



## Puppy/kitten proofing your home

Puppies and kittens have a tremendous amount of energy and natural curiosity, and they love to explore the world around them. This is part of what makes them so much fun, but it can also lead them into harmful situations. Before you bring your new pet home, make sure you survey your home for potential dangers.

### **Indoor hazards**

- Know which plants are toxic and place them out of reach, or replace them with nontoxic plants.
- Keep all medications, including any pet supplements, in a safe area the animal cannot access.
- Put bathroom trash cans up high where your dog cannot get into them. Sanitary supplies and used razors are only two of the hazards here.
- Keep cleaning supplies in high cupboards or use childproof latches to secure lower cupboards.
- Be careful around furniture. A rocking chair can harm a pet's tail or leg, and a curious puppy or kitten may crawl under an open recliner or sofa bed.
- Electrical cords are a big danger to puppies and kittens, who often chew on them while playing. This can cause burns in the mouth, electrical shock, or death by electrocution. Tie up loose electrical cords and keep them out of sight.
- Cords for drapery and blinds can cause strangulation.
- Keep fishing line, hooks, and lures stored out of reach.
- Keep doors and windows closed. Keep screens on windows and sliding glass doors securely fastened and in good repair, to keep your puppy from falling through or escaping.
- Close off stairwells with a baby gate.
- Many dogs will eat cat feces from the litter box if given the chance. Cat litter can cause an intestinal obstruction, and any intestinal worms the cat has may be passed on to the dog. One solution may be to put the litter box behind a baby gate, either in a separate room or in a closet with the gate across the doorway. The gate can be raised up from the floor to allow the cat to go under it, unless the dog is able to go under it also. If the cat cannot jump over the gate easily, a stepstool beside the gate can help.
- Tobacco products, including nicotine gum and patches, contain substances that can be toxic or fatal.



### **Outdoor hazards**

- Do not leave your puppy outside unsupervised. To prevent your puppy from wandering, you will need to either build an outdoor kennel or provide secure fencing that your puppy cannot jump over or dig under.
- Some outdoor plants and trees can be toxic to dogs. Cocoa bean mulch can be toxic to dogs. Some dogs chew and swallow landscaping stone, which can cause dangerous intestinal blockage.
- Make sure all gasoline, oil, paint, lawn fertilizers, insecticides, and auto supplies are placed into secure containers, out of reach. Be especially careful with antifreeze and rat poison, both of which taste good to dogs and both of which can be deadly if ingested.
- Pools, ponds, and hot tubs should be covered or fenced off. Drainpipes can also pose problems.
- Fire rings, barbecues, and other heat or fire sources pose the potential of causing burns.
- Walk around your property and look for other areas or items that could be a hazard to your puppy, such as broken glass, exposed nails, or other sharp objects.

