

## You and Your Pet

According to the PDSA, in 2019, **50%** of UK adults owned a pet! Of this number, 24% of adults are cat owners and 26% are dog owners. This means there are approximately **10.9 million** pet cats and **9.9 million** pet dogs currently in the UK.

Here's our quick and easy factsheet to answer some of your questions you may have around dog walking and how to keep your pets entertained indoors. There's also some information of foods and plants to be careful of around your pets.

### **Dog Walking**

As restrictions have now been lifted on the amount of times per day we can exercise, this means you and your furry friends can get outside and enjoy the outdoors much more.

For those who can't get out to exercise their dogs due to being key workers or isolating, looking at the services provided by a dog walker may be your option.

#### **Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG).**

These are as follows:

- Handover of dogs must occur in a space large enough to allow for appropriate social distancing as set out by the Government.
- If dogs from Covid-19 infected or self-isolating households are being walked, they should be walked after all other dogs.
- Dogs from different households can be walked together at the same time
- The walker should ensure both themselves and the dogs they are walking adopt social distancing measures e.g. dogs of other people should be kept on leads at all times to prevent them running up to other people unless in a secure, safe area.
- Dogs should only be walked locally
- If a vehicle is use for transport, the vehicle and any equipment should be cleaned and disinfected between dogs and especially after the transport of dogs from Covid-19 infected/self-isolating households.
- Dog walkers should use their own equipment to walk someone else's dogs.



The CFSG have also devised this helpful infographic that provides advice for a 'Handover Protocol' to be used when walking someone else's dog. Take a look below:

## Pets and Coronavirus (COVID-19):

13.05.20

### Walking someone else's dog



Pets provide invaluable companionship, especially at this time. For many dogs, going out for a walk is an important part of their daily routine. The measures put in place to control Coronavirus means that lots of owners who are shielded, vulnerable, over 70s or unwell will not be able to walk their dogs and also as some people go back to work they may need to rely on others to help them. If you have offered to walk someone else's dog here is some guidance to help you do it safely.

#### When walking someone else's dog:

- Consider each individual situation and how to safeguard the person you are assisting.
- Agree the process in advance including time and duration of walk.
- Start and finish your walk from the owner's home and stay local.
- Find a way to collect and return the dog securely, in a way which maintains a two-metre distance between you and minimises any time spent in the owner's home.
- If walking dogs from an infected or vulnerable household, do not mix them with dogs from other households and walk them after all other dogs.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds using soap and water before leaving your home.
- Use a different lead to the owner's.
- Ask someone from the household to open and close the doors for you.
- Don't handle anything else, such as your phone, during any time of contact.
- Where possible, minimise touching the dog.
- Maintain your social distance while walking, keep to quiet areas.
- Wash the lead with soap and water once the dog has been returned.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds using soap and water as soon as you get home.

There are no confirmed instances of transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19) from pets to people. However, the virus could be passed from person to person via a surface such as a dog's fur, collar and lead.

#### When walking a shielded person's dog, it is especially important to protect their already compromised health:

- Avoid any contact with the occupants of the home – maintain at least two metres distance.
- Keep the dog on a lead to avoid them coming into contact with anyone or other pets.
- Wipe the dog with a disposable pet-safe wipe or clean, damp cloth before returning to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus to the owner.
- Avoid driving to a location to walk and instead use the local area.

#### When walking a dog from a household where people have or are suspected of having Coronavirus, it's especially important to protect yourself and others:

- Avoid any contact with the occupants of the home – maintain at least two metres distance.
- Wipe the dog with a disposable pet-safe wipe or clean, damp cloth before the walk.
- Keep the dog on a lead to avoid pets and other people touching them in case the virus is on their fur.
- Take care when cleaning up after them; use a sturdy poo bag and dispose of it as soon as possible.

**To find out more visit: [www.cfsg.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.cfsg.org.uk/coronavirus)**

This information may be subject to change so please regularly check Government guidance.



**Other helpful infographics have also been devised by the CFSG as listed below to help you out with your pet:**

- [Comfort in Crisis: Pets and Coronavirus \(Covid-19\)](#)
- [Keeping pets happy and healthy during the outbreak](#)
- [Advice to help owners worried about their pet](#)

- ['In an emergency' poster for your home](#)

## **Animal Boarding**

If you require the services of a boarding facility, please look at the **Animal Licensing** page on our website (<http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/>) for registers of all of our licensed premises who may be able to offer their services. (Please note, any costs incurred with using these facilities will be the responsibility of the pet owner as normal).

## **Enrichment**

Enrichment is a great way to provide mental and even sometimes physical stimulation to our pets. These ideas are great if you have a particularly bouncy or lively young dog or a dog that just loves to play.

## **Dogs**

Here are some great ideas to get your dog using its brain:

- **Snuffle Mats** → These are great to provide enrichment for your dog. These can be made easily at home with fairly limited materials (there are lots of great tutorials on YouTube on how to make your own Snuffle Mat) and will really get your dog working hard for their reward. Once you have your Snuffle Mat, bury some of your dog's favourite treats in the mat and let your dog try to find them.



- **Treasure Hunts** → Much like Snuffle Mats, this will get your dog busy using its great scent ability to find hidden treats. You can either hide treats around the house or garden or in items such as old cardboard boxes, toilet roll tubes, brown paper, the possibilities are endless!

- You can always use your dog's own kibble (dried food) to hide in their enrichment.
- **Play Games** → Dogs really are man's best friend and they love spending time with you. Try to devote some time each day which you spend playing with your dog with their favourite toy or a new toy. This will build an even stronger bond between you and your dog and will undoubtedly tire your dog out.



