

Pet Care



Keep Pets Safe in Summer

Summer can promise great fun for pets and their humans alike. Keeping it fun means following certain precautions to protect your pet against higher temperatures and other hazards.

Just like humans, pets need plenty of fresh water, especially when it's hot outside. Ensure your pets always have access to clean water, both indoors and outdoors. Consider adding ice cubes to their water bowl to keep it cool throughout the day.

One of the most critical summer safety tips is to never leave your pet inside a parked car, even for a short time. Cars can quickly become like ovens in the summer heat, leading to heatstroke and even death in a matter of minutes. If you need to run errands, leave your pets at home where they're safe and comfortable.

When pets are outdoors, provide them access to shaded areas where they can rest and cool off. Whether it's a tree, a canopy or a covered porch, shade is essential for preventing overheating. If your pet spends time in a backyard, ensure there's a shelter or a doghouse where they can retreat from the sun.

Schedule outdoor activities such as walks or playtime during the cooler parts of the



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day, such as early morning or late evening. Avoid strenuous exercise during the hottest hours to prevent heat exhaustion or burns on your pet's paws from hot pavement.

If you're taking your pet swimming or near water, always supervise them closely. Not all pets are natural swimmers, so introduce them to water gradually and provide them with flotation devices if

needed. Rinse off chlorine or saltwater after swimming to avoid skin irritation.

Summer brings out insects like fleas, ticks and mosquitoes, which can transmit diseases and cause discomfort to pets. Use vet-approved flea and tick preventatives and consider insect repellents formulated specifically for pets. Check your pet regularly for any signs of pests and remove them

promptly.

While summer gatherings are fun, certain foods like onions, grapes, chocolate and alcohol can be toxic to pets. Keep human food and beverages out of reach, and remind guests not to feed your pets anything unfamiliar. Also, be mindful of hot grills and sharp BBQ utensils that can pose hazards.

Recognize the signs of heat-

stroke in pets, which include excessive panting, drooling, rapid heartbeat, weakness, vomiting and collapse. If you suspect heatstroke, move your pet to a cool area, offer water to drink, and seek immediate veterinary attention.

Following these summer safety tips can help your pets enjoy the season while keeping them healthy and safe from common summer hazards.

The Art of Playing with Cats

Playing with your cat is not just a source of entertainment; it's a vital part of keeping them mentally and physically stimulated.

Cats are natural hunters and explorers, and engaging them in playtime can mimic these instincts while fostering a strong bond between you and your furry companion.

