

# AROMATHERAPY *for* PETS



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# Aromatherapy for Pets

## What is Aromatherapy and Why is it Dangerous for Pets?



Aromatherapy is the use of essential oils from plants and other sources that have scents to improve or achieve psychological and physical wellbeing. Aromatherapy has been done for centuries across global cultures. Aromatherapy is a traditional form of alternative medicine.

Aromatherapy uses blends of essential oils, plant resin extracts and has specific attributes associated with various scents. Essential oils are supposed to have specific therapeutic benefits to humans. The different smells (aromas), and the chemical constituents of the oils, can produce different emotional and physiological reactions. The smell is an important sense. It's even an integral part of our sense of taste. The olfactory nerve in the nose connects directly to the brainstem where the human and animal's most primitive and immediate reactions occur. The more undiluted the oil, the stronger the reaction, but essential oils are concentrated scent compounds.

Memory and emotion are strongly related to scent. Therefore, we always experience nostalgia when we smell a certain perfume or cologne or smell the scent of freshly baked chocolate cookies. Pleasant and familiar scents comfort us, and repugnant and decaying scents serve to repel and warn us. Stores use scent to convince us to linger and shop longer and realtors bake cookies for open houses to make a home seem more welcoming and therefore more likely to purchase the shown home. Scent memory can also be why your pet cringes at the door of the vet office or whenever you use a pine cleaner or antiseptic.

Pets, especially dogs and cats, have a heightened, more sensitive sense of smell compared to humans, thus many fragrances are potential irritants for them. Just like a human may feel ill or nauseated by a person wearing cologne or perfume, or have an allergic reaction to it, with lilies being the most common pet and human fragrance allergy as well as a toxic plant to our beloved pets, the same occurs with animals. With their more acute sense of smell, it can be hard for pets to not be overwhelmed at times by things and scents we find pleasant smelling. Aromatherapy is popular but it is not always safe, and it is not a way to treat illness or problems with our pets.

# What is Aromatherapy?

## Fragrance and Aromatherapy: A Brief History

The ancient Egyptians were one of the first cultures known to use essential oils to perfume themselves and their environments. Incense and fragrant oils were known in antiquity from China to the Indian subcontinent. Essential oils were used for medicinal purposes by cultures from the Ancient Greeks and Romans and written about by the famous physician Hippocrates. We know that Hippocrates ethics were sound and that a physician should “first do no harm,” but his science is now known to be questionable or wrong. Around 1000AD, a Persian philosopher, astronomer, poet and physician named Avicenna likely became the first man to collect the medical beliefs and formulary of the ancient world in his writing and created a new way of distilling that created a purer distilled product. Essential oils are not true oils. True oils are chemical bonds made from long chains of fatty acids. Olive oil and olive essential oil are two very different things and not interchangeable. Olive essential oil can be diluted in olive oil as a carrier oil, however. Essential oils are derived from certain fragranced volatile compounds within a plant.

Essential Oils were high in demand and created trade in the Dark Ages as they were a means to cover up the body odor and skin ailments that were common in a populace who thought bathing was bad (unlike the Romans and Greeks) and were the first time essential oils



were used to replace good hygiene. While some plant oils appeared to have some protective benefits, plant oils were used in “nosegays” to hide the stench of death and decay during the Black Plague and used by polite ladies when walking in areas of open sewage and poor hygiene. Monasteries in the medieval period educated herbalists and scripted texts related to what is now known as “holistic medicine” and the use of herbs and essential oils in the sick room. The famous metaphysician and physician Paracelsus lived during the 16<sup>th</sup> century and tried to apply both the study of alchemy, the precursor to modern chemistry to medicine. Paracelsus at least was right in stating that “the dose makes the poison” and that while his experiments using mercury did stop syphilis, it also harmed and killed the patient.



Modern use of essential oils as a treatment of physical or mental conditions started with a French chemist named Rene Maurice Gattefosse who in 1910 claimed to have treated a severe burn with lavandin- or essential oil of lavender. He gets the credit for

calling the modern usage of essential plant oils “Aromatherapy.” Modern research often explores the properties of categorized and isolated botanical compounds for medical use, which continues to this day. However, it must be noted that these fragrant compounds are not the same as those used in classical literature, even if they share the name. Food oils or fragrance oils that are classified and approved for the market even as food grades are permitted to contain synthetic, lab-produced aromatic compounds to emulate or enhance poor qualities of essential oil. Lemongrass Oil for example and even orange oil can have up to 75% of it come from synthetic fragrances added to oil or poor-quality oil. Poor-quality oils are enhanced with additional phenols and aromatics to improve and upsell. Another concern about essential oils is that they may contain contaminants such as pesticides or adulterants that make more serious issues arise. Our sense of smell and wanting pleasant aromas can expose us to chemicals. While humans are durable and have enzymes that can process the toxic effects of phenols, our pets do not, especially cats. They rely on their noses as a primary sense even more than we do.

Our pets are constantly using their sense of smell to interact with the environment and react to it accordingly. Our pet does not associate the smell of dandelions with childhood memories and comfort. Lavender that we use to calm them can oxidize and become an inhaled toxic material. And its only humans that find the smell of pumpkin spice mentally and physiologically arousing. These are inhaled irritants to cats and dogs. Some scents used in aromatherapy products can also be allergens to humans and our pets. Just because menthol and eucalyptus vapors help ease cough and comfort a child with a respiratory tract infection, it does not mean it's going to affect your pet the same way. Sometimes what we think will help can cause harm.

#### Animals Adversely Affected by Essential Oils

- Birds
- Cats
- Dogs (especially “flat-faced” or brachycephalic breeds such as pugs, Shih-Tzus, Chows, Pekingese, bulldogs, Boston and some terriers that have respiratory difficulties)
- Fish
- Guinea Pigs, Hamsters, Mice, Rats, and other “Pocket Pets”
- Rabbits
- Pregnant or newborn animals
- Older animals
- Chronically ill or disabled pets



Many people now want to not only use aromatherapy for themselves but on their pets to treat health and behavioral problems. Aromatherapy is not a true science and therefore an aromatherapist could have a two-hour education that comes from an essential oil company's MLM educational program for new representatives or be part of a holistic

medicine program. An integrated medicine veterinarian who has a DVM degree from an accredited college should be the only person you might reasonably consider treating your pet with any oil and even then, be smart and cautious. Aromatherapy cannot cure serious illnesses such as infections, metabolic problems or cancer.

However, if you are looking to find a miracle, aromatherapy promises man from claims that essential oils can literally be a panacea (from the Greek meaning "cure-all"). It can be easy to fall for official and well-assembled graphics, memes, and articles online that promise essential oils can cure ear infections, kill fleas and more. However, no science backs up aromatherapy.



Imagine a single oil or combinations of oils that claim to- “eases upset stomach, improves digestion, promotes easy breathing, repels insects, eases mental and emotional distress, calms the body and mind during times of nervousness, panic, restlessness, excitement, or hyperactivity, supports skin health, elevates the spirit when experiencing shyness, fear, irritability, anger, and other negatives, elicits tranquility and a sense of well-being, stimulated circulation and reducing pain, muscle spasms, and cramping has anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties and calms or decreases inflammation while it encourages restful sleep.” These are from various descriptions of the effects of just three essential oils on pets. If it sounds too good to be true, it’s because it is. Essential oils are not magical, not medicine, and not able to back up those appealing claims. Marketing sells them and these lovely-sounding promises cause pet poisonings.

Aromatherapy users often make custom blends of essential oils for their use with various methods of use such as topical application and massage by blending the oils with a “carrier oil” as most essential oils are too strong or can be irritating when undiluted by a carrier oil.

Aromatherapy is also provided by the inhalation or by bathing in a diluted aromatherapeutic product to elicit the reported therapeutic benefit. The oils can also be diffused into the environment via hydrosols (or flower waters), electronic diffusers, reeds used to absorb and diffuse the scents and now through many common items found in the health, beauty and home care sections of the supermarket. Aromatherapy has undergone very little scientific scrutiny and is largely based on folklore and tradition. It may be effective in helping with some minor health issues, but the effectiveness of some uses can be biased and use the power of suggestion. If someone believes a scented oil will ease a headache, the scent is more likely to do so. The placebo effect must be factored in when dealing with aromatherapy and just because a scent makes us happy or feel more “awake,” it does not mean it will have the same effect on our pets.

It may be nice to refresh the air and deal with the resulting lingering smell of a fresh cat poop or puppy pad clean up, but caring for your home, making sure your pet is healthy and hygienically and properly preventing pet behaviors that increase pet odor and behaviors that result in accidents that create lingering pet odor can help you not need to rely on products to cover up pet odor. Even your cleaning supplies fragrances can be a problem for your pet’s wellbeing even if they make the environment more pleasant for you. With the trend of leading “clean lifestyles”, we are exposing our pets to more essential oils more than ever and creating a health risk. It is possible to use more environmental and “green” or sustainable products and not risk our pet’s health from essential oil exposure or overexposure.

## The Manufacturing and Proper Use of Essential Oils



Essential oils are manufactured by taking raw plant material and using water or steam processing to distill the volatile plant oils out. The plants are heated with steam, water or both until the essential oils that are the source of the fragrance vaporizes. The oil condenses as it cools and is separated from the water. The Essential oils extracted from some varieties of a plant can have many different strengths

or properties than an oil extracted from another part of the plant. Ideally, if you insist on using an essential oil, regardless of the lack of evidence or safety of the, you should know the Latin botanical name of the markedly “safe” variety. Two oils from the same plant can come in multiple forms and a “Leaf Oil” versus a “Bark Oil” affects the senses in different ways. The more dilute aromatic compounds remain behind in the water used in the essential oil making process and depending on the conditions under which they are manufactured are either considered food grade, cosmetic grade (inedible) or waste products containing very little to no organic compounds as the plants are depleted of their scented oils. The wastewater from essential oils is called hydrosols and some hydrosols are just as toxic to pets as the undiluted essential oils.