- **New Tricks** → Dogs are very fast learners so why not try to teach your dog some new tricks? Check out Dog's Trust website for some videos to be used for Doggy Training School. Consider using a clicker and treats to positively reinforce the behaviour.

## Cats

- **Tricks** → "You can't teach cats to do tricks" Wrong! Why not try teaching your cats some new tricks using a clicker to make the behaviour and then reward them with some of their food or a treat.
- **Climbing Enrichment** → Cats love climbing so why not try to create your own climbing equipment for your cat if they don't already have one which they can climb up and also have a space underneath to hide in. Always make sure the equipment is safe for your cat and does not cause any injury.
- **Food Enrichment** → Why not make your cat's mealtimes more exciting and put their food in a feeder ball or a toy which they have to work to get the food out. This will make your cat think even more and get them working.



Visit the Blue Cross website [here](#) for more information on how to keep small animals and horses entertained.

- Always ensure you supervise your pet when playing with a new toy or enrichment to keep them safe
- Always follow the guidance regarding the number of treats to be given.
- Never force your pet to do something they don't want to do
- Always use positive reinforcement (reward based training) when training your pet

## Dangerous Plants

Some dogs, when bored or stressed, will often end up getting themselves into mischief, especially in the garden with all the different plants that are around.

Here is a list of the plants you should be mindful that are poisonous to dogs:

### Dogs

- Apricot kernals
- Azalea
- Castor bean (*Ricinus communis*)
- Daffodil
- Elephants' ear (*Bergenia*)
- Grapevines, *Vitis*
- Jessamines (*Cestrum*)
- Jimson weed (*Datura*)
- Larkspur (*Delphinium*)
- Mistletoe
- Deadly nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*)
- Oleander
- Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)
- Ragwort
- Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*)
- Yew (*Taxus baccata*)
- Rhododendron



### Cats

Some plants both garden and indoor plants are also poisonous to cats. Take a look at the guides created by **Cats Protection** about which plants can be deadly for your cat:



**Cats Protection**

## Cats: Poisonous flowers advice

– a visual guide to keeping your pet safe

Some flowers are toxic or harmful to cats when brushed against or nibbled. Take a look at our flora-danger list and keep your bouquets feline-friendly.

**Lily**  
All parts; stamen, pollen, flower and bulb – and water in the vase

**Chrysanthemum**  
If flowers eaten

**Dumb cane**  
If eaten

**Other frequently used bouquet flowers**  
Sweet pea, Poppy, Peony, Delphinium, Iris, Cornflower, Marigold, Ferns, Ivy

**What should I do if I think my cat's eaten a poisonous flower or plant?**

**Do**

- Take them to a vet immediately
- Give your vet information about what you think your cat has consumed
- Keep other pets away from the source

**Do not**

- Wait for symptoms or assume they will go away
- Try to make your cat vomit or feed them salt water
- Panic

**Symptoms of poisoning**

The symptoms of poisoning aren't always obvious and they can vary but here are a few of the most common signs:

- Increased thirst
- Confused/uncoordinated
- Drooling
- Difficulty breathing
- Fitting/seizures
- Vomiting

**Prevention is better than a visit to the vets!**  
For more details of these plants go to [www.cats.org.uk/dangerous-plants](http://www.cats.org.uk/dangerous-plants)

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## Cats: Poisonous indoor plants advice – a visual guide to keeping your pet safe

Some indoor plants are toxic or harmful to cats when brushed against or nibbled. Take a look at our flora-danger list and keep your house feline-friendly.

### Lily

Most commonly ingested from cats getting pollen on their fur and then licking it off. But all parts are toxic; stamen, pollen, flower and water in the vase



### Dumb cane If eaten



**Others to watch out for**  
Indoor plants:  
Umbrella plant,  
Rubber plant  
Christmas plants:  
Poinsettia, Holly,  
Mistletoe

### What should I do if I think my cat's eaten a poisonous flower or plant?

#### Do

- Take them to a vet immediately
- Give your vet information about what you think your cat has consumed
- Keep other pets away from the source

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- Wait for symptoms or assume they will go away
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## Dangerous Foods

### Dogs

Although it might be tempting to throw some treats to your dogs whilst at the dinner table or when having a snack, bear in mind that many human foods are dangerous and can even be fatal to dogs.

Some of the foods you should keep to yourself and away from your dog are:

- Onions, garlic and chives
- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Chocolate (especially dark)



- Raisins
- Grapes
- Small, cooked bones
- Peaches and plum stones
- Macadamia nuts
- Corn on the cob
- Xylitol sugar substitute (found in chewing gum, reduced fat and sugar foods, human toothpaste)

## Cats

Likewise with cats, many human foods can be poisonous so keep the following foods away from your cat:

- Alcohol
- Chocolate
- Tea, coffee and energy drinks
- Cheese and milk
- Fat trimmings
- Raw eggs, raw meat and fish
- Grapes and raisins
- Onions and garlic
- Xylitol sugar substitute



**If you suspect your dog or cat has consumed any of these foods then contact your veterinary surgeon immediately and they will advise you on the best course of action in this matter.**

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All of the information above and more information can be found at the following pages:

<https://www.cats.org.uk/help-and-advice/home-and-environment/dangerous-plants>

<https://www.gardenersworld.com/plants/plants-toxic-to-dogs/>

<https://www.vets-now.com/2017/01/foods-poisonous-to-dogs/>

<https://www.vets-now.com/2017/02/foods-poisonous-to-cats/>

<http://www.cfsg.org.uk/coronavirus/SiteAssets/SitePages/Home/4th%20July%202020%20CFSG%20Animal%20Business%20Guidance.pdf>

<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/news-events/news/2020/advice-for-dog-owners-who-need-to-self-isolate-and-stay-at-home>

<https://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/indoor-games-for-pets-coronavirus>