

Pet hair, poop and other cleaning challenges

Story Highlights

Use rubber gloves to attack pet hair on furniture

Reach for the baking soda in case of wet pet messes

Allergic to cats? Spray the cat down with Allerpet

Use natural cleaning products to protect your pets

(CNN) -- Pet owners know that their furry friends can add a little something extra to the spring cleaning chores. CNN spoke with "the Queen of Clean," Linda Cobb, a New York Times best-selling author and television personality. Cobb, who owns three cats, knows a thing or two about getting the best of pet messes.

CNN: What can pet owners do about pet hair?

Cobb: You can use what's called a soot and dirt removal sponge. You simply run it over a lampshade [or the] upholstery on your furniture, and it actually pulls the hair right off.

You can also use a damp sponge. Another good thing to use is rubber gloves. Dip them into water -- keep a bucket of water near you -- shake off the excess water and rub that over the upholstery, and the hair will collect on the rubber gloves. It does a great, great job.

The other thing you need is a really good vacuum cleaner. I have found that I prefer one that has a bag in it. I use an Oreck XL. If you're using a canister vacuum, you have to take it out and then shake it into the trash, which puts all of that dust and that dander and that cat hair and everything else back up into the air.

Another good vacuum that is newer to the market is the Halo [UXV Ultraviolet Vacuum Cleaner]. That's the one with the ultraviolet light that kills germs and bacteria as you vacuum. Now, you have to vacuum correctly and go back over the area of the carpet enough times, but that's a very good vacuum too.

If you have someone in the house that is sensitive to cats, has an allergy from them or something like that, there is a product called Allerpet that you can actually just spray on to your pet, and it neutralizes the enzymes in the saliva, which is what people are usually allergic to. This is something that even if the cat licks itself, it won't hurt it.

CNN: What about pet accidents?

Cobb: If you've got a hairball, or spaghetti didn't agree with the dog, accident on the carpet, the first thing you do is scream and run to get the paper towels and start trying to pick it up, which drives it down into the carpet fibers.

Instead, reach for your baking soda. Sprinkle on a really heavy coat, and I mean heavy, so that it's completely covering it totally. Walk away. The baking soda will pull the liquid, the bile, the acids from the accident up into it away from the carpet. Once it's dry, you take the suction hose from your vacuum and simply vacuum that up, and many times you can't even tell there was an accident there.

For pet urine, the first thing you want to do is put a very heavy, heavy pile of paper towels on it, stand on it, draw all the urine you can away from the carpet. Then pour on club soda and do the same thing. Then you can go in to neutralize it with about a half a cup of water quarter cup of white vinegar. [Then] blot that dry.

If you have any odor, you want to use an odor eliminator to remove that. Now, that's not a spray that smells like lavender or oranges or flowers. An odor eliminator has no odor. A really, really fine one is Odorzout. It's all-natural, so it can't hurt the pet. The man who invented it powdered his grandson's little butt with it when he changed his diaper, that's how natural it is.

If there's a larger accident and you have a bowel movement on the floor, as long as it's not diarrhea-like, you can pick that up with a paper towel. I recommend that you immediately treat that with Odorzout, because if your pets can smell what they've done, they'll go back to that area because they think it's OK.

CNN: What about the litter box?

Cobb: Cats like to be very, very clean, so to avoid having accidents in other areas because their litter's dirty, you want to clean every day. If you're using a regular litter box, there is a product called a Litter Locker; it's a little sanitary container for the [waste] removal. It's a fantastic product. I use it for my cats, and I just love it.

Now, if you're using [an automatic cleaner], every few days, you need to make sure that the catch basin is cleaned out. If it overfills and the cat smells that, they don't want to go in, and then they're going to start using corners of your house. And you know what? That's not their fault. That's our fault if we don't keep their litter clean.

CNN: How do you keep your pets safe when you're doing a big spring cleaning?

Cobb: Well, you look for natural products. Don't use harsh chemicals; it's not necessary. Disinfectants have to stay wet on the surfaces for five to 10 minutes to work; then they have to be rinsed off. They're not safe for food surfaces. You know what that says? They're not safe for your pets to walk on, either.

Read when you go to the grocery store. If there's a natural seal or if they have a green cross on it, they're a natural, safe, organic product. I recommend so highly the ACT Natural microfiber products from Sweden, the cloths and the mops. Because with nothing but water, they remove 99.9 percent of germs and bacteria and soiling from surfaces. You're not getting any residue on surfaces, and you're not spending any money on chemicals, and you're saving the environment and your health too.