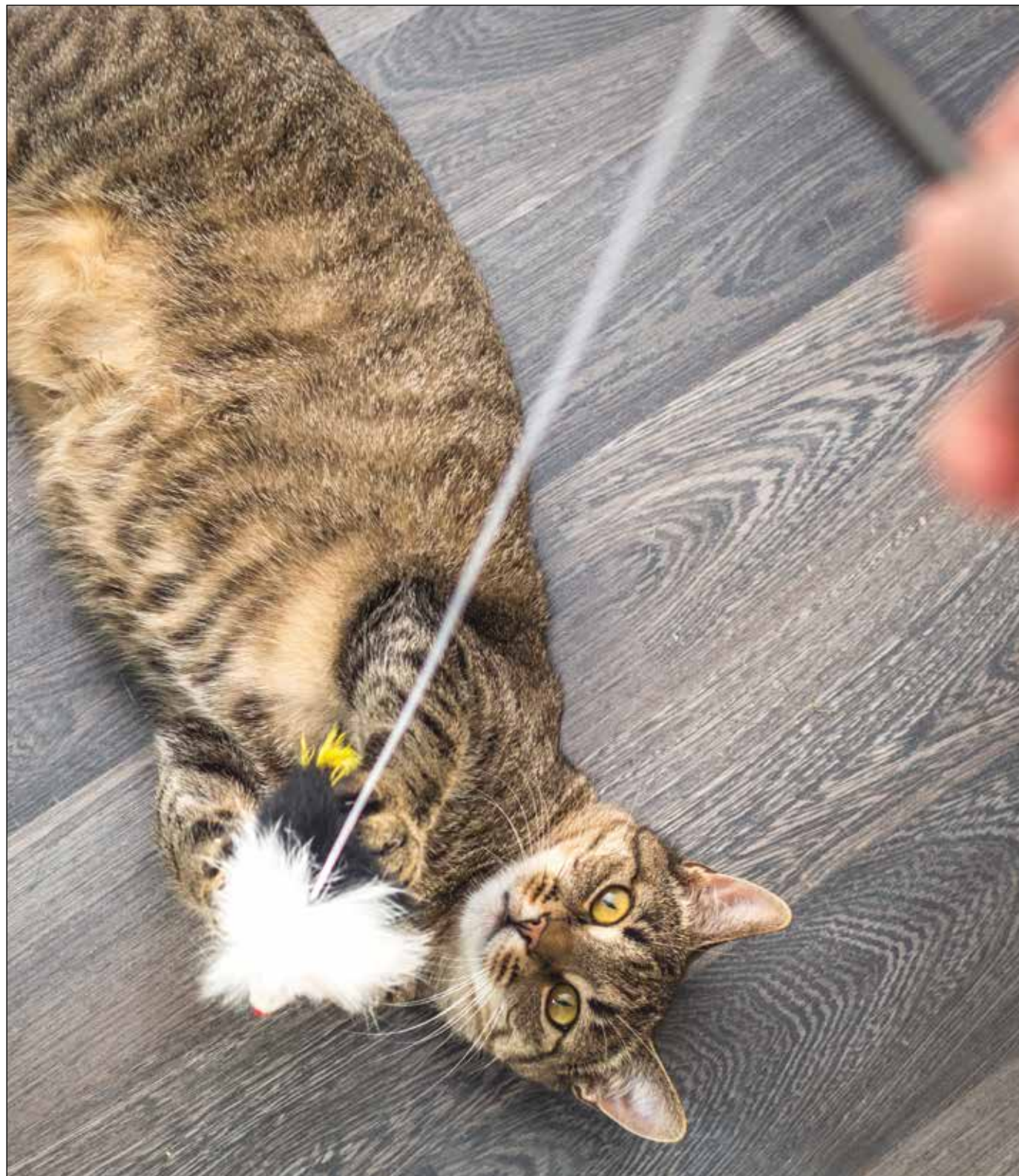
CAT GAMES AND TOYS

Here are some games that are enjoyable for cats but beneficial for their overall well-being.

Toys that mimic prey are particularly enticing for cats. Wand toys with feathers, strings or small stuffed animals at the end can simulate the thrill of hunting. You can move these toys around to encourage your cat to stalk, pounce and engage in playful swatting.

Laser pointers can provide endless entertainment for cats. The moving laser dot mimics prey, encouraging your cat to chase and leap around. However, do not ever shine the laser directly into your cat's eyes as this could cause eye damage.

Puzzle toys or treat balls that dispense treats as your cat plays with them can be mentally stimulating. These toys encourage problem-solving skills and keep your cat engaged while rewarding them with treats, making play-



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time both fun and rewarding.

Providing vertical spaces for your cat to explore and climb can satisfy their natural urge to perch and observe their surroundings. Cat trees with

scratching posts, tunnels, and perches offer a variety of activities for your cat to enjoy. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals reminds cat owners

that a cat needs to scratch as it pulls off the old outer nail sheath. Scratching posts should be at least three feet high and sturdy enough that it won't wobble. ASPCA recom-

mends covering it with a rough material such as burlap or tree bark.

SAY NO TO YARN

Few cat images are as iconic as a kitten playing with a ball of yarn, but it's actually dangerous for them. Cats are attracted to string-like objects because they resemble prey items such as snakes or insects. However, playing with loose yarn, string or thread can pose serious risks to your cat's health.

Cats may accidentally swallow yarn or string while playing, especially if it's dangling loosely. Ingested string can cause intestinal blockages or choking, leading to severe health complications that may require emergency veterinary care.

Cats may become entangled in long strings or threads, leading to injuries such as strangulation or cuts. Avoid leaving string-like objects unattended where your cat can access them freely.

Chewing on string or yarn can also result in dental problems for cats. Frayed threads or fibers can get caught in their teeth or gums, leading to discomfort or dental infections.

To keep your cat safe during playtime, opt for toys specifically designed for cats that do not pose ingestion or entanglement risks. Supervise play sessions with interactive toys to ensure your cat's safety and always store string-like items securely out of your cat's reach when not in use.

