

Puppy Proofing 101: 4 Essential Steps to Keeping Your New Pup Happy, Healthy, and Safe

Key Takeaways:

- Puppies require supervision and protection because they don't understand our world
- Make your home safe for your new puppy by removing things that can be chewed or swallowed
- Limit your puppy's access to unattended areas where he could ingest harmful materials
- Use proper preventatives to protect your puppy (and you) from fleas and ticks
- Properly store medications and products made with xylitol
- Start crate training, housebreaking, and commands to prevent boredom and destructive behavior from your dog

Is there anything more adorable than a puppy? (Answer: definitely not!) When you bring a new puppy into your home, your life will never be the same. Dogs are loyal, loving, and wonderful companions.

With dog ownership comes great responsibility. There are several things new [doggie parents need to do](#), starting with their safety. Puppies are curious explorers and don't understand how things in your home can hurt them.

It's up to you to provide them with a safe environment. You'll also want to train them, not only for their protection but also for the sake of your belongings. This article will give you 4 simple steps to puppy-proofing your home.

Puppy Proofing Step #1: Prepare Your Home for Your New Arrival

Before you even bring your fuzzy bundle of joy home, you'll want to do a little prep to make your home safe for your new friend. Think of this preparation just like you would prepare for a toddler. By getting down on the puppy's level, you'll have a better idea of what to do.

- **[Prepare Your Home](#) with Child-Proof Methods** - Latch kitchen garbage cans shut or secure them in a latched cabinet to prevent a puppy buffet. Fit your cabinets with child-proof latches. You'd be amazed at what little paws can pry open!
- **Cut Off Access to 'No Fly' Zones** - Keep toilet lids, doors, and cabinets closed. Consider putting up baby gates to limit your pup's access to off-limit areas of your house.
- **Eliminate Chewing Temptations** – Unplug electrical devices you aren't using in areas where your puppy will be. Put away shoes, boots, coats, hats, and mittens. Teach your children to put away their toys. Anything a puppy can get into his mouth is a possible chew toy!

- **Put Away Choking Hazards** – Pack away knitting needles, pens, pencils, the TV remote, cell phone chargers, and anything tiny enough for your puppy to swallow.

Puppy Proofing Step #2: Get Flea and Tick Protection for Your Puppy

To be a [responsible dog owner](#), you'll need to do a lot more than just remove things your puppy can chew or swallow. You have to be his health advocate, too. There are simple things you can do to protect his health. This includes getting [flea and tick protection](#) for your pup.

Flea bites may lead to skin irritation, infection, loss of fur, and a host of other problems. Plus, they just don't feel good to your pup! Ticks are even worse. They can cause several diseases in your dog, including anemia and paralysis! Since people can also be bitten by fleas and ticks, you'll be protecting yourself as well as your pup.

While fleas aren't very harmful to humans, they can cause an allergic reaction. And like your pup, it's not fun! Fleas can also survive up to 100 days without a host, so part of puppy-proofing your home should be flea protection. Most tick bites aren't harmful to humans either, but some do carry Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Be careful when introducing flea and tick medication to your puppy. Since he's very young, you need to make sure the dosage is right for him. Your veterinarian can help you give your puppy the right medication at the right time in the correct dose.

Puppy Proofing Step #3: Protect Your Puppy Against Toxins, Medications, and Allergies

To keep your puppy safe, you'll need to change your way of thinking in many areas of your home. Certain products you have may be helpful to you, but they can cause serious harm to your new furry friend.

- **Properly Store Medications** – Many of us don't think of our medications in the same way as other belongings. They are there for our health, so they become almost "invisible" to us when we are puppy-proofing a home. You'll want to properly store any medications you normally leave out where a puppy could reach them. This includes nightstands, end tables, coffee tables, and other locations at the doggie level.
- **Store Bags, Purses, and Backpacks** – You may not think of a backpack as potentially harmful to a puppy. But xylitol poisoning is becoming more and more common in dogs. Over 700 products, from purses to sugar-free gum have xylitol in them. Familiarize yourself with [products that include xylitol](#) to create a safe home for your new puppy.

- **Bathe Your Puppy** – When you give your dog a bath, you’re not just washing away dirt and doggie-stink. You’re also getting rid of possible allergens in the form of grass, pollen, mold, and dust. During bath time, be sure to wash and dry his ears thoroughly, too. Between baths, wipe his feet with hypoallergenic baby wipes to prevent tracking allergens indoors.

Puppy Proofing Step #4: Start Training Early

A well-trained dog is less likely to get into trouble and get hurt. You can start training your puppy when he’s seven to eight weeks old. By training our dog, he will be less inclined to get into trouble. Dogs enjoy having things to do, so teaching them new things is a great way to help puppy-proof your home.

- **Housebreak Your Puppy** – It takes between four and six months to housebreak a puppy. Smaller breeds may take longer because they have smaller bladders. And some dogs are just slow learners. The key to housebreaking is patience and consistency.

- **Crate Train Your Puppy** – While some pet owners believe putting your puppy in a crate is cruel, the opposite is true. Dogs are den animals. Your new puppy will likely be quite nervous in your home. There are so many new smells and sensations to take in. By giving him a crate, he will feel more secure. One important thing to remember is never to use the crate as punishment. [Crate training](#) can also be a great addition to housebreaking.

- **Teach Your Puppy Commands** – Dogs are task-driven animals and enjoy learning commands. When you begin teaching your puppy commands at an early age, you are giving him mental stimulation, important for your puppy’s mental health. Learning commands helps prevent boredom, which will prevent destructive behavior. Keep training sessions short, under five minutes, and always use positive reinforcement.

Summing Up

You can enjoy a good long life with your dog by taking simple steps to keep him safe. Remember, your puppy doesn’t understand the human world. Start good habits early and you’ll be rewarded with a wonderful companion who will shower you with unconditional love.

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