

Pets and People

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This lesson is designed for 6th-8th grade students to explore the health benefits and risks involved in pet ownership and interaction. Zoonoses will be introduced, and students will examine the safety of their interactions with household pets.

Disclaimer: The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Summary

This lesson is designed for 6th–8th grade students to explore the health benefits and risks involved in pet ownership and interaction. Zoonoses will be introduced, and students will examine the safety of their interactions with household pets.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will understand basic health benefits and health risks associated with animal ownership and interaction.
- Students will be introduced to common diseases that are transmitted from pets to humans.
- Students will become familiar with the symptoms, causes, and treatments of various zoonoses.

Materials

1. Photocopies of Prized Pet cards
2. Photocopies of Pet Care sheets
3. Graph paper
4. Poster paper
5. 1–4 stuffed animals (dog, cat, mini-mammal, reptile)
6. Simulated plastic germ (Glo Germ™-type) powder
7. Portable black light
8. Photocopies of Common Pet Disease Student Chart
9. Internet access
10. Photocopy transparency of Common Pet Disease Chart Answer Key
11. Photocopies of Pet Problem cards
12. Photocopies of Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic Admission form
13. Photocopies of Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention Chart
14. Photocopy transparency of Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention Chart Answer Key
15. Photocopies of Animals Can Make You Sick article
16. Photocopies of Healthy Reasons to Have a Pet
17. Photocopies of Pet Wellness certificates

Total Duration

4 hours, 35 minutes

Procedures

Teacher Preparation

One copy of each of the following handouts should be made for each student.

- Prized Pet cards
- Pet Care sheets
- Common Pet Disease Student Chart
- Pet Problem cards
- Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic Admission form
- Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention Chart
- Animals Can Make You Sick, Healthy Reasons to Have a Pet
- Pet Wellness certificates

If the Internet is not available, photocopying overhead transparencies of the Common Pet Disease Chart and the Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention Chart will suffice. Four stuffed animals (dog, cat, mouse, and reptile) are needed for **Step 2**. Simulated plastic germ (Glo Germ-type) powder and a portable black light are also needed for **Step 2**. The simulated germ powder needs to be sprinkled on the stuffed animal(s) prior to class. The powder and black light are available at science supply companies such as <http://www.carolina.com>. The teacher should access Web resources to become familiar with background information, particularly CDC's Healthy Pets Healthy People website.

Web Resource

Title: CDC Features — Healthy Pets Healthy People

URL: <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HealthyPets/>

Description: This website provides information on healthy pet and human interactions.

Introduction

Duration: 55 minutes

Step 1

Pre-assessment: Students will write an answer to the prompts written on the board or overhead: "Think of a pet animal owned by you or a friend, relative, neighbor. Describe the interaction between you and that animal over the course of a day or a week." This can include types of activities, amount of time spent together, where the interaction occurs, and so on.

Survey the class about pet ownership. Inquire about the number of students with dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, reptiles, birds, or other animals. Display the results on a poster, easel, or whiteboard. Ask students to generate a bar graph of the data. Provide parallel national statistics on pet ownership for students to generate a second graph for comparison to class data, using data available at the American Pet Product Manufacturers Association website: <http://www.americanpetproducts.org/>

Lead a discussion of pros and cons of pet ownership and record students' responses. Responses for pros may include items such as, companionship, exercise, responsibility. Responses for cons may include cost, cleaning up waste, or even being bitten. **Note:** Save this information for use during subsequent steps in the lesson.

Distribute Prized Pet cards and ask students to name their pets. The cards can be distributed to individual students or groups of students. Distribute the appropriate Pet Care Sheet and ask students to read the Pet Care Sheet **before Step 2**.

Web Resources

Title: Dog Care Sheet

URL: <http://www.petco.com/caresheets/dog/Dog.pdf>

Description: This flyer provides information that highlights dog facts and care tips.

Title: Proper Cat Care Sheet

URL: http://www.petco.com/caresheets/cat/Cat_BasicCare.pdf

Description: This flyer provides information that highlights cat facts and care tips.

Title: Spay/Neutered Rabbit Care Sheet

URL: http://www.petco.com/caresheets/small%20animals/Rabbit_SpayNeuter.pdf

Description: This flyer provides information that highlights rabbit facts and care tips.