Preventing Dog Bites

Even the nicest dog has been known to bite, especially if they are scared or cornered.

Dogs are beloved companions for many people, offering loyalty, companionship and joy. However, dogs are animals with their own instincts and behaviors. Understanding how to prevent dog bites is essential for the safety of both humans and animals.

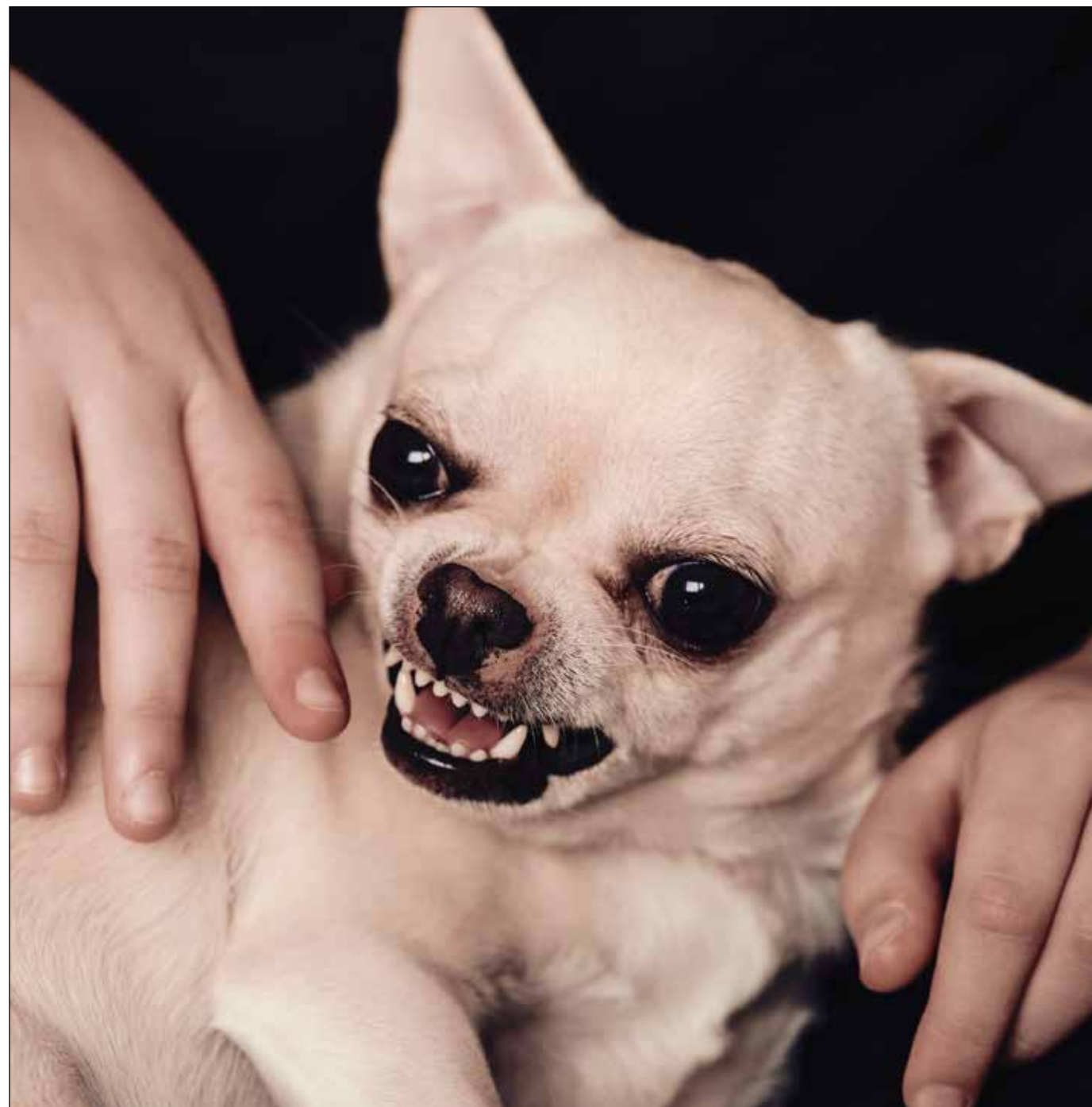
The Centers for Disease Control reports that more than 4.5 million people in the U.S. are bitten by dogs each year and at least half of those are children. More than 800,000 of those people seek medical care.