All volatile aromatic plant oils are highly concentrated plant oils. Frankincense and other aromatherapy oils come from resins from the plant and ginger oil come from the roots of the ginger plants. Aromatic plant oils do not dissolve in water and therefore are diluted with other oils. Essential oils cannot be sprayed mixed with water unless a chemical dispersant is used. Oil extracts placed into alcohol-based are called tinctures and are very dangerous as they contain not only the oils but alcohol which cannot be tolerated by some humans and certainly not metabolized by our pets. Diffusers that fragrance a room by passive immersion in oil by reeds or by using a candle or electric warmer use air or heat to diffuse or spread the fragrance. Liquid potpourri oils are toxic to pets and children and animals should not be allowed near a tea light or an electric oil warmer. More and more homes are now using active diffusers or atomizers to add a pleasant essential oil to the air to fragrance a room. Active diffusers micronize the oil and send out particles of oil which can land on people and pets and make them sick.

# What Essential Oils are Dangerous to Pets?

Some of the most dangerous popular essential oils are:



- eucalyptus
- peppermint
- camphor
- spearmint
- wintergreen (also called methyl salicylate)
- tea tree
- rosemary
- juniper
- cedarwood
- pine
- basil
- calendula
- citronella
- cypress
- grapefruit
- juniper
- clove
- nutmeg
- cinnamon
- cassia
- oregano
- thyme
- sandalwood
- ylang-ylang
- thuja
- anise

- yarrow
- fir
- sea salt
- driftwood
- neem
- yew
- lily of the valley
- aloe
- citrus- such as sweet orange/lemon (d-limonene)
- bergamot
- lime
- tea tree
- lavender
- sweet birch
- marijuana/CBD
- myrtle
- rosemary
- spruce
- tansy
- helichrysum
- calamus
- goosefoot
- hyssop
- sassafras
- mugwort
- rue

- santolino
- santo palo
- terebinth
- savory
- boldo
- ivy
- holly
- fig
- rhubarb
- azalea
- sweat pea
- sweet flag
- iris
- geranium leaf
- hydrangea
- larkspur
- lemon verbena
- marjoram
- daisy
- chrysanthemum
- jonquil
- peony
- periwinkle
- rhubarb
- tarragon
- begonia

- apricot
- portulaca
- purslane

Some essential oils used mostly as flavorings or added to special cooking oils are also dangerous to pets such as garlic, onion or scallion oil.

The above list is by no means a complete list either.



There are popular aromatherapy diffused oils that are toxic to pets in even micro doses over time so a diffuser should never be allowed to operate for long periods of time or when pets or children are in the room. A good rule of thumb, or nose, as it maybe is “If you can smell it, the diffuser oil is present.” Essential oils are so concentrated that on average only a single drop of essential oil is added to 49 drops of a carrier oil for human use and some oils need to be diluted even more. One suggestion is that for pets a 1:449 ratio is used for safety. The oils are so potent that one drop of an essential oil diluted in 449 drops of a carrier oil is still effective. Even dry oil sprays often used for beauty care by humans contain dosages of essential oils that can be dangerous and the rice bran or other carrier oils in dry oil products allow the oils to be absorbed into the skin easily. Heavier or room temperature solid oils such as coconut or shea butter are harder to absorb on the skin, but a body lotion can still pose a threat. There are even alleged pet-approved or pet-safe carrier oils which can be used on a pet's skin which include borage seed oil, virgin or unrefined coconut oil, jojoba oil, avocado oil, aloe vera gel, sunflower oil, apricot kernel oil, sweet almond oil, grapeseed, and kukui nut oil. However, you'll notice that some of these oils are dangerous to pets or some from a plant that produces toxic essential oils to our pets like sunflower, avocado, aloe gel, which is not an oil even, and grapeseeds. Grapes and raisins kill pets so applying an oil made from the seeds of a poisonous food does not seem wise. Ingesting oils outside the food if applied to the skin while grooming can also make a pet ill and even coconut oil can act as a laxative and prevent a pet from getting enough nutrient from their food because the oil causes food to pass through without the protein and other nutrients being absorbed by the intestines before coming out. Oils can also cause pancreatitis in some pets and even edible coconut oil is 120 calories a spoonful so can contribute easily to a dog with diarrhea and an obesity problem. Carrier oils require caution as well

Too much oil is not good for our pets at all. Cats especially can have fatty livers that work poorly if they ingest too much fat and cats will imbibe carrier oils if possible due to their fastidious grooming habits. If they feel their hair feeling oily, they will obsess over that spot to remove the oil-sensation to feel clean and comfortable. Our pets can be allergic to the carrier oils as easily as they are to the essential oils diluted in them and the more a pet is exposed to a thing, the more likely an allergy can develop.

Some essential oils and plant oils are poisonous or toxic and should never be used. Even very diluted camphor, sweet birch, pennyroyal, and wintergreen all carry considerable health risks or dangers for example. Aromatic products such as tiger balm and even over-the-counter muscle rubs for sprains, strains, and arthritis often contain camphor, but it is in safe amounts if used exactly as described. Pennyroyal and blue and black cohosh essential oils can cause strong uterine and other muscle contractions and have traditionally been used as an abortifacient for this reason. Wintergreen oil or sweet birch oil can cause internal bleeding as it contains blood-thinning effects in tiny amounts and can cause liver failure in small doses as low as less than 5g per kg of weight. It is often used in muscle creams and such because it contains aspirin-like compounds called salicylate. Aspirin ingestion kills hundreds of domestic pets yearly. "Hot oils" are ginger and essential oil of cinnamon or cassia bark (as common cinnamon substitute often sold as cinnamon) and can be powerful irritants and can cause burns and painful skin eruptions if not very weakly diluted. People with sensitive skin can react to even very diluted irritant essential oils.



No essential oils should never be ingested by mouth, or dropped into the nose, instilled in the eyes, or applied undiluted to the skin. The eye dilating and poisonous compounds of the plant belladonna in the nightshade family was once used as an eyedrop to dilate the pupils of women to make them meet the ideal Italian beauty standards of the time. It was not a safe practice as the tincture or oil of belladonna contains dangerous chemical compounds. People who have impaired immune systems, have asthma or COPD and anyone prone to nose bleeds need to exercise discipline and try to avoid inhaling essential oils dispersed into the air by incense, vaporizer or diffusers

Not only should you not eat or drink essential oils or aromatherapy products (with the exceptions only being food-grade pure hydrosols such as the rose water, mint water, or orange blossom waters sold in ethnic groceries and created to be safe for food use and a common ingredient in Middle Eastern and Indian deserts such as Greek baklava, Iranian faloodeh or Indian kulfi ice cream which use small quantities of floral waters in the recipes) and in small quantities, but you should also avoid them around your pets.



You should not place volatile essential oils inside your body or your pets. Essential oils should not be inserted into ears as well or used internally such as using essential oils in the vagina. They can not only irritate the tissues or cause harm, they can unbalance the natural pH or acidity of the tissues and trigger a serious overgrowth of bacteria or yeast. On online marketplaces, you can find gallnut and essential oil “teas” and vaginal suppositories that claim to tighten and tone the tissue but what occurs is that the tannins in the gall nut cause swelling and irritation and any so-called “benefit” comes from the harm such natural products cause.

Aromatherapy is potentially dangerous for people, so it is more so a risk to our beloved pets. Cats cannot remove essential oils from their bodies that contain polyphenolic compounds. Without the enzymes to metabolize and eliminate phenols, they become toxic easily. Cats and essentials oils, in general, are a very bad combination and all essential oils, fragrances and mists are very dangerous or lethal to birds as well. The respiratory system of our feathered pets cannot tolerate particulates and mist and air fresheners, or our perfume can cause them to be unable to breathe and contract pneumonia. Cats easily get gastrointestinal upset and experience central nervous system depression and even liver damage from essential oils. Inhalation of essential oils causes aspiration pneumonia and often occurs when pet owners try to feed oils and the animal inhales some of the oil when swallowing causing it to get trapped in the lungs.

Animals metabolize and react differently to essential oils depending on the species. A growing concern seen by veterinarians is accidental poisonings from diffusing essential oils. As people start using essential oils, their enthusiasm for using oil causes their pet's health issues. Even lavender oil is problematic, especially for felines. Lavender oil can oxidize over time. These oxidized essential oils may smell pleasant still but can become strong respiratory irritants and cause heightened allergic responses.

Humans love tea tree oil. It's popular to be used in health and beauty items and for first aid as tea tree oil has some antimicrobial properties. However, it is used in great dilution even on humans and for cats and dogs, it is poisonous. Cats and dogs should not receive essential melaleuca oil in any form or concentration. Some well-meaning pet parents try to treat ear mites with tea tree or neem oil and cause their pet to become deaf. Never instill essential oils into the ear of a cat as they can damage cats' delicate eardrums and cause nerve damage. Never use oils on a cat or dog's eyes as well. You should also always speak to a veterinarian before using any essential oils on your pet or even in the environment, you share with your pet.