Title: Guinea Pig Care Sheet

URL: <http://www.petco.com/caresheets/small%20animals/GuineaPig.pdf>

Description: This flyer provides information that highlights guinea pig facts and care tips.

Title: Gerbil Care Sheet

URL: <http://www.petco.com/caresheets/small%20animals/Gerbil.pdf>

Description: This flyer provides information that highlights gerbil facts and care tips.

Title: Red-eared Slider Turtle Care Sheet

URL: http://www.petco.com/caresheets/turtles/Turtle_RedEaredSlider.pdf

Description: This flyer provides information that highlights turtle facts and care tips

Title: Corn Snake Care Sheet

URL: http://www.petco.com/caresheets/snakes/Snake_Corn.pdf

Description: This flyer provides information that highlights corn snake facts and care tips

Title: American Pet Product Manufacturer's Association, Inc.

URL: http://www.americanpetproducts.org/press_industrytrends.asp

Description: This site provides information and statistics related to pet ownership.

Supplemental Documents

Title: Prized Pet Cards

Description: Set of twelve cards detailing type of pet and brief fictional history; teacher will photocopy and distribute one card per student or student pair.

Title: Pet Care Sheets

Description: Informational flyers with facts and care tips about dogs, cats, rabbits, gerbils, guinea pigs, turtles, and corn snakes.

Step 2**Duration: 55 minutes**

Ask students to gather around the stuffed animal representing their assigned pet (dog, cat, mini-mammal, or reptile) placed at different stations in the room. Inform the students that this toy is their mascot for the day, and they are allowed to pet it and pass it around for 10 minutes. These items should **first** be sprinkled with simulated plastic germ (Glo Germ-type) powder prior to being passed around. **Note:** If four toy animals are not available, use one stuffed animal sprinkled with the simulated germ powder.

Each group will review the information from the handouts and generate a brief list of pet traits and care requirements for their particular type of pet — dog, cat, mini-mammal, or reptile — on poster paper. A group representative will share the information with the class.

The teacher will review the pet pros and cons chart with the class, introducing the topic of pet illnesses. At this time, the teacher will move around the room with the black light to illuminate the *germs* (simulated germ powder transferred from the stuffed animal to students) that each student has picked up through touch.

The teacher will then provide students with The 6 Steps of Hand Washing from the National Science Foundation (NSF) Scrub Club, or show an animated episode of Scrub Club. Students will wash their hands and the teacher will check for germs again with the black light.

Web Resources

Title: The 6 Steps of Hand Washing

URL: http://www.scrubclub.org/assets/pdf/6steps_poster.pdf

Description: A downloadable poster from the NSF featuring the six steps of proper hand washing.

Title: NSF Scrub Club

URL: <http://www.scrubclub.org/site/meet.aspx>

Description: An animated overview of proper hand washing techniques developed by the Scrub Club of the NSF and the Partnership for Food Safety Education.

Step 3**Duration: 55 minutes**

The teacher will distribute the Common Pet Diseases chart. Students will conduct an Internet search to find information related to ten common zoonoses. If the Internet is not available, the teacher can display the Common Pet Diseases Answer Key by using an overhead transparency.

Distribute one Pet Problem card to each pet owner at the end of class. Each pet should have a specific corresponding disease card.

Web Resources

Title: CDC Healthy Pets, Healthy People — Browse by Disease

URL: http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/browse_by_diseases.htm

Description: This website offers information regarding common pet diseases from the CDC.

Title: Veterinary Partner

URL: <http://www.veterinarypartner.com/>

Description: This website offers information about the care and treatment of pets.

Title: American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) — Pet Health
URL: <http://www.avma.org/careforanimals/animatedjourneys/pethealth/pethealthfl.asp>
Description: This website from the American Veterinary Medical Association offers information about pet care and treatment in an animated format.

Supplemental Documents

Title: Common Pet Diseases Student Chart
Description: Chart to record information about ten common pet diseases

Title: Common Pet Diseases Student Chart Answer Key
Description: Chart with information about ten common pet diseases

Title: Pet Problem Cards
Description: This set of twelve cards, one for each of the twelve Prized Pets students received in **Step 1**, describes symptoms of pet illness and schedules *appointments* for pets at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic.

