowers. While you don't want slugs around your house and garden, slug bait is extremely dangerous to your pet. The toxins in slug bait are often mixed with sugars to attract the slugs, but it also entices pets. Even a small amount can be fatal, so ask your veterinarian about pet-safe slug control options.

SLUG BAIT INGESTION CAN COST UP TO \$2,500 TO TREAT.



DOG PARK ETIQUETTE 101

What better way to spend a sunny spring Saturday than with your favorite furry friend at the local dog park? Here are a few tips for your visit:

- **Study up on canine body language** — know what both playful and aggressive behaviors look like.
- **Leave toys at home** that your pet is unwilling to share.
- **Make sure your dog comes when called** — don't let them give dogs entering the park an overwhelming welcome, and always respect pets who need their space.
- **Know your dog's "type"** and avoid dogs they feel uncomfortable around.
- **Don't bring your dog to the park if they're sick**, behind on vaccinations (including flea, tick, and heartworm prevention!), younger than four months old, or have any behavioral issues.

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