



Dog Safety at Home

By Michelle Riportella

Our pets are our family and we want to do all we can to keep them safe both in and outside the home. Whether you're a pro or a beginner, it's a good idea to do a quick review to see how "dog proof" your home is. My veterinarian, Dr. Karen Burgess of Healthy Paws Animal Hospital, provided the following information:

"When it comes to dealing with puppies, the best advice is to crate them whenever they are not supervised," states Dr. Burgess. The best way to view your home like a puppy, is to get down to floor level and look around in each room of your home to see what they could get at. This is also true for dogs of any age depending on their personality.



Some things to keep in mind when looking through your home are:

- ✓ Can your dogs access your garbage cans and waste baskets? Putting your waste containers in a cabinet with a safety lock on it or in a closed room would be your best bet. If you have to keep them out, make sure your dogs cannot access them, whether that means a closed lid they cannot open or putting your garbage can out of reach.
- ✓ If your dog is a counter surfer, as a deterrent you can use double-sided tape around the area or aluminum foil, as most dogs do not like either one. **"The most important piece to most of this is the training of your dog,"** Dr. Burgess explains. As a good pet owner, you want to train your dogs right away as to what in your home is pet friendly and what is not.
- ✓ Some people shake a can with pennies in it as a training device to **teach the dog what is acceptable** and what is not. Although not her favorite, Dr. Burgess said a "snapper trapper" (a device that makes a loud slapping noise and flips into the air startling the pet) can be used for times when you're not around to catch your dog in the act. Dr. Burgess advises training your dogs to not have access to places like the kitchen, and teaching them to go to their crates or beds while you or a family member are eating or preparing a meal. Eventually, they will learn that the kitchen is off limits to them, and helps you keep your dog safe.
- ✓ Dr. Burgess recommends to dog proof your home of anything toxic that your dogs can get to. This includes both inside and outside your home. **TOXIC** means **POISON** to our dogs and should be taken seriously. Some common toxic plants are poinsettias, lilies, ivy, amaryllis, tulip bulbs, and chrysanthemums. Common toxic foods that can harm your dog and even cause death include chocolate, Xylitol (often found in chewing gum), grapes, raisins, yeast dough, salt, onions, moldy or spoiled food, macadamia nuts, coffee, and avocado.



Detailed information on toxic plants and foods can be found online in the [GCCR Library](#) in the Helping Hands Handbook and in the Health and Wellness section. "Toxin poisoning seems to be one of the biggest things I see come in my door as a veterinarian," quotes Dr. Burgess.

- ✓ In addition to ingesting plants and food, another common issue many people overlook is that our dogs, like children, are vulnerable to eating anything. That could include anything from small toys such as Lego® pieces, to clothing items, such as socks.

Many assume that there is nothing to worry about if your dog ingests something because it will eventually pass. This is absolutely not the case. One of GCCR's fosters recently required surgery to remove part of a nightgown she had swallowed! As pet owners, it's our responsibility to make sure there is nothing that our dogs can get to that can harm them. **"It can be something as simple as changing our laundry habits or picking up after ourselves,"** Dr. Burgess says.

All in all, we love our pets and want the best for them. We hope this little bit of information will help in keeping our sweet and lovable Cavaliers safe! A big thank you to Dr. Karen Burgess, D.V.M. for taking some time to give us a few tips and share some of her experience with us.