Step 4

Duration: 55 minutes

Welcome students to the **Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic**, and post this title on a board or overhead projector or over the door to the classroom to be seen upon entry. Give students the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic Patient Admission Form. Ask students to fill out the top three sections of the form.

Distribute the Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention of Common Pet Illnesses Student Chart. Use the overhead transparency of the Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention of Common Pet Illnesses Answer Key, and discuss the six diseases. Details about transmission of diseases from animals to humans should be highlighted during the group discussion.

Students will then analyze the symptoms presented by their pets. Next, students will diagnose the illness and plan a course of treatment. Ask students to complete the Diagnosis and Treatment note section of the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic Patient Admission form. Distribute the Pet Wellness certificates after students have diagnosed their pets' illnesses and planned their course of treatment. The Pet Wellness certificates can be printed on mailing labels to easily affix on student papers.

Introduce the term **zoonoses**, meaning diseases that can be passed from animals to humans. Provide the handouts: Zoonoses — Animals Can Make You Sick and Healthy Reasons to Have a Pet to students (for outside-class reading).

Web Resources

Title: Zoonoses — Animals Can Make You Sick
URL: <http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d000701-d000800/d000752/d000752.html>
Description: Michigan State University Cooperative Extension flyer that summarizes ten key animal diseases that can be transmitted to humans

Title: Healthy Reasons to Have a Pet
URL: <http://www.deltasociety.org/AnimalsHealthGeneralReasons.htm>
Description: List of health benefits of animals from the Delta Society

Supplemental Documents

Title: Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic Patient Admission form

Description: Form for students to record information describing the pet's illness.

Title: Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention of Common Pet Illnesses Student Chart

Description: Chart providing some diagnoses, treatment, and prevention information about six key pet diseases with empty areas for students to complete.

Title: Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention of Common Pet Illnesses Chart Answer Key

Description: Completed chart providing diagnoses, treatment, and prevention information about six key pet diseases.

Conclusion

Duration: 55 minutes

Revisit the pros and cons chart. Obtain students' suggestions for additions to the chart based on reading selections from **Step 4**. Discussion points may include the importance of regular veterinary care, sanitation, and the benefits of sharing tips with friends and family members who interact with pets.

Post Assessment: Students will write answers to a prompt already written the on board or overhead: "Think of the pet animal owned by you or a friend, relative, neighbor. Considering what you have learned about pet illnesses, describe the interaction between you and that animal over the course of a day or a week. What changes will you make to benefit the health of you and your pet?"

Assessment

Students will be asked to reflect on their personal pet interactions to evaluate and consider modifying their health habits during and after contact with pets. For a pre-assessment, students write about past and present pet interactions. As a post assessment, students will reflect and write about how they will interact with pets in the future. Student knowledge is also assessed through their successful completion of the Common Pet Diseases handout and the Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention Chart.

Modifications

Extension

Possible Additions to the Conclusion

- Create a brochure that provides important information about the link between healthy pets and healthy people
- Videotape a public service announcement to educate community members about common pet illnesses and the importance of regular veterinary care
- Produce a slide presentation to share with elementary school students encouraging safer interactions with pets

Web Resource

Title: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Pet-Scripton

URL: http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/petscription_gen.htm

Description: This site offers tips for health-conscious interaction with pets.

Education Standards

National Science Education Standards

SCIENCE IN PERSONAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES, CONTENT STANDARD F

As a result of activities in grades 5–8, all students should develop understanding of

- **Personal health**
- Populations, resources, and environments
- **Natural hazards**
- **Risks and benefits**
- Science and technology in society

Prized Pet Cards

Pets and People

June Teisan and Carolyn Kelley, CDC's 2007 Science Ambassador Program

<p>Prized Pet (1.)</p> <p>You have been given a female Cairn Terrier puppy purchased from an internet breeder in Ohio! CONGRATULATIONS!</p>	<p>Prized Pet (2.)</p> <p>You have been given a male Golden Retriever puppy purchased from a breeder advertising in the local newspaper! CONGRATULATIONS!</p>
<p>Prized Pet (3.)</p> <p>No one has claimed the loveable young male mixed-breed stray dog you found last week so you can keep him! CONGRATULATIONS!</p>	<p>Prized Pet (4.)</p> <p>Your neighbor's Labradoodle had puppies and they are giving you the sweet little female puppy you wanted! CONGRATULATIONS!</p>

Prized Pet

(5.)