As cannabis legalization for medical and recreational use has occurred, so has pet poisoning from cannabis and CBD edibles and other cannabis products. Just because something is natural does mean it is safe for our pets and what may be beneficial for anxiety or pain for a person may cause severe illness in a pet. Many well-meaning pet parents forget that even if cannabis is legally obtained, it is still a potent substance and the essential oils in hash butters, tinctures and edibles can make a pet very ill. Dogs are prone to eating cannabis and can experience cannabis toxicity. The essential oils and chemical compounds in cannabis cause the same symptoms of many other plant-related poisonings. While there are even products designed for pets containing the non-psychoactive marijuana chemical CBD, THC is bad for dogs and even CBD products can come with the risk of having chemicals or flavorings in them that are not good for pets. Cannabis edibles and oils used in popular vaporizers should be stored in an area a pet cannot access at all. Cannabis products, including just CBD products, should be treated like human medicine and kept secure.



Many pet parents worry about what will happen to them in their pet ingests THC oil or edibles in states where it has not been legalized and their cat or dog ingests it. The pet owner will not have the police called on them or face charges. The vet should be told what the pet has eaten and is concerned with saving your pet's life

and providing the pet supportive care via IV hydration, observation, and any necessary treatments until the THC or toxins are eliminated. Just like if your pet ate a pill they should not have, the vet is not concerned with how or who the pill belonged to; they are there to save your pet. If your pet consumes cannabis, seek emergency vet care, do not be afraid. You are not the patient or the vet's concern - your pet is. Your pet has patient confidentiality of sorts and a vet sees a lot of pets each year that have gotten into things they should not, including THC/CBD combo gummies. While marijuana may be pleasant and even prevent nausea for humans, that same intoxication is not ever fun or good for our pets. It does the opposite in cats and dogs. It makes them vomit, dizzy, confused, anxious, have movement issues and makes them ill and miserable in general. They cannot metabolize or have the same brains as us so ensure your pet's safety around your medical or recreation THC and CBD products.

# What Should I Do If a Pet Accidentally Ingests Essential Oils?

As a good pet parent, you should always notice any changes in your pet's behavior. The common signs of essential oil poisoning are

- Smelling essential oils on their fur, skin, breath or vomit
- Difficulty breathing or signs of cognitive or neurological changes
- Drooling
- Fatigue and weakness
- Difficulty walking or stumbling, a drunken gait
- Muscle tremors or an increased startle response
- Pawing at the mouth or face
- Irritation, slobbering, drooling, and redness or burns on their lips, tongue, skin or gums
- Vomiting or Diarrhea

If your pet has been poisoned by essential oils and you are seeking emergency medical care- the proper steps for urgent care are as follows



If the oil is on your pet's fur or skin, wash it off immediately. Do not ever give your pet any treatments before taking them to emergency veterinary care without a vet's instructions and always take the oil or oils and any products that they have ingested or been overexposed to with you to the vet in its original packaging, even if chewed up or vomited up on, so the vet knows exactly what they're dealing with and can do the best treatment to detox and treat your pet.

Only when your pet is poisoned by a toxic ingredient does a pet need to “detox.” Mammal bodies are made to detoxify the blood and bodily organs by having working kidneys and livers. These organs are always detoxing in a healthy pet unless the poison is one a pet cannot metabolize. Cats have livers that are not designed well for removing some of the unusual toxins they can get into and dogs certainly do not have livers and kidneys like ours. Essential oils cannot detox a pet, they can do the opposite easily. Detoxification is a medical term, not a DIY buzzword.

Essential oils can be poisonous and as the popularity and the “back to nature fallacy” increases, the numbers of humans and pets being poisoned by essential oils is increasing, especially in children and household members with four legs whose parents did not secure the oils safely away from children and pets. Essential oils should always be secured and kept out of the reach of children and pets. Having the number of the Poisons Control Hotlines on your cellphone and posted on the refrigerator along with other emergency numbers can save lives. Responding quickly to an essential oil poisoning in a pet is vital. A delay in treatment can cause death to your beloved pet. Always seek medical treatment as soon as possible if your pet has gotten into any essential oils or shows signs of essential oil poisoning. Call your veterinarian or contact the Pet Poison Helpline at (800) 213-6680.

# What Other Household Chemicals Should I Be Aware of That Can Hurt My Pet?

We need to have clean homes for the health of ourselves and our pets. Our pets sleep on the floor, in our sinks, and occasionally a cat may even get up on the tables. Not only do we need to keep surfaces in our homes clean and sanitary, especially the kitchen and bathrooms, but a clean home smells more pleasant and clean home has less lingering pet odors if your pets are using the right products and trained properly in their toilet habits. Our pets also lick various surfaces, eat off bowls on the floor typically and are tracking in dirt and mud after walks. Our pets also shed fur and dander that need to be vacuumed up and removed to improve the air quality of a home and reduce allergens.



People are becoming afraid of using chemicals in their homes and food. There can be irrational “chemophobia” (fear of chemicals) and rational chemophobia. A rational source of chemophobia includes avoiding using toxic ingredients in our homes and on our furry, feathered, or scaled companions. However, some of the alternative cleaning products use dangerous amounts of essential oils that can sicken our pets. A tea tree sanitizing spray sounds great but is deadly to our pets. There are “green” or safer cleaning products that can help keep our homes clean and safe. Not all chemicals are bad. Acetic acid sounds scary. However, acetic acid is a great cleaning product. Scientific and chemical terms should not intimidate or scare you just because it has many syllables or certain terms in it. Acetic acid is merely the scientific name for “vinegar.” Surely you provide plenty of dihydrogen monoxide to your pets, even though people are killed by it each year and it causes severe property damage and erosion. Dihydrogen monoxide is water and your pets always need fresh water available.

Our pets can absorb cleaning product ingredients via their paw pads, skin, as well as by ingestion while we clean our homes. A lot of fearmongering claims are made that we need to use “safe” or “natural” cleaning products only but those “safe” or “natural” cleaning products may contain essential oils. Pine cleaners contain pineol oils and lemon-scented cleaners contain limonene which are irritants. However, lavender and tea tree cleanser are just as dangerous and toxic to our pets.

The EPA states that indoor air pollution can be on average anywhere from two to five times higher and sometimes even higher than the level of outdoor air pollution. To not cause panic, let's examine that number. Air pollution does not just include chemicals and other gases and toxins, it also contains particulates. Particulates are solids that are light enough to be carried about and moved on air currents. Particulates include dust. If you have a pet, it also includes pet fur and animal dander and the more pets, the more the air quality of your home worsens without taking measures to reduce particulates as well as any other things that can cause respiratory illness, trigger allergies or asthma.



Using a HEPA filter on your HVAC unit and vacuum can help trap particulates that can act as irritants. An A/C filter should be changed each calendar quarter and vacuum cleaner filters should be cleaned or replaced on a regular schedule, as recommended by the manufacturer or as necessary. There are special pet filters designed for these purposes that are worth considering for not only the ability of you to breathe easier and better-quality air but also to have your pet breathe easier. The more pets that share the home, the more frequently the home should be vacuumed, and the carpets cleaned. A multi-pet home requires daily vacuuming ideally to keep dander, litter dust, and other particulates down and to improve human and pet air quality. A pet owner needs to dust regularly to keep dander and dust mites under control as well.

Some people are switching entirely to “non-toxic cleaners” and while some of these are effective products, there are still uses for “harsh chemicals” that strike terror in people. Sometimes it’s necessary to use so-called “toxic chemicals” to clean properly. “The dose makes the poison” applies in these cases. If you are using bleach, hydrogen peroxide, or even ammonia, provided you rinse off all residue and prevent your pets from having any contact or inhalation of the fumes and secure your pets in a safe room while using these products, removing the residues, and air out the fumes, they are safe to use in a pet-shared house or apartment.



Ammonia is an irritant if inhaled and can cause the same discomfort and burning it causes in the nose and throat of humans. It can also irritate the eyes and cause eye-watering. It is what makes “smelling salts” work. It is also found in some stainless-steel cleaners, oven cleaners, and window cleaners because it usually cleans evenly, prohibits streaks and removes grease. You can use ammonia containing products in a well-ventilated room and when your pet is secured in another area of the house. Some oven cleaners have instructions for humans to leave the well-ventilated room while they are in use for two hours while they work, and that instruction should apply to our pets as well. If it’s not safe for us to be there while the cleaner works, it’s not safe for our pets.



Bleach is another household cleaner that people are afraid of despite its effectiveness. It is a strong disinfectant and sometimes a strong disinfectant is needed. It is a caustic agent and can erode the mouth, esophagus, and stomach of your pet if swallowed, even properly diluted, and is an irritant if inhaled. While a cat litter box should be replaced at least once a year at a minimum, a quarterly outdoor hosing off and allowing the litterbox to soak in a dilute 10% bleach and water solution for an hour or so will kill all the bacteria and other causing remnants that can remain on a box. Bacteria and fecal matter, which is a feast for bacteria and encourages bacterial growth, can get embedded in the scratches made by cats when burying their waste after using the box. A monthly or quarterly deep sanitizing of the cat box, followed by a complete rinse off until no bleach scent remains and then drying the box completely before replacing the cat box liner or litter can keep the cat boxes in use longer than six months and also reduce the buildup of malodorous bacteria. You use bleach or disinfectant wipes in your bathroom furnishings sometimes and your cat deserves the same respect and courtesy regarding their sanitation and hygiene. Bleach is a common ingredient in powdered cleansers designed for scouring grout and grime, mildew and mold remover sprays and occasionally found in antibacterial bathroom cleansers. Always rinse away all cleanser residues if a product contains bleach and use in a well-ventilated area. Never clean with even natural cleaning products in a closed off room.