Any dog, regardless of breed, can bite, the American Veterinary Medical Association says. It's not the breed, but the dog's individual history and behavior that matters. They list many reasons why a dog might bite including stress, defending its territory, fear, feeling threatened, protecting something or someone, illness or play.

PREVENTING BITES

Proper socialization is key to reducing the likelihood of aggressive behavior in dogs. Introduce your puppy to different people, animals and environments early on to help them feel comfortable and confident in various situations.

Basic obedience training is



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fundamental for all dogs. Teach commands like “sit,” “stay,” “come” and “leave it.” Training helps establish boundaries and communication, reducing the risk of misunderstandings or confrontations.

Always supervise interactions between your dog and unfamiliar people, especially

children. Educate others, particularly children, about approaching dogs calmly and respectfully.

Learn to recognize signs of stress or discomfort in your dog, such as growling, barking excessively, showing teeth or trying to hide. These signs indicate that your dog is uncomfortable and may bite if

the stressor continues.

Identify situations that may trigger fear or aggression in your dog and avoid them whenever possible. For example, if your dog is uncomfortable around other dogs, choose walking routes or parks where encounters can be minimized.

Ensure your dog has a safe

and quiet space where they can retreat if they feel overwhelmed or need alone time. Teach family members and visitors to respect your dog's space when they retreat to these areas.

Spaying or neutering your dog can reduce certain types of aggressive behavior, especially in males. Consult your veterinarian to determine the best time for this procedure.

RESPONDING TO A BITE

If a dog bite occurs, assess the severity of the injury. For minor bites that break the skin but are not severe, clean the wound with soap and water and apply an antiseptic.

For more serious bites, especially those that cause deep puncture wounds, heavy bleeding or signs of infection, seek medical attention immediately. Dog bites can lead to infections or require stitches.

If the dog is unfamiliar or its vaccination status is unknown, try to gather information about the dog and its owner. This information will be important for medical treatment and reporting purposes.

Depending on your location, dog bites may need to be reported to local animal control authorities. Cooperate with authorities and provide accurate information about the incident.

After a dog bite, take steps to prevent future incidents. This may include additional training for your dog, avoiding similar situations or using muzzles or restraints when necessary.

Spotting Signs of Illness in Fish

Keeping fish as pets can be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. However, like any living creature, fish can fall ill.

Recognizing the signs of illness early on contributes to the health and well-being of your aquatic companions.

COMMON SYMPTOMS

Pay attention to any sudden changes in your fish's behavior. This could include lethargy, loss of appetite, hiding or unusual swimming patterns. Changes in behavior can indicate underlying stress or health issues. The American Veterinary Medical Association warns that fish might start swimming upside down or appear disoriented.

Inspect your fish regularly for physical signs of illness. Look for abnormalities such as lesions, growths, discoloration, fin rot, cloudy eyes or excessive mucus on the body or gills. These symptoms can be indicative of infections or parasitic infestations.

Watch for signs of respiratory distress in your fish, such as rapid breathing, gasping at the water's surface, or spending excessive time near air stones or filters. Respiratory problems can be caused by poor water quality, infections or gill parasites.

If your fish is swimming erratically, tilting to one side or struggling to maintain bal-



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ance, it could be a sign of swim bladder disorder or other internal issues. Swim bladder problems can affect buoyancy and normal swimming behavior.

A loss of color or vibrancy in your fish, along with a decreased appetite, can indicate stress, nutritional deficiencies or systemic health problems. Healthy fish should have vibrant colors and a healthy appetite.

CARING FOR A SICK FISH

If you suspect that one of your fish is ill, consider isolating it in a quarantine tank. This can help prevent the spread of disease to other fish in the main aquarium.

Test the water parameters in your aquarium, including temperature, pH, ammonia, nitrite and nitrate levels. Poor water quality can stress fish and make them more susceptible to illness. Perform partial

water changes as needed to maintain water quality.

