

## **Pets**

### ***The true facts about our pets***

- Sixty-three percent of Americans own at least one pet, and they are virtually unprotected from toxic chemicals.
- In America there are 8 times more companion dogs and cats than there are children under five. Seventy percent more households have dogs or cats than children of any age.

### ***Are we harming ourselves or our pets with daily activities?***

- Environmental Working Group found that American pets are polluted with even higher levels of many of the same synthetic industrial chemicals that researchers have recently found in people, including newborns.
- Pets face chemical exposures that in some ways are similar to those of infants and toddlers, who have limited diets and play close to the floor and put their hands and household objects in their mouths far more often than adults.
- Dogs and cats often eat food processing and packaging chemicals that contaminate their food, day after day and year after year, resulting in cumulative exposures with unknown health risks.
- Chew toys might contain plastic softeners, foam beds might be infused or coated with fire retardants and stain-proofing chemicals linked to cancer and birth defects, and plastic water bowls might leach hormone disruptors.

### ***How can I change my habits?***

- Choose organic or free-range pet foods. Check labels to avoid the chemical preservatives butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT), and ethoxyquin, and switch your cat's food regularly to limit the exposure to mercury in seafood.
- Give your pet the same filtered water that you enjoy.
- Use baby shampoo on your dog. Pet products are not required to list potentially harmful ingredients on labels.
- Flea collars are generally ineffective and contain lots of chemicals. Ask your vet about safer treatments and repellents.
- Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter, and take off your shoes at the door to minimize your pets' exposure to toxic chemicals in the house that have been introduced from the outside.
- If you suspect that your backyard deck was made with arsenic-treated wood, treat it with a sealant every six months, and don't let pets play or sleep underneath it. Wash it with mild soap and water, but never power wash it.
- Buy recycled pet toys and beds

***What are the benefits in changing my ways?***

- If one in every twenty dog owners purchased a bed made from recycled materials, the fiber savings would total nearly 3,200 tons and fill 400 garbage trucks.
- If every dog in the US ate vegetarian just one day a month, the energy savings per year would be equivalent of 190 million gallons of gasoline.
- If all pet toys purchased each year were 100% recycled, the virgin materials saved could make a Frisbee nearly 2.5 miles in diameter.
- If only 10% of all dog and cat owners purchased treats in recyclable packaging, more than 58,000 cubic yards of waste would be eliminated annually.