You have been given a purebred white male Persian kitten purchased from the pet store at the mall!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Prized Pet

(6.)

You have been given the female orange tabby kitten that has been living under your porch for the past two weeks!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Prized Pet

(7.)

You have been given a tiny male kitten from the litter your neighbor's calico cat had two months ago!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Prized Pet

(8.)

You have been given a bunny rabbit purchased from the local farmer's market in the city!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Prized Pet

(9.)

You have been given your very own gerbil from the litter that was born to the pet gerbil family in your classroom!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Prized Pet

(10.)

You have been given a furry little guinea pig your friend had to give away when he moved to an apartment!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Prized Pet

(11.)

You have been given a Red-eared Slider turtle your friend found and brought home from her vacation to Mississippi!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Prized Pet

(12.)

You have been given a sleek and beautiful corn snake purchased at a local pet store!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Common Pet Diseases Student Chart

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Disease	Symptoms	Cause	Animals That Can Be Infected
Rabies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems swallowing [1] • Aggression [1] • [1] • [1] 	Virus [2]	[3]
Tapeworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice-like objects in feces [4] • [4] 	[4]	Dogs [4] Cats [4]
Hookworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worms in feces [5] 	Worms [5]	[5] [5]
<i>Salmonella</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea [6] 	[6]	Reptiles [6] [6]
<i>Campylobacter</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [7] 	Bacteria [7]	Farm animals [7]
Ringworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rash [8] • [8] 	[8]	Dogs [8] Cows [8] [8] [8]
Toxoplasmosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [15] 	[9]	Cats [9]
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever [13] • Vomiting [13] • Weight loss [13] 	[10]	Dogs [13]
Hantavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor symptoms [15] 	[11]	Wild mice [11]
Plague	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No symptoms [14] 	[12]	[12]

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Common Pet Diseases Student Chart Answer Key

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Disease	Symptoms	Cause	Animals That Can Be Infected
Rabies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems swallowing [1] • Aggression [1] • Changes in behavior [1] • Increased drooling [1] 	Virus [2]	Mammals [3]
Tapeworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice-like objects in feces [4] • Scooting across the ground on rear [4] 	Worms [4]	Dogs [4] Cats [4]
Hookworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worms in feces [5] 	Worms [5]	Dogs [5] Cats [5]
<i>Salmonella</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea [6] 	Bacteria [6]	Reptiles [6] Chickens [6]
<i>Campylobacter</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea [7] 	Bacteria [7]	Farm animals [7] Cats [7] Dogs [7]
Ringworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rash [8] • Fur loss [8] 	Fungus [8]	Dogs, cats, cows, horses, pigs, and goats [8]
Toxoplasmosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No symptoms [15] 	Parasites [9]	Cats [9]
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever [13] • Vomiting [13] • Weight loss [13] 	Bacteria [10]	Dogs [13]
Hantavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor symptoms [15] 	Virus [11]	Wild mice [11]
Plague	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No symptoms [14] 	Bacteria [12]	Wild rodents [12]

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Pet Problem Cards

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Pet Problem

(1.)

Your terrier puppy has been experiencing diarrhea, sometimes with blood in it. Your pet has an appointment at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Pet Problem

(2.)

Your retriever puppy doesn't want to play, has very white gums and black feces. Your pet has an appointment for the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Pet Problem

(3.)

Your dog is scratching and biting his belly, and scoots his bottom along the carpet. Your pet has an appointment at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Pet Problem

(4.)

Your puppy has been experiencing diarrhea, sometimes with blood in it. Your pet has an appointment at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Pet Problem

(5.)

Your Persian kitten has been experiencing diarrhea, sometimes with blood in it. Your pet has an appointment at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Pet Problem

(6.)

Your kitten has little brown bean-shaped bumps on her skin that are growing larger. Your pet has an appointment at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Pet Problem

(7.)

Your kitten has areas on his tummy and ears where the fur is missing. His skin has ring-shaped red patches. Your pet has an appointment at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Pet Problem

(8.)