If you're unsure about the cause of your fish's illness or if the symptoms persist, seek advice from a veterinarian who specializes in aquatic animals or consult with knowledgeable staff at a reputable aquarium store. They can guide diagnosis and treatment options.

Based on the diagnosis, follow any treatment recommen-

dations provided by a veterinarian or experienced aquarist. Treatments may include medications, changes in water parameters or adjustments to diet and feeding habits.

Keep a close eye on your fish during treatment. Monitor their behavior, appetite and physical appearance for improvements or worsening symptoms. Adjust treatment protocols as necessary based on observations.

Finding the Perfect Pet Retreat

Even pets need pampering and vacation time. Pet resorts and retreats are overshadowing traditional kennel options as people want to ensure the well-being and happiness of their furry companions.

Whether you're planning a vacation, facing a busy work schedule or need temporary care for your pet, selecting the right pet resort can provide a positive experience for you and your beloved animal.

Here are essential factors to consider.

FACILITY FEATURES

A reputable resort should provide comfortable and clean accommodations for pets, including secure enclosures or kennels, cozy bedding and ample space for exercise and play.

Prioritize your pet's safety by checking the resort's safety protocols and security measures. Ensure the facility is well-maintained, has secure fencing or enclosures and follows strict procedures for handling emergencies or medical situations. Ask about staff training in pet care, CPR and first aid.

The quality of care your pet receives depends on the expertise and compassion of the



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staff. Inquire about the qualifications, experience and training of the resort's staff members, including caregivers, trainers and veterinary professionals. Observe how the staff interacts with pets during your visit to assess their friendliness and attentiveness.

WELLNESS

If your pet enjoys socializing with other animals, choose a

resort that offers supervised group play or socialization sessions. Ensure that the facility assesses pets for compatibility and provides separate areas for different sizes or temperaments of animals to prevent conflicts and ensure a positive social experience.

Verify the resort's health and wellness policies, including vaccination requirements, parasite control measures and

cleanliness standards. A reputable resort will require up-to-date vaccinations to protect all pets from contagious diseases and maintain a healthy environment.

EVALUATING A RESORT

Read reviews, testimonials and recommendations from other pet owners about their experiences with the resort. Positive reviews regarding

cleanliness, staff care, pet happiness and overall satisfaction are indicators of a reliable and caring facility.

Schedule a visit before making a reservation. Inspect the accommodations, play areas and overall environment. Observe how pets are cared for, interacted with and monitored. Ask questions and trust your instincts about the facility's suitability for your pet.

SPECIAL AMENITIES

Pet resorts offer a range of amenities. Many have designated play areas where pets can engage in supervised group play or individual exercise sessions. These areas may include outdoor yards, indoor playrooms or agility courses.

Grooming services are often available, including baths, brushing, nail trimming and coat conditioning. Experienced trainers may offer training programs at some resorts.

Others offer enrichment activities such as interactive toys, puzzle games, nature walks and social interactions with staff or other pets.

Many pet resorts have round-the-clock monitoring and security systems to ensure the safety and security of pets and prevent unauthorized access to the premises. Some modern pet resorts offer webcam access that allows pet owners to check on their pets remotely. This feature provides peace of mind and allows owners to see how their pets are doing while they are away.

Crafting Homemade Pet Treats

Pet store shelves are filled with pet treats, but nothing beats a snack lovingly made at home.

Creating snacks for your animal companions makes sure they're getting treats with only the most wholesome and nutritious ingredients.

Homemade pet treats are a fantastic way to pamper your pets while controlling the quality of ingredients they consume.

One of the primary advantages of homemade pet treats is the ability to tailor the ingredients to your pet's dietary needs. Commercial treats may contain additives, preservatives or fillers. By making treats at home, you have full control over the ingredients, allowing you to prioritize freshness and nutritional value.

DOG TREATS

For canine companions, there are numerous easy recipes to try. A basic recipe might include ingredients like whole wheat flour, eggs and peanut butter. You can combine these ingredients to form a dough, cut it into shapes using cookie cutters, and bake until golden brown. Homemade dog biscuits can be a hit, and you can experiment with adding ingredients like pumpkin, carrots, or oats for added flavor and nutrients.



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Some human foods are dangerous for dogs. Avoid alcohol, chocolate, fruit seeds or pits, avocado, broccoli, coffee grounds, grapes and raisins.