Phthalates are a plasticizing agent used to thicken the viscosity of products and allows them to have a certain texture and consistency that allows them to carry artificial fragrance or essential oils. High levels of phthalates have been shown to have endocrine disruptive properties in humans and are a “possible carcinogen”. A “possible carcinogen” is a chemical or product that may have a causative relationship in causing cancerous cell changes and abnormal growth. In small animal studies, phthalates have caused an increase in liver, testicular and pancreatic tumors.

Phthalates are often found in deodorizers (such as gels) and general-purpose cleaners with heavy scents. They are labeled with a 3 in the triangles used for recycling codes when used to create packaging and are often found in recycled plastic products. Virgin plastics do not need to be softened by phthalates. It is becoming very easy to find

Phthalate-free pet toy and pet and human health and beauty products.

Glycol Ethers are a toxin that has been shown to cause liver, nerve and digestive damage in some EPA studies and have been connected to causing lung and liver damage or causing severe anemia if ingested by animals or humans. Glycol Ethers are a sudsing agent and solvent. It is present as butyl glycol in many household cleaning products such as general-purpose cleaners, fabric, and spot cleaners and stain removers, glass cleaner and are often in an ingredient in “natural cleaners”.

Formaldehyde is also used in cleaning products. It is an eye and skin irritating chemical that is classified by the EPA as a carcinogen but is used in plug-in-fragrances, liquid potpourri, and various cleaning products.

Some pet owners decide to go “all-natural” and start making their own cleaning products. While white vinegar and water does a great job of cleaning windows and doing a quick mop of a floor, your house will smell like a package of salt and vinegar potato chips for a couple of days and that’s not a pleasant scent. It is also corrosive and will eventually eat your grout, erode window seals, and will permanently dull stone countertops. Vinegar makes marble, travertine, granite and fancy countertops impossible to polish and make shine. It etches the stone. Worse, it’s an urban myth that vinegar is a disinfectant and can sanitize surfaces it’s cleaned. Vinegar does not sanitize anything, even porous surfaces. It does leave behind as many as 20% of pathogens on a surface and can’t do a thing against staph, the common cold virus or salmonella. You need a real disinfectant to do the job when trying to fight pathogens that can make your family or pets ill. Cleaning your toilet with a powder made of salt baking powder and apple cider vinegar will not sanitize your toilet either. DIY white vinegar cleaners are not very effective even though safe and natural. Apple cider vinegar containing “the mother” means the vinegar contains apple cider or must (an apple-concentrate paste) and the acetic bacteria that partially ferments the product. Wine is nothing more than vinegar that has not been corrupted by “the mother” or acetic anaerobic bacteria. Using ACV, a pop culture health hero, especially if unfiltered, it is wiping down surfaces with a bacterial film. Adding lemon juice and apple cider vinegar will also not sanitize or disinfect anything.

Lemons are given a great deal of imaginary superpowers in DIY and pet-safe cleaning products. Lemons contain limonene in their peel which is an inhaled irritant for pets and can cause respiratory illness or distress in sensitive pets. Also, vinegar, water, and lemon juice just create a strongly acidic solution that will destroy things like stone countertops and grout and sink gaskets. The added lemon juice ruins the reason for diluting the acidic vinegar. It's just bad and junk science, in general, to add back the very thing you're trying to dilute. Rubbing a cut lemon over a cutting board will make the freshly washed cutting board smell nice and marinates the remaining bacteria in lemon juice. Lemon smells great but it's dangerous limonene that lemon peels contain and that is not pet-safe. You cannot make a polishing lemon-scented furniture or hardwood floor polish by mixing a cup of olive oil, with some lemon juice and apple cider vinegar. You can, however, make a nice salad dressing which should not be used to polish the furniture with as one website suggests. Vinegar and lemon juice remove the factory finish and the oil leaves a residue that dirt, dust, dander and pet hair can stick to.



Baking soda used with salt and water is a popular DIY crunchy homemaker cleaner, but it does not kill the E. Coli that is found in your toilet bowl and is naturally found in human and pet bowel movements. E. Coli is a normal part of the end section of the digestive system that causes illness when it can get someplace else such as the urinary tract causing the common UTI or cystitis. It can also contaminate food and cause food poisoning. It's fecal bacteria, you do not want your pet drinking from a toilet bowl ever so keep the toilet lid down and keep the toilet clean for yourselves, not for use your pet's alternate water source. Baking soda is good for use in an emergency whenever you are out of an enzyme fabric or carpet cleaner spray when your pet has an accident however and can freshen up a carpet safely when used as a substitute for heavily perfumed carpet freshening powders which are just heavily perfumed baking soda. Do not make your own with essential oils for your home. If you have, re-read this please as aromatherapy should not be used to hide odors and baking soda removes and neutralizes them. Enzyme cleaners do better though and prevent the likelihood of a pet peeing in their most impolite place if a pee accident and stain are removed with a special enzyme cleaner. Hydrogen peroxide can lift dye from a carpet so unless a carpet is supposed to be white or pale mottled shag, avoiding hydrogen peroxide to clean and disinfect a pet stain can cause carpet damage. Treat messes quickly and properly to prevent set-in stains whenever possible and learn to blot stains up and not saturate a stain with water. Wetting down a fresh soiled carpet can wind up forcing the uric acid in pet urine through the carpet fibers and into the padding and plywood floor causing a permanent spot of eternal urine odor. It can also cause pet diarrhea to go beyond carpet deep and carry the bacteria into the sub carpet areas requiring professional carpet cleaning to ever resolve the issue. Any DIY pet cleaner that suggests mixing the baking soda with the vinegar is a practical joke, much like vinegar as a disinfectant is. Mixing baking soda and vinegar will cause a frothing bubbling violent chemical reaction that is usually used to demonstrate how volcanoes erupt to young children by science educators.



One option to replace air freshener sprays can be dangerous. Many natural pet sites recommend boiling apple slices, cinnamon, and pumpkin pie spice ingredients in a small pot on the stove to release the essential oils in them and create a natural fragrance. However, those oils are all on the dangerous to pet list so making a cinnamon holiday simmering pot is not a good idea. However, using safe natural fragrant plants like catnip and cat thyme on the window box can give your cat an edible safe and aromatic treat. Slicing cucumbers and crushing mint leaves and placing them in bowls of water to create cucumber mint water and placing them in locations near air circulation is a way to create a fresh light scent that is not poisonous to cats or dogs and do not let them eat the contents and do not let contents sit until they get gross. It is a brief fix.

A quick burst of 2-3 spritzes in a pump bottle of food intended rose hydrosol (do not use cosmetic grade rose water or rose and rose glycerin rose water or a rose or other sort of facial mist, even if labeled “organic” or “all-natural”) can also make a room smell cleaner for a short period of time without risking your pet's health but more than that can. If using natural home fragrance, be cautious and never allow any mists, spritzes or products you use for fragrance, even freshly applied lotions, to come into pet skin or air contact. Potpourri and clone products are popular to hide human bathroom malodors, but these sprays create an essential oil film to mask human bathroom smells. The layer of oils humans like linger after the human waste coated in oils is flushed away so even potpourri is very dangerous to pets and another reason to keep the toilet lids down unless in human usage.

There are many commercial pet-safe products available at not only special pet supermarkets but also on the shelves of mass-market merchandisers and big box stores. One need not spend a whole paycheck at a natural foods shop just to get safe or non-toxic cleaning supplies that you can feel good about using around your pets. Even online megamarkets provide many options that are safe, non-toxic and even environmentally safe. Brands such as Puracy, Seventh Generation, Clean + Green, Better Life, Mrs. Meyers, Eco Me, Bean & Lily, Nature's Kleen, Biokleen, Roxie & Rocco, Angry Orange, Sal Suds and Unscented Dr. Bronner's Castile Soap.

If you insist on having a “clean” and “all-natural” lifestyle, use products that do not contain essential oils that are unsafe for pets even if the product claims it is pet safe. Read the labels and know what ingredients to avoid. You want a clean and pleasant environment in your home but the pet product market has little regulation and no marketing restrictions so there are even dangerous tea tree pet shampoos out there. Owner education, awareness, and label reading can make sure the products you want to use are pet-safe and pose no harm to your pet but still clean and still make your environment pleasant.

## **What Dangerous Items Should I Keep My Pet Away From?**

Of course, it goes without stating, essential oils are dangerous items you should keep your pet away from, as are cleaning products, but our pets can and do sometimes get into everything. Clever pets can even learn to open cabinets so, for those pets, using childproof cabinet locks and babyproofing the home is mission-critical to protecting your pet's health and reducing danger and messes.

## Human Food Hazards



Often pet owners show affection to their pets and reward desired behavior with human food. However, our pets not only have very different dietary needs for proper nutrition than humans do but feeding our pets table scraps and human treats can cause our pets to become obese and develop bad

behaviors such as begging at the table or jumping up at the dinner table to steal a favorite morsel. There are also many human foods and ingredients in recipes that can seriously sicken or poison our pets and need to be kept from our canine and feline companions. Just because they are family, does not mean they should enjoy the family meal except on special occasions and only with safe foods. The following list of foods that your pet should never be permitted to eat and should always be stored in a high cabinet or pantry where they cannot accidentally get into such foods or kept in the fridge. Using a trashcan or garbage pail can also protect your pet from helping themselves to foods that are not safe for them. Using garbage disposal after meals and during meal preparation also keeps pets safe from dietary dangers.

