

## Puppy Proofing Your Home

Puppies are like babies; they're lively, curious and they teethe. This can lead them into serious trouble unless you take preventative measures.

Remember your puppy has a lower vantage point than yours, like a baby who has begun to crawl, and may be attracted to things you cannot see when you are standing. It is practically impossible to completely puppy-proof your home against accidents, but here are a few suggestions to add to your puppies safety:

- Confine your puppy to a safe area inside, remember to keep doors and windows closed and/or screened securely.
- Always keep your puppy in view or on a leash. They will investigate, wander about and possibly get into mischief. This is especially important for housetraining and catching any house soiling (hopefully before it occurs).
- Keep your puppy off balconies, upper porches or high decks.
- Securely store cleaning supplies, detergent, bleach, paint, fertilizer, disinfectants, insect and rodent poisons, and antifreeze safely out of the reach of your puppy.
- Remove poisonous houseplants or place them in hanging baskets out of the reach of your puppy.
- Keep toilet lids down. Puppies may play in or drink the water. They could be hurt by the lid closing on them.
- Unplug, remove or cover any electrical cords in your puppy's confinement area. DO NOT use electric blankets or heating pads in our puppy's crate or bed. Cover electric outlets with plug covers when not in use.
- Check to see where your puppy is before closing any doors. This will help prevent injury from closing the door on them, or accidentally locking them into an unsafe area.
- Keep sewing supplies and small hardware out of your puppy's reach. Buttons, beads, needles, pins, balls of string or yarn and thread can potentially cause serious problems if ingested. The same goes for nails, staples, screws, paper clips, fishing lures and fishing line.

- Keep all plastic bags and six-pack beverage holders away from your puppy. The potential for eating the plastic or getting trapped and suffocating is great.
- Ribbons around your puppy's neck are not a good idea. They may become untied and the puppy may develop serious problems from ingestion.
- Keep all valuables and prized possessions out of the reach of your puppy. REMEMBER: puppies do not know which object is OK to chew and which objects are not. They think everything is fair game. It is your job to teach him/her the difference, which takes time. Punishing a puppy after he/she has chewed on your favorite book will only instill fear; instead, gently remove the object and give them something of theirs they can chew on.

### *Choosing Appropriate Toys for Your Puppy*

- As a general rule, watch your puppy when they play with a new toy for the first time. This will help you determine how safe the toy is for your pet.
- If your puppy can fit the whole toy into his/her mouth, the toy is too small.
- Do not allow your puppy to play with your old shoes or clothes. This means all your shoes and clothes will be fair game, in your puppy's eyes. Also, these may lead to ingestion and potential bowel obstruction.
- Be careful of toys with squeakers or attached parts. Your puppy may be able to tear these objects apart or off the toy and swallow them, also leading to the potential for obstruction or choking.
- Rawhide chews may also cause problems. After your pet has chewed on it for period of time, it will become soft and pliable. If your puppy swallows it, there is the potential for choking or bowel obstruction.