CAT TREATS

Cats have more specific dietary requirements, but homemade treats can still be a

part of their snack routine. A simple recipe might involve mixing canned tuna or salmon with a small amount of cooked quinoa or brown rice. Form the mixture into small balls or shapes and refrigerate for a cool, tasty treat.

Remember to avoid ingredients that are toxic to cats,

such as onions, garlic, or certain spices.

MAKING TREATS

Be aware of any allergies or sensitivities your pet may have and choose ingredients accordingly. Ensure that treats are appropriately sized to prevent choking hazards, especially for

smaller pets.

Homemade treats typically don't contain preservatives, so store them properly to maintain freshness. Store treats in airtight containers in the refrigerator to prolong their shelf life. You can freeze treats for longer storage, especially if you make a large batch. Remember to label treats with the date of preparation for reference.

Creating homemade treats for your pets can be a fun and rewarding experience that strengthens the bond between you and your furry friends. Involve your family members in the treat-making process, and consider making treats as gifts for other pet owners. Homemade treats can also be an excellent way to celebrate special occasions or milestones in your pet's life.

RECIPE

The American Kennel Club shares the following recipe for a bacon-flavored dog treat using a silicone pyramid pan:

Ingredients

1/2 package of bacon
2 eggs
150 grams of gluten-free flour
Water (to thin)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Blend the bacon and eggs.
3. Add flour. Stir in water if the batter needs to thin.
4. Smooth the batter over the baking mat and bake for 8 minutes.
5. Once cooled, cut the treats into bite-sized pieces or dump out.

Purchasing Pet Prescriptions

Caring for pets can be expensive, especially if they are ill or have chronic health conditions. One way to carefully manage a budget is in the choice of where you purchase pills and medicine for pets.

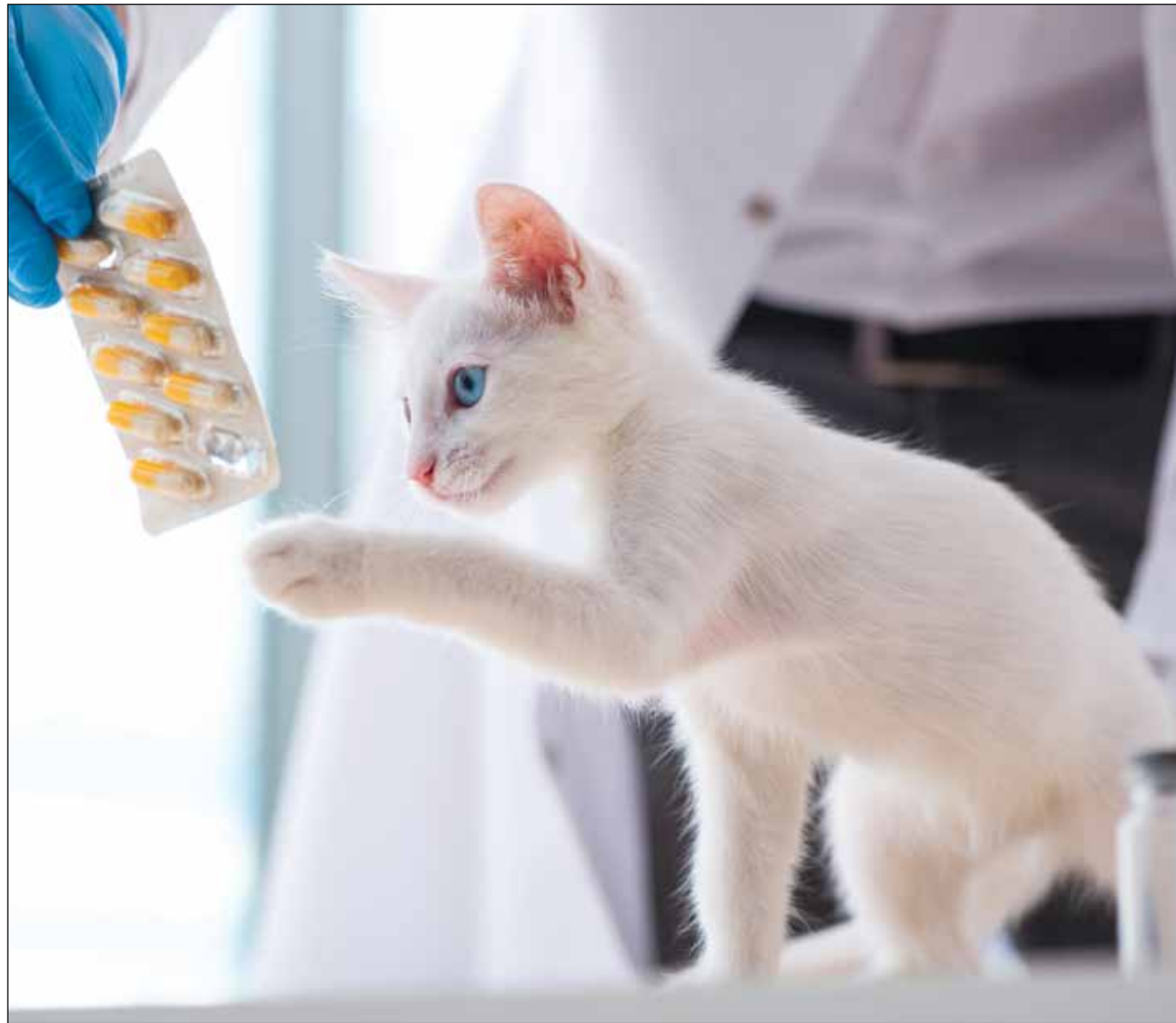
Even the American Veterinary Medical Association says medication can be one place where a pet owner might be able to save some money, though it still must be done with caution and obtained from reliable sources.