- Chocolate
- Foil-wrapped foods or candies
- Coffee grounds used tea bags or any other products with caffeine
- Avocados
- Fatty foods, such as fat trimmings from meat and many nuts such as macadamia and cashews
- Sugarless gum, candies and other products that contain xylitol
- Pan drippings and cracklings made from animal fats
- Grapes and raisins
- Alcoholic products and flavoring extracts
- Garlic, Onions, Shallots, Scallions (Spring Onions), Chives and flavorings in the allium plant family
- Unripe tomatoes
- Spinach
- Mushrooms (wild or dried especially)
- Rhubarb
- Raw meats, raw fish, and all cold cuts
- Dairy products (Cats are lactose intolerant and cheese can make a dog have painful flatulence and ingestion)
- Baby foods and formulas
- Yeast dough
- Canned or pouches of tuna that is not verified mercury-free.
- Protein or Nutritional Food Mixes and Ready-to-Drink Mixes
- Aloe Beverages (Aloe is from the lily family and is lethal to pets)
- Fresh herbs that are amongst the list of essential oils plants that are dangerous (Parsley is safe and an excellent fresh breath additive but is not considered palatable by most pets)

## Household Medications and Health and Beauty Products



It is very important to keep medications and health and beauty products away from pets. Sometimes even the best pet parents can forget to put things away properly when in a rush in the morning. Leaving pill bottles on the night table or dresser or the countertops or vanity can invite disaster. Even body lotion, mouthwash, and toothpaste can sicken or injure our pets and therefore our self-care and health and beauty items need to be secured in medicine cabinets or cabinets. No matter what your pet ingests, if it's not their food and water, or if it contains essential oils, it's important to seek prompt veterinary treatment and whenever possible to bring the bottles or containers with you to the vet when seeking emergency treatment for accidental ingestion. Always know the brand name of the generic medications you are taking for easy reference for yourself and in case you need the name for the vet.

- Over the Counter (OTC) and Prescription Medication that are very dangerous for pets include:
- NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatories) such as Advil or Motrin (ibuprofen), Aleve (Naproxen)
- Aspirin and Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or over the counter medications containing acetaminophen, aspirin, and caffeine (such as Excedrin/ OTC Migraine analgesics)
- Antidepressants and Mood Stabilizers such as Depakote, Effexor, Cymbalta, Lithium, Paxil, Prozac and Lexapro for example
- Antiseizure and Migraine prevention medications such as Topamax, Tegretol, Butalbital, Phenobarbital, Ergot-derived medications
- ADD/ADHD Medications such as Concerta, Vyvanse, Adderall and Ritalin
- Benzodiazepine medications (tranquilizers/anti-anxiety medications) and “Z-drugs” (zolpidem, etc.) or sleep aids such as Xanax, Klonopin, Ambien, Sonata and Lunesta. OTC diphenhydramine, an antihistamine commonly known as Benadryl, is also sold as a sleep aid and can overdose a pet at human dosages.
- Birth control pills and/or hormones such as estrogen, estradiol, and progesterone in a patch, ring, cream or pill forms. Even natural progesterone creams made from wild yams and sold at health food supermarkets and stores can cause serious problems for your pet even if not sold as medication and labeled “all-natural”. Testosterone and any testosterone blockers (antiandrogen) drugs used to reduce hormone levels to treat men’s prostate conditions are also dangerous hormonal medications for pets.
- ACE (angiotensin-converting enzyme) inhibitors are drugs used for hypertension (high blood pressure). Examples of these are lisinopril, zofenopril, Zestril and Altace

- Beta-blockers are cardiac effecting medications used to regulate abnormal heart rates due to defects or health conditions and to prevent cardiac events. Atenolol, Propranolol, and Metoprolol are generics for drugs such as Tenormin, Lopressor, Toprol, and Coreg
- Thyroid replacement hormones such as Armour desiccated thyroid and Levothyroxine, Unithroid, or Synthroid. Anti-thyroid agent medications used to treat hyperthyroidism are equally dangerous to pets such as methimazole. Even if your pet requires and has a prescription for these, if your pet gets into their own prescription medication, they can take fatal overdoses, even in topical forms.
- “Statins” or Cholesterol-lowering agents such as Lipitor, Zocor, and Crestor
- Some pet parents may give their pets a multivitamin and mineral supplement. Pet supplements are an equal risk to human vitamin and mineral supplements when taken improperly or snuck into and snacked on. Iron, calcium, magnesium and even single vitamin or mineral supplements can be overdosed on. All human or pet supplements, nutraceuticals or herbal remedies in capsule, tincture, gummies, or liquid forms (including aloe gel drinks, serious pet danger, and laxative) pose a health threat.
- Another pet medication to keep from pets are flea and tick preventative medicines and deworming treatments, especially if in treat forms. Never use dog treatments on cats as some pesticides that dogs are treated with monthly are lethal to cats, plus the ingestion of these essential pet care products causes illness and poisoning. Keep those treatment treats and single applicators, as well as multi-pet vials out of pet contact except for their scheduled safe application by you.
- Sports or performance supplements like MCT Oils and various diet and health OTC products can risk pet’s lives, and sport and performance supplements can cause liver failure if sweetened with xylitol. Keep your gym smoothie mixes, keto supplements and protein powders safe from your pets.

## Garden and Household Items

Our garden sheds and garages can be full of dangerous items and poisons for our pets so storing things properly and keeping pets out of these spaces protects pet lives and prevents large medical bills.



- Bait traps for rodents, snails, and slugs
- Paint, paint thinners, and adhesives
- Antifreeze, motor oil, power steering fluid, windshield cleaner, transmission fluid, and automotive additives, sealants and other toxic product
- Rodenticides
- Insecticides
- Blood Meal
- Fertilizers
- Plant Foods
- Plants and plant bulbs and seeds
- Sharp garden tools (special concern given to rusty garden tools or dirty ones), particularly those under the fabric where blades or tines cannot be seen easily

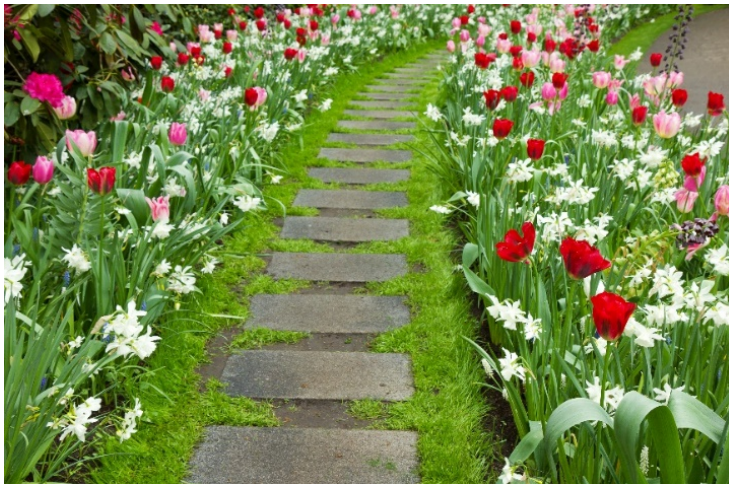
Inside the home, health care and beauty items and products can also be a pet hazard lurking out in the open. If it is not a product intended for pet use and for the type of pet you have, keep it locked up, behind cabinet doors, on wall shelving or somehow up and away from curious pets.



- Toothpaste (xylitol risk)
- Mouthwash (alcohol and xylitol risk)
- Body lotions, creams (various risks)
- Deodorant and Antiperspirants (including “all-natural, mineral or aluminum-free”)
- Body Wash and Liquid Soap
- Loofahs/Konjac sponges/Makeup Sponges
- Shampoo and conditioners
- Vapo-Rub or cough and cold inhalants
- Cosmetics
- Exfoliating acids and sheet masks
- Sunblock and suntan lotions
- Aloe Gel
- Castor Oil, Coconut Oil or Facial and Hair Oils
- Skincare serums, toners, makeup removers (liquid, cream or wipes)
- Antibiotic creams and sprays
- Perfumes/essential oils/plug-in air fresheners
- Sharp small beauty tools such as tweezers, nail clippers, nail files, and manicure scissors
- Acetone and nail polishes and topcoats as well as UV lights used for curing at home gel nails.
- Isopropyl alcohol (labeled as “rubbing alcohol”, especially Wintergreen rubbing alcohol)

- Muscle pain and strain massage rubs, analgesic creams, sprays, and topical pain relief stick-on pads and self-heating adhesive pads. Some contain toxic oils; some contain combinations of aspirin compounds with essential oils used to create the hot-cold sensations of these products)
- Hydrogen Peroxide (causes vomiting if ingested, can only be administered safely by veterinarians and should be kept away from where your pet can encounter it)

## Outdoors



Some plants are very toxic to our pets and can lead to kidney and liver failure or cardiac arrest.

While we may want to have flowers for our dog to sniff when we walk him down our walkway, not all plants are pet-friendly and some beautiful plants are life-threatening if licked, gnawed on

or ingested by a curious kitty or dog. Some bouquets need to be kept in a cat-free room to protect your cat. There are full lists of dangerous plants on the ASCPA and RSPCA websites for more information. A good rule of thumb to remember is that bulb flowers and plants are poisonous, so most early spring flowers, and common Eastertime flowers as well as bulb forming vegetables like onions or garlic are very bad to have around pets and are not included in a pet's environment.

- Aloes
- Autumn Crocus
- Azaleas
- Foxgloves
- Rhododendrons
- Tulips
- Cyclamens
- Daffodils
- Dieffenbachia
- Hyacinths
- Kalanchoes
- Lilies
- Oleander
- Sago Palm/Saw Palmettos
- Orchids
- Plants, Flowers, and Herbs as seen in the Dangerous Essential Oils list as previously listed.