Your rabbit has areas on his tummy where the fur is missing and his skin has ring-shaped red patches. Your pet has an appointment at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Pet Problem

(9.)

Your gerbil doesn't dash around the cage anymore and doesn't eat or drink very much. The fur at the base of his tail is wet and matted. Your pet has an appointment at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Pet Problem

(10.)

Your guinea pig has little brown bean-shaped bumps on her skin that are growing larger. Your pet has an appointment at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Pet Problem

(11.)

Your turtle seems to be fine but you want to make sure it is healthy. Your pet has an appointment at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Pet Problem

(12.)

Your corn snake seems to be fine but you want to make sure it is healthy. Your pet has an appointment at the Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic!

Schoolhouse Veterinary Clinic

Patient Admission Form

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[SECTION 1]

Owner's Name: _____

School Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

[SECTION 2]

Pet's Name: _____

Pet's Age: _____ Pet's Gender: Male Female Unknown

Pet Type: Dog Cat Rabbit Rodent Reptile

Details (specific breed or species): _____

[SECTION 3] Reason for visit (explain symptoms your pet is experiencing, if any):

***** Please do not write below this line *****

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

Pet Wellness Certificates

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Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!	Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!	Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!
Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!	Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!	Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!
Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!	Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!	Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!
Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!	Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!	Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!
Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!	Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!	Your pet has been successfully treated and has earned a Certificate of Wellness!

Diagnosis, Treatment and Prevention of Common Pet Illnesses Student Chart

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Disease	Symptoms/Diagnosis	Treatment	Prevention For Your Pet	Human Connection
Tapeworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scooting across the ground on their rear [1] • [1] 	[1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vet visit [1] • [1] • Clean up feces [1] 	Humans can contract tapeworm from pets [1]
Hookworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bloody stool – dark and watery [2] • Puppies are pale [3] 	De-worming [2]	[2]	Humans can contract hookworm from pets [2]
<i>Salmonella</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [4] • “Wet tail”; matted hair on rear [5] • [6] 	[6]	[5,6,8]	Humans can contract <i>Salmonella</i> from pets [6,8]
<i>Campylobacter</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea [7] • Microscopic examination of feces or bacterial culture [8] 	[8]	[7,8]	Humans can contract <i>Campylobacter</i> from pets [7,8]
Ringworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fur loss, rash [9] • Microscopic examination of fur [10] 	[10]	[9,10]	Humans can contract ringworm from pets [9]
Ticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown bean on pet [11] 	Remove ticks from pet [11]	[11]	Humans can contract ticks from pets [11]

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Diagnosis, Treatment and Prevention of Common Pet Illnesses Answer Sheet

Pets and People
June Teisan and Carolyn Kelley, CDC's 2007 Science Ambassador Program

Disease	Symptoms/Diagnosis	Treatment	Prevention For Your Pet	Human Connection
Tapeworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scooting across the ground on their rear [1] • Rice-like objects in their feces [1] 	Prescription medication [1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vet visit [1] • Control fleas [1] • Clean up feces [1] 	Humans can contract tapeworm from pets [1]
Hookworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bloody stool – dark and watery [2] • Puppies are pale [3] 	De-worming [2]	Clean up feces [2]	Humans can contract hookworm from pets [2]
<i>Salmonella</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea [4] • Wet tail; matted hair on rear [5] • Blood test/culture [6] 	Medication if pet has symptoms [6]	Maintain clean environment for pet [6] Keep pet away from infected animals [5,8]	Humans can contract <i>Salmonella</i> from pets [6,8]
<i>Campylobacter</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea [7] • Microscopic examination of feces or bacterial culture [8] 	Prescription medication [8]	Maintain clean environment for pet [8] Visit your veterinarian regularly [7]	Humans can contract <i>Campylobacter</i> from pets [7,8]
Ringworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fur loss, rash [9] • Microscopic examination of fur [10] 	Prescription medication, dips, or topical medication [10]	Keep pet away from infected animals [9,10] Wash hands after handling infected pets [9]	Humans can contract ringworm from pets [9]
Ticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown bean on pet [11] 	Remove ticks from pet [11]	Flea and tick repellent for pet [11]	Humans can contract ticks from pets [11]

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