

Keeping Pets And Their People Healthy

(NAPSA)—A pet's health is an important consideration for families—and not just because they care about their four-legged friend.

Although rare, it is possible for pets to pass certain diseases to humans. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control estimates between 1 and 3 million people are zoonotically infected (meaning made ill by their pets) each year in the U.S. Additionally, as many as 4 to 20 percent of children in America contract roundworms from their pets each year. Roundworm infection can result in devastating diseases, including major organ damage and blindness.

The good news is that these types of illnesses are completely preventable. Experts at www.growingupwithpets.com, a Web site dedicated to pet and family health, say the best place to start is with basic hygiene. Kids should be taught to wash their hands after playing with pets, after playing outdoors and before eating. The site offers these additional tips:

- Take your pet to the veterinarian for checkups as recommended, use a convenient, monthly oral pet parasite preventive year-round and keep up with all vaccinations recommended for the area.

- Wash your hands with soap and running water if you have come into contact with pet feces.

- If your dog bites you, wash the area right away with soap and water.

- Wash your hands after handling your pet—especially before eating or preparing food.



Using a convenient, monthly oral parasite preventive year-round can help children avoid contracting diseases.

- People with weakened immune systems should take special precautions, including never letting pets lick them on the face or on an open cut or wound, never touching animal feces and never handling an animal that has diarrhea.

- Don't let your pet drink from toilet bowls or eat feces.

Protective Measures

You can also reduce the risk of zoonotic infection by keeping your family's and pet's indoor and outdoor environments clean:

- Remove your pet's fecal matter from your lawn or surrounding outdoor environment daily. Feces can be bagged and put in the trash, burned or flushed down a toilet.

- Cover your children's sandboxes when not in use.

- Use appropriate methods to reduce mosquito populations in your outdoor environment.

For more information and tips, visit www.growingupwithpets.com.