Other garden and outdoor things are also dangerous and can make our pets ill if they ingest or get into them

Compost may be great for our gardens and the environment, but the partially broken-down twigs and materials in a compost heap cannot just choke a cat or dog or splinter in them, compost is full of bacteria that can cause problems. There can also be pests and worms there waiting to sicken your pet.

Mushrooms are not always edible and never allow your pet to eat any wild mushrooms or mushrooms in general.

Salt or standing waters in coastal areas are general risks. Saltwater will dehydrate and irritate your pet's paw pads and skin and if ingested will cause a very miserable vomiting pet. If the water is contaminated by bacteria, algae and more than salt, more risk is possible. Standing water and lakes, pools and tires swings that fill up with rain are ideal places for mosquitoes to breed and mosquitoes can carry viruses and infectious diseases that can make pets seriously ill and our pets can be allergic to the bite of an insect just like we are and an itching pet with several mosquito bites is an unhappy and restless pet.

#### Household Repair Products and Specialized Chemicals

If you are in the process of a home repair or renovation project, make sure the following things are kept safely away from inquisitive four-legged friends. Some certain toxic chemicals:

- Expandable foam insulation can choke and asphyxiate a pet that ingests it. Insulation made from fiberglass is a strong irritant and can abrade the insides of our pets' mouth, esophagus and GI tract. It can also risk being aspirated into the lungs where the glass particles can do terrible damage.
- The tar used for roofing is a petroleum product that belongs on the roof or driveway, never on or near your pet.
- Pool chemicals are all strong irritants to the respiratory system and can cause topical burns. All pool chemicals should be kept secure and used carefully. Never allow a pet near a pool unattended and certainly not after a "shock" treatment is used to sanitize the water. Never allow a pet to drink pool water. Responsible pet parents keep their pets away from the swimming pool and have a fence around it.
- Drain cleaners are incredible caustic chemicals and cause severe trauma and damage and are best, not used unless necessary and always used far from a pet's presence, per the product's directions and any remaining cleaner secured and locked away.
- Lead (lead paint chips, dust or stained-glass supply) can lead to a pet getting lead poisoning if the lead is licked at or ingested, even if overtime.
- Zinc is a mineral that comprises most US pennies made after 1982. Ingested coins are a pet health issue but zinc if the coin dissolves in the stomach and passes can also cause toxicity and illness.

# How to Keep Pets Away from Essential Oils



The very best way to keep your pet away from essential oils and their risks is to simply not allow them in your home or in your home products for pet or human use. However, with the trends of adding essential oils to everything from cleaning products to healthcare products and even commercially available pet products, the only reasonable option may be to become a label reader and to choose products based on their effectiveness and ingredients and avoid products that contain essential oils whenever possible or to limit their usage in the home.

It is simple to avoid pet problems that are caused by essential oils by simply not purchasing the products that contain them. Just because you love the lavender kitty and puppy comfort spray and it may seem to calm your pet, not repurchasing the product and training your pet to self-comfort or use other forms of positive reinforcement or a pet daycare may be a healthier way to deal with a pet's separation anxiety and passive aggression rather than spraying the pet with a few spritzes of an essential oil containing mist. Reducing scented products and focusing on keeping the air quality of your home better with cleaning, reducing litter dust, properly treating pet stains, and vacuuming daily to eliminate dust, dander and shed fur will improve pet and human health and improve pet odors in the home. Using the right products for the task of cleaning pet accidents by using enzyme cleaners and changing the litter in a box more often or changing your dog's walking schedule can reduce the need to use air fresheners in the first place. Following the best policies for pet hygiene, sanitation and home cleaning can minimize the side effects of having a pet share your living space and if started before odors become a problem, you and your visitors and pets benefit more. Having a clean home and making sure your pet has a clean litter box or your dog has fresh pee pads and is regularly walked and exercised reduces the need to cover up the shameful stench of either a badly trained pet, a somewhat neglected pet. It also reduces the sorrow and misery that an incontinent or sick pet might experience. An incontinent or sick pet who has accidents can begin to associate the aromatics that come after cleanups with being a bad pet and can become a trigger to elicit antisocial or hiding behaviors. Likewise, scent can train a pet and train them badly- if a home is always heavily spritzed with lavender and vanilla around the pee pads or cat box, your pet may begin to associate that actual scent with where they are supposed to urinate or poop and if you spray your lavender vanilla essential oil blend in the hallway floor or use it to mop the kitchen, your pet may not realize that was not the right place to do their bathroom needs even though it smelled exactly like the place they are supposed to go pee or poop.

Another option is a set aside one or two rooms in your house that become pet-free zones where you can use essential oil products as you desire and leave your diffusers, reeds, soy wax candles with oils and other products only in this pet prohibited zone so you can enjoy your favorite scents and get the emotional or psychological comfort or benefits of aromatherapy without forcing your cat or dog to have an aromatherapy treatment as well. Of course, we want to share these positive experiences and mediate with our pets even, but sometimes the environment can harm them and as a good pet owner, you must realize that your room reserved for yoga cannot have your pet present. You can also choose to continue doing yoga with your pet but do it in a room without a diffuser or a wall plug-in scenting the room.

If you still want to use essential oils and their diffusing devices for yourself, you can also use extremely diluted (1 drop per 1.5 teaspoons or more carrier oil, meaning a 0.25% concentration or weaker) of pet-safe oils and never use a droplet diffuser or a reed diffuser that allows your pet different access to inhale or ingest the oils. This is the recommended dilution for pets and despite you, loving rose oil and water lotus oils, it may be healthiest to appreciate it lightly and in moderation and at a pet approved dilution level even for your own enjoyment.



You should always store your essential oils in a dark, cool, dry environment like a closet shelf or cabinet that your pets cannot get into or a locked medicine storage box which is available online and even at Ikea. This is so you can not only store them properly but keep them locked away to make sure children and fur kids cannot get into your essential oils. Ensure that your pets cannot reach them at all under any circumstances even if they climb or can open cabinets themselves. Keeping them in a closely fitting drawer, a canister with a lid fastener of some sort or in a lidded storage box also is a good idea to keep them safe from your pets.

“But I insist on using essential oils in my home and around and on my pet! How can I do so, my intuition, my life coach, my yoga instructor, several celebrities I respect and take the advice of personally and many websites I visit say it’s perfectly safe!” Unless you have a veterinarian aware of and helping you use aromatherapy, you may want to ensure your pet is healthy before any experiments with scent as a treatment for things and you should consult your vet, many vets are will allow safe and complementary alternative medical treatments (CAM).

Ok, then, now we have to you a detailed list of good practices. Good practices are the best that can be provided as aromatherapy is not proven, is not a science, has no proof, and the plural of anecdotes is not data. You need your essential oils and your dog and cat loves them so here are some ways to merely minimize the harm they can do and possibly mitigate a disaster. Essential oils will not treat your dog’s cancer even if the internet says it will. Alternative medicine is no substitute for proper veterinary care. Regular veterinary care is essential and regular pet medical care, especially for older or already chronically ill pets, is an alternative to death. These pet aromatherapy guidelines provided are only good practices. Best practices are to not use aromatherapy for your pet but since you are sure that memes are never wrong and the internet and health gurus never lie, here’s some advice and recommendations for your pets’ comfort, safety, and benefit.

If you are going to use essential oil’s in your pets and your shared home, always use them in an open area and leave a way for the pet to leave the area freely and ensure you use essential oils in a space with access to fresh air such as a screened-in window or patio door. Having a room that is already well-ventilated before testing an essential oil out around or on a pet is a good idea.

Always start using oils one at a time and the weakest possible dilution to quickly identify the cause of respiratory irritation or allergic reactions. By not using blends and unknown essential oils or carrier oils, it's easier to remove them from the environment and pass the oils that cause a negative reaction in you or your pets onto a friend who may not have the same reaction or who has good experiences with that particular essential oil.

Anytime you use essential oils to scent a room or on your pet, most possible allergic or reactions occur within a half-hour but sometimes a bad reaction to an essential oil can take up to 24 to 36 hours to show symptoms. If your pet shows signs of motor or neurological dysfunction such as drooling, difficulty walking/staggering, changes in their breathing, low body temperature, weakness, self-harm, abnormally slow or hyperactive reflexes, lethargy, confusion, aggression, irritability to physical illness such as nausea, vomiting or sneezing, coughing or wheezing, or physical signs like muscle tremors, skin irritation redness and blistering, immediately take your pet from the room or area of the home where the oil has been and provide fresh air and immediately call your vet for further advice. Never apply essential oils to the fur, skin or scales of pocket pets such as mice, rats, guinea pigs, or gerbils. If you have any pet birds or caged pets, never apply or expose them to topical or diffused essential oils as they are confined and cannot remove themselves from an environmental hazard. Birds have challenges with fragrances in general and the concentrated essential oils can cause severe and life-threatening breathing issues.



If a pet can tolerate a safe dilution of a pet-tolerable essential oil, many holistic veterinarians, naturopaths and natural pet experts suggest a necessary patch test. This is like the patch tests done when using hair dyes and skincare products to prevent more widespread and serious allergic reactions. A

patch test for a pet is done by taking a 1 drop of essential oil to 449 drops of a carrier oil blend solution and apply it to an insensitive part of your pet like the back of the neck. The ideal patch is an area the size of a US dime or a 1cm spot. The problem with a patch test is that a non-sensitive part may not react while the pet may have a reaction elsewhere. Essential Oils and even carrier oils should never be tested, let alone used near a pet's eyes, nose, ears mouth or genitals/anal region due to the sensitivity and delicacy of these areas and the dangers to your pet of oil contact in these sensitive delicate parts. Patch tests are high-risk in this regard. When safety or allergy testing a diffuser, use 1-2 drops of an essential oil to the carrier essential oil in a diffuser and allow the diffuser to disperse the oil for 10 minutes and observe. The dilution ratio of essential oil to carrier oil for a large dog will not be a safe amount of the same essential oil to a small or toy breed.

