

# 5 Ways to Keep Your Pet Safe at Home

Not many pet owners have the luxury of being able to keep their pets under watch all the time. There are a number of steps that pet owners can take to help ensure pets are safe around the home when pet owners are not there.



Follow these five tips to help keep your pet safe:

1. **Don't be trashy.** Dogs and cats alike seem to love the smell, taste and texture of trash, and they will go out of their way to play in that arena while you're away. Many things in our trash that may seem benign to us can be dangerous to pets, including chicken bones, which are choking hazards because of their brittle nature. Take all the trash outside when you leave for any length of time, or place trashcans out of your pet's reach.
2. **Do sweat the small stuff.** Remove small toys, string and other choking hazards such as rubber bands from your pet's area in your home. They may love these things as toys, but the risk of choking is high. Also put away cat toys with strings when you will not be there to supervise the play. Consider, too, if your pet's toys are sized appropriately. A ball meant for a smaller animal can lodge within a larger one's throat.
3. **Don't count on nine lives.** Cats aren't always as nimble footed and self sufficient as legend has it. Check for places where they can become stuck, such as behind the refrigerator or in fireplace openings, and seal up those openings. Close all toilet lids before you leave the house.
4. **Do call for backup when you're away.** Pets enjoy their routines. And if you're going to be away for an extended period of time, or if you're going to be away at times of the day when you're usually at home with your pet, your professional pet sitter can help your pet stick to its schedule. It is reassuring to the pet, and can help alleviate some of the mischievous exploring that often leads to disaster. A good pet sitter knows how to think like a pet and can quickly scan your pet's environment for known dangers.
5. **Don't forget to include pets in your disaster plan.** Natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods, as well as unforeseen man-made disasters like chemical spills, can close off a residential area in short order. The key is to be prepared as best as you can and it only takes a small amount of preparation.

You should be able to pass the "five-minute preparedness test," meaning in five minutes or fewer, you should be able to get your pets and their emergency kit out of your home.