

Adopt a Pet™

# Five steps to help keep your new dog safe

Your new dog has a whole new world to explore. These five steps can keep them safe from day one.



Bringing a new dog home? *Before* they get the run of the house and yard, take these five steps to keep them safe as they settle in.

## 1. Get them ID'd, stat

New dogs can be flight risks because they're adjusting to unfamiliar surroundings and still figuring out where "home" is. Getting your dog an ID from day one means they'll have a better chance of making it safely back to you if they ever get loose. Have your dog wear a safety-buckle collar with an ID tag 24/7. Include your phone number on the tag, so anyone who finds them can quickly reach you.

A microchip is also a must. It provides permanent identification if your dog gets lost and their collar comes off. If they're already chipped, register the chip in your name right away, and keep your contact information up to date.

## 2. Lock down their space before they test it

Don't underestimate a new dog on a mission. Before giving them free rein, check your home and yard for possible escape routes.

- **Check your fence, top to bottom:** Walk the entire fence line looking for gaps or loose boards before letting your dog in the yard. Check gates are secure, too.
- **Leash and collar setup outside:** Keep your new dog securely leashed every time they're outside. A harness or martingale collar can provide extra protection.
- **Use a drag leash indoors:** Consider leaving a short leash attached to your dog while they're supervised indoors for a quick way to redirect or stop them.
- **Watch exterior doors:** Make sure everyone in your household knows to check where the dog is before opening an exterior door.

## 3. Practice slow and steady intros

New people and other pets should be slow reveals, not surprise parties. When your dog is ready to meet new people, keep the environment calm and let them approach folks at their own pace — instead of forcing interaction.

Other pets in the home, such as dogs and cats, need gradual introductions, too. Keep early meetings short and supervised, and make sure each pet has space to retreat when needed.



## 4. Get to know your vet early

Don't wait until something's wrong to find a vet for your new dog. Schedule a checkup within the first few weeks of adoption to get a baseline physical exam and establish veterinary care.

If you are unsure about your dog's microchip status or number, your vet can check this out and set you up if needed, including helping you find where to register your information for your dog's chip.

## 5. Dog-proof your house and yard

Dogs tend to investigate anything within reach. Check every space they can access — indoors and out — for potential toxins. And don't forget about nontoxic troublemakers. Dog-proof your home by securing electrical cords and trash, as well as putting away string, small objects, and anything else your new dog might decide looks chewable or edible.

Keep these common hazards out of reach:

- **Toxic foods:** Chocolate, grapes and raisins, onions and garlic, xylitol-containing products (like sugar-free gum), alcohol, caffeine, and other foods that are harmful to dogs
- **Human and pet medications:** Pain relievers, prescription drugs, and supplements intended for humans or other pets
- **Toxic plants:** Sago palms, oleander, geraniums, hydrangeas, azaleas, tulips, lily of the valley, peace lilies, and other plants that are toxic to dogs
- **Household and yard chemicals:** Cleaners, bleach, pesticides, rodenticides, fertilizers, antifreeze, and other potentially toxic chemicals

The precautions you put in place from day one can help keep your dog safe as they adjust to their new surroundings — and for years to come. And remember, settling in takes time.

## Grab your free adopter kit

Tell us about your pet's adoption, and we'll send along special offers and resources to help you settle in together.



For more pet adoption advice on what your dog's first days, weeks, and months at home may look like, visit [adoptapet.com](https://adoptapet.com)