Likewise, a safe dose for dogs may be very toxic to a cat. No dose is safe for pet birds and pocket pets. A pet's size and species need to be considered. The toxic oils listed in this article are toxic to all birds and most oils toxic to cats can also sicken dogs with a few species-specific better-tolerated oils for each species. The essential oil dilution that your healthy adult dog may be poisonous to their puppies, however. For pets that are disabled, have mobility problems, are elderly or geriatric pets or are pregnant, special attention is required. If you insist on using essential oils, added dilution is advised as physically weak, sick or aged pets cannot process and metabolize toxic substances the same way a healthy pet will. A pregnant cat or dog should likewise merit special considerations as many oils can trigger miscarriage or cause birth defects in their litter if a pregnant pet is exposed to essential oils. Using these oils to induce a spontaneous abortion (the medical name for a miscarriage) to end an unwanted pet pregnancy can kill your pet and as a responsible and good pet parent, you should always spay and neuter as soon as possible unless you intend to breed them and once they are done breeding, to spay and neuter them so they may enjoy their retirement without estrus, embarrassing humping behaviors, and territorial marking.

Always wash your hands thoroughly after mixing or using any carrier or essential oils,

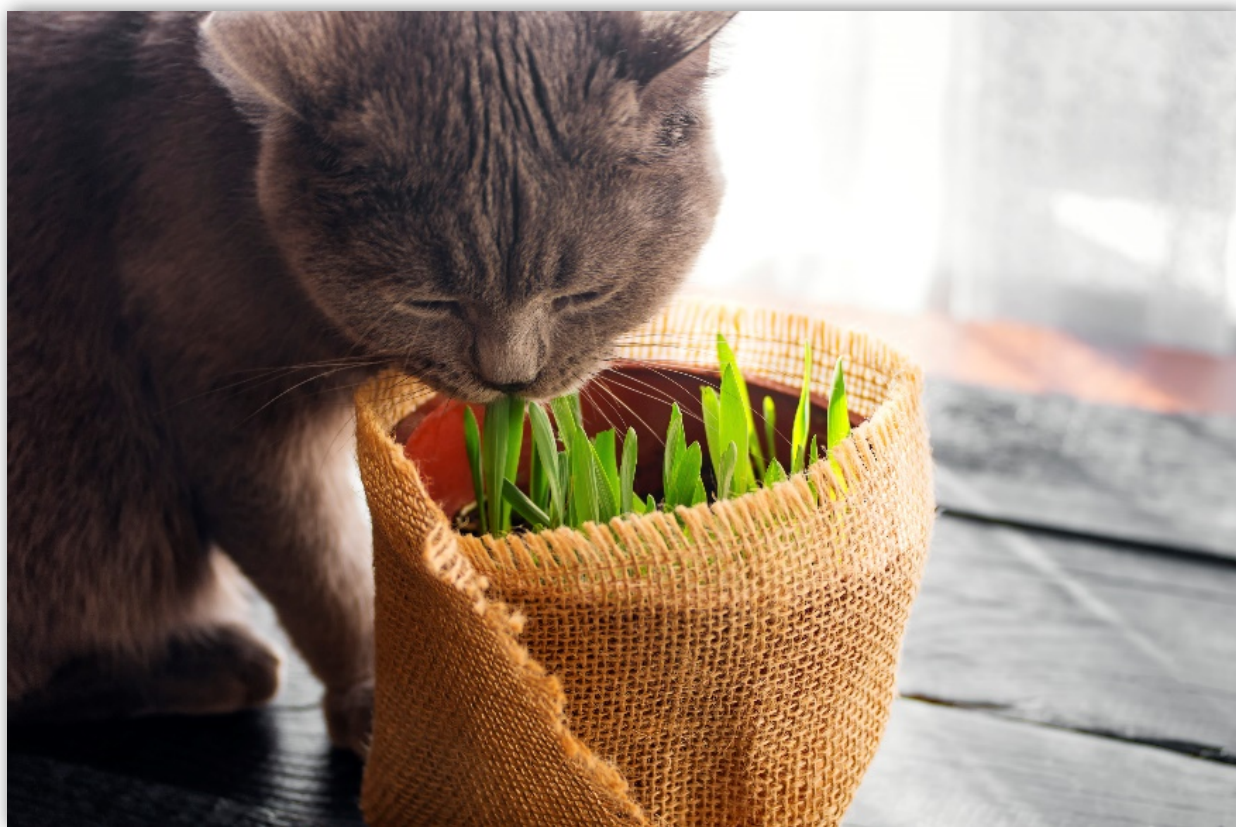


even if for your own personal use.

Any oils on your hands after use can end up on your pet when they are petted, groomed or fed. If you are planning on using an essential oil blend or formula to compliment vet care for a health condition, do not consider using the same dosage of the essential oil that is suggested for a human

and never do so without the approval and awareness of your vet. You can buy special pet formulary, blends, and essential oil products online and at pet stores and pet supermarkets. Never use without vet supervision and never use more than stated on the product's directions. If using an essential oil cleaner, try to use less if possible than what is suggested due to the high concentration of volatile chemicals in aromatherapy's essential oils.

You can buy various pet products that use essential oils in them. Many health and nature conscience pet parents use these special products for their pets. There are special shampoos, calming mists, and even supplements that contain essential oils so knowing if your pet is sensitive or allergic to any essential oils can help you purchase safely. A very popular essential oil product is pet calming sprays. Most of these products contain lavender oil. As lavender oil spoils quickly once exposed to air, it is important to pay attention to the expiration dates. Some products may require refrigeration after opening and others may contain preservatives or antioxidants to keep them fresh and shelf-stable longer. There are many anecdotal reports of the effectiveness of calming mists being effective on pets with anxiety or who do not travel well. Doing research and reading online reviews on third-party retailers can help decision-making.



There are also essential oil and pheromone-based calming sprays. Pheromones are hormones emitted that have a specific effect. Pheromones can either comfort and attract a pet to a place or be interpreted by their senses to repel them. Many essential oil sprays designed to housetrain, and litter train cats have pheromones to encourage a puppy or cat to associate the pad with a pleasant experience and encourages pee pad or litter box compliance. There are also sprays that claim to be the equivalent of chamomile or “sleepy time” teas, some include essential oils of chamomile and valerian. Valerian is in the catnip family and is claimed to have sedating effects that can calm an anxious or aggressive cat according to some sources. Botanical pet deterrents often contain scents our pets find strong and repellant. Rosemary is a particular oil that causes pets to avoid a space but making your own rosemary mist on a couch or a place one does not want a pet to sleep or to stop a pet from marking or other territorial behaviors is not advised. To reduce unwanted behaviors, asking your vet for advice and following their behavior modification tips and other suggestions before trying pheromone sprays is necessary.

One essential oil spray that is fantastic for cat owners is catnip spray. Catnip spray uses the essential oil of catnip to allow cat owners to refresh catnip toys which have lost the catnip effects over time and can be used to encourage a cat to sleep and play in a certain area. Catnip spray can also be used to encourage a shy cat to emerge from their shell by using the positive reinforcement of catnip's effects on a cat. Using catnip spray on scratching posts may encourage their use. However, there is a small percentage of cats that lack the receptor for catnip and are not affected by catnip. If you have a cat that does not go crazy for the nip, you have one of the estimated 10% of cats immune to it and even catnip spray will not affect your cat. Cats that are affected by catnip spray will aid in a recreational playtime and a fun time for you as your cat frolics and rolls around as if under the influence. If a toy is in good repair and intact, there is no reason to not use catnip spray to "enhance it" or recharge the catnip toy whose catnip oils have all evaporated and dried out. Wetting an old catnip toy will not reactivate or rehydrate an old catnip toy. Catnip's essential oil eventually loses potency over time or when dragged into a water dish during play. Catnip spray has instructions for its safe use on the container that should be followed. Moderation is also recommended as too much of a good thing can desensitize a pet's brain and taking an occasional nip break can increase their reaction and enjoyment of it.

Anytime an essential oil product or essential oil is used around, with or on a pet, it is important to provide oil-free breaks. The maximum period an oil should be used is two weeks and after those two weeks, there should be an oil-free downtime of at least 2 to four weeks to prevent your furkid from developing an allergy or other negative reaction to an oil. If an allergy develops over time or illness occurs after repeated use, the specialized pet product should be immediately discontinued and a vet visit to treat the symptoms is called for. While often we consider essential oils and aromatherapy simply being a fragrant way to change an environment and set a mood, they can have undesired physical and psychological side effects to our pets, same as some essential oils can be unpleasant and headache-inducing for humans. Even pet essential oils need to be stored with pet medicines, pet shampoos and other pet care products that do not belong on an open shelf or easily accessible to children and pets.