HAVE A PRESCRIPTION

One crucial aspect of purchasing pet medication is having a valid prescription from a licensed veterinarian. Just like in human medicine, certain medications for pets require a prescription due to their nature, potential side effects and dosage considerations.

Veterinarians play a vital role in diagnosing pet health issues, prescribing the appropriate medication, and monitoring treatment progress. Pet owners should never attempt to self-diagnose or administer prescription drugs without professional guidance.

AVMA also warns against giving human medications to pets as it could prove fatal or cause



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lasting, harmful side-effects.

SOURCES FOR PURCHASING MEDICATION

The primary and most reliable sources for pet medications are veterinary clinics and pharmacies affiliated with licensed veterinarians. These establishments ensure that medications are genuine, properly labeled, and dispensed with accurate instructions.

While some reputable online pet pharmacies exist, pet own-

ers should exercise caution and research thoroughly before making purchases. Look for pharmacies accredited by organizations like the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) or Vet-VIPPS (Veterinary-Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites) accredited pharmacies. Avoid purchasing from unverified sources or websites that offer prescription drugs without requiring a prescription.

Many pet supply stores carry a range of over-the-counter

medications and supplements for pets. While these products can be convenient for minor issues like flea treatments or vitamins, prescription medications should still be obtained through proper veterinary channels.

In cases where a specific dosage or formulation is required, compounding pharmacies can customize medications as per veterinary prescriptions. Ensure that compounding pharmacies adhere to quality and safety standards.

IDENTIFYING SCAMS

Pet owners should be cautious of potential scams or counterfeit medications, especially when purchasing online. Here are some red flags to watch out for:

Legitimate pharmacies will always ask for a valid prescription from a veterinarian for prescription medications. Avoid websites that sell prescription drugs without this requirement.

Be wary of significantly discounted prices compared to standard rates. Extremely low prices may indicate counterfeit or substandard products.

Reliable online pharmacies provide clear contact information, including a physical address and phone number. Avoid websites with vague or incomplete contact details.

Be cautious of unsolicited emails or advertisements promoting pet medications. Stick to reputable sources and avoid clicking on suspicious links.

Research online pharmacy reviews, customer feedback, and ratings to gauge the reputation and reliability of the seller.

The AVMA warns against purchasing from pharmacies outside the U.S. that might sell non-FDA approved medications that are illegal in the U.S. They explain that some online pharmacies have been found to sell counterfeit medications or pills that don't contain any medication.

Being informed, vigilant and discerning when purchasing pet medication helps maintain your pet's health and minimizes the risk associated with counterfeit or substandard products.