# Can I Make Essential Oils for My Pet at Home?



Unless you have the means to distill botanical materials such as flower petals, roots, stems, and resins, as well as woods, you cannot make your own essential oils. Plus, many aromatherapy fragrances are fortified in strength using synthetic fragrance oils and are sold as essential oils. To make truly safe oils at

home, you would need to distill a large volume (several pounds) of organic certified botanical materials to make a small amount of oil. Just purchasing flowers from the forest or harvesting plants from the yard means you are risking the essential oil being contaminated with pesticides and other chemicals that are unsafe. Fertilizers can also contaminate a crafted essential oil and make it have higher health risks. It requires a large amount of plant parts or blossoms to produce a small volume of the oil, so to do a DIY essential oil, it can be incredibly expensive to source a proper still, all the equipment, as much as a couple of hundred pounds of organic certified quality flower petals and the accessories required to bottle the essential oil gathered and then the undertaking of cleaning up, disposing of the used botanical mash, and what to use for wastewater from the process for, whether it is a good hydrosol in demand or best poured someplace and hopefully not be a hydrosol that is not able to alter the environment.

It is cheaper and better to get essential oils from a quality source and not attempt to make your own. Just choose good oils. Some brands are popular, but farmers' markets may be a great way to support local oil producers or get essential oils sourced from sustainable farms and from organic botanicals. Always purchase organically grown oils that state the source of the essential oil and lists any carrier oils if it comes already diluted. Always purchase "natural oil" and research to make sure there are not synthesized fragrance oils added. Buying cheap oil is not worth it. You save money but are not getting pure essential oil usually. When it comes to essential oils, you get what you pay for, unless you purchase from an MLM type company and even if they may sell pure botanically sourced essential oils, you may be overpaying. Only buy from companies that disclose and provide MSDS and information on their manufacturing processes. Altreya is another company that is well-established and makes high-quality hydrosols that are food-safe and organic and therefore safer to use when diluting around pets.

The best option if you want to make your pet and yourself some essential oils at home is to make a hydrosol. Even making a hydrosol that will be used on yourself or your pet will require organic flowers. You do not want to spritz your face with a cosmetic hydrosol made with floral essential oils with pesticides and fertilizers in the mist. To make a hydrosol, ideally, you will use a ceramic, glass or non-chemical leaching saucepan, distilled water (a gallon) and enough rose petals (a safer hydrosol so we'll use roses as our example and organic roses can be found and ordered as people use rose petals in cookery and candy them for cake and candy décor) that can be covered by the water. Place the petals in the saucepan and cover with cool water. Place the pot on a burner at high until the water boils and then turn the water to a simmer. Use a potato masher or spoon to crush the petals and then add more while simmering. If using red or pink rose petals, the water will be tinted lightly. If the water is deep red, the flowers had dye added. Rosewater is clear to only the lightest and a translucent hue of pink if natural. Do not use unnatural or enhanced colored roses. Once the petals are all added and covered with water and simmering, allow the petals to simmer. The water should be added until it barely covers the crushed petals. It will fragrance the home while simmering. After 30 minutes, remove the mixture from the heat and allow the rose petal and water mix to gradually cool to room temperature on the countertop. Once the content of the saucepan has reached room temperature, use a fine-tooth strainer to separate the rose water into a bottle or bottles and dilute to taste. Some people keep some of the macerated, now pale petals or add reserved fresh or dried petals to the bottles to dress them up for gift giving. A hydrosol should be diluted with 1-part hydrosol to 3 or 4 parts water if used around pets. Finding organic flowers is harder and more expensive and food-grade hydrosols from ethnic markets save you around a hundred dollars and are assured to be from only natural sources and food grade. Cortas is a very reputable and pure food quality floral water available in various floral and herbal varieties including large 16oz glass bottles.

# How to Keep Your Pet Healthy and Safe



A pet owner must ensure that their pet stays healthy and safe, as well as happy.

Therefore, so many pet parents are turning to using essential oils despite the risks. There are many things a good pet owner should do to ensure the safety and welfare of their pet. By pet-proofing your home, you can reduce your worries and prevent many of the problems less conscientious pet-owners experience and protect your pet from many hazards in the home. Our dogs and cats are always inquisitive and exploring their environments. Dogs use their mouths like hands and can get into as much trouble in the home as an overly curious daredevil cat.

Here are some extra tips to create safe environments for pets:

- Use cable and cord management systems and careful placement to keep wires out of reach. TV, DVD, Blu-ray player, stereo, lamp, computers, cell phone chargers, game systems, and game controller charging cords should always be kept up and away from pets.
- Children's toys and games present pet choking hazards and a stray Lego not only will hurt your foot if stepped on but can get lodged in your pet's throat if accidentally swallowed. Making sure your child or you put all toys away after play and make sure small pieces don't get left about will prevent accidental marble, dice, and other small object ingestions and large vet bills.
- Tie up Venetian blind cords or use vertical blind openers to reduce the risk of a cat or small dog being strangled when they poke their head between the slats. Better yet, lift the blinds up halfway each morning to present a screen for pet TV to minimize blinds getting damaged.
- Until your cat can learn to not act like the action in the "I do what I want" meme and has either no inclination or has coordination, put knick-knacks and sentimental fragile decorative items in a location where a clumsy or mischievous cat cannot knock them over and break them.
- Always check the nooks and crannies of your home for string and other hazards to a pet. If the vacuum cannot fit, your pet may still be able to fit and can stash dangerous things there that they've stolen from you as possible toys.
- Keep all house plants that may be poisonous out of reach, or even better, not in your home, this applies to hanging plant baskets, as well as some pets, will attempt to use tables and chairs as trapezes to launch at a hanging houseplant that smells good or looks interesting to them.
- Check and make sure all heating/air vents are covered to avoid a pet in the ductwork and getting injured.

- Keep all craft supplies and sewing supplies away from pets and store them properly and in a pet-safe cabinet or container. Storage totes are ideal for keeping pets out of glues, glitter, fabric trims, and sharps such as scrapbooking scissors and sewing accoutrements.
- Use baby-proof latches on cabinets to prevent tiny paws from opening cabinets.

- Keep all human foods out of pet reach to prevent not just human food ingestion of dangerous foods but prevent twist tie and plastic or food packaging consumption which can harm a pet.
- Always keep the toilet lid down. Never allow your pet to drink from the bowl or think it is a place they can explore, even if you use all-natural cleaning supplies. The toilet is not an alternate water bowl.
- Always keep all over the counter and prescription medications, cleaners, household chemicals, sponges, steel wool scrubbers, and laundry supplies on high shelves.
- Use covered trash cans or a childproof cabinet location to make sure your pet doesn't go into the trash and make a mess or ingest something dangerous. Keep garbage and trash pet-free.
- Cats love warm spaces to snuggle up in. This includes the dryer. Always check the dryer for cats if you've left the door open and check before shutting the door on that load of laundry and turn the dryer on.
- Make sure laundry isn't left lying around so buttons and drawstrings don't become chew toys and accidentally swallowed.
- Medications, lotions, or cosmetics should always be moved off the bureau or nightstand. These products belong in the drawers, in the vanity or in another inaccessible spot.
- Keep cords, wires, and cables safely away from pets.
- Dogs and cats can be lightning fast. Always make sure you do not accidentally close them in the closet or in dresser drawers if they are still small and always exploring.
- In all rooms, always check for snouts, tails, and noses when shutting drawers, doors and moving a desk or chair from a table to prevent injuries.

- Keep all chemicals such as paints, solvents and other home chemicals like pesticides on high shelving or in a locked closed storage cabinet in a garage.
- If you add antifreeze in the garage and a single drop hits the floor, immediately clean and dilute it. The same applies to adding antifreeze in the driveway. Ethylene glycol has a very appealing smell to our pets and a single drop can be lethal.
- If you park outside in winter and have stray or outside cats that frequent your house, always knock loudly on the hood before starting your car to make sure a cold neighborhood kitty hasn't curled up under your hood to take advantage of a cooling warmed up engine or sought shelter. Likewise, pocket pets that are wild can set up overnight and can do serious damage to wiring.
- Keep all sharp objects like garden and power tools out of your pet's reach.

Your pet needs proper nutrition, exercise, affection, regular checkups at least once a year for a mature pet and twice a year for senior pets. Kittens and Puppies need to follow the vet schedule to make sure they get all their vaccinations. Your pet also needs to ideally have preventative treatment for fleas, ticks, heartworm, and other preventable illnesses. An awesome pet parent trains their pet young to tolerate having their sharp teeth brushed with a pet toothpaste as gum disease is painful and miserable for our pets and a pet with a toothache is as miserable and suffers just as a human with one does.



Having regular nail trimmings and making sure your cat or dog has a healthy coat and skin is important as well and if you ever find bald patches, dry skin or any lumps or bumps, it's time to make a vet appointment to make sure your fur kid is fit and healthy. Some breeds and older pets who cannot groom benefit greatly from professional grooming and for fat older pets, "a sanitary trim" is essential for a pet with bowel or incontinence to keep clean and healthy and reduces the risk of anal gland problems and smelly pets.

A happy and healthy pet is spayed or neutered. It extends their lives, reduces aggressive behavior in male animals, and in male pets can even prevent some cancers and health conditions. For female animals, there will be no estrus or doggie sanity pads or the caterwauling that keeps you up all night each month and no spraying of urine to mark territory.

Always know your pet and take steps to care for them if you notice abnormal behavior or any changes. By knowing your pet and observing them, you know what's normal for your pet and what their quirks are so you can tell if they seem sick or upset.

A good pet parent also keeps their pet safe and healthy by having their pet have a collar with an up to date ID tag with the pet's name and your current phone number as well as any additional information you'd like engraved on the tag, and makes sure that they also have their pet have permanent identification via a microchip. Keeping their microchip up to date, along with the contact information on their collar, and a current rabies tag registration with the vet on their collar is very important for pet safety and health. If your pet ever does somehow get lost, it can be reunited with you and come back to its forever home.

Also, do not accidentally poison your pet with essential oils attempting to use aromatherapy on your much-loved pet.

