

5 Things to Toss Right Now for a Healthier Pet

It's only natural to hang on to old pet supplies, but some are clearly better off in the trash. One can create a highly toxic situation for your pet, and another may lead to unnecessary (and costly) surgery. Take action today and purge these from your home for the sake of your cherished pet.

Reviewed by Dr. Becker

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Many dedicated cat guardians don't give much thought to the condition of their pet supplies
- It's very likely some of the accessories you're currently using might be better off in the trash
- Old, dirty cat toys can harbor bacteria, and broken or damaged toys can be a choking hazard for your cat
- Some cats can develop an allergy to the materials and dyes in plastic bowls, and they've also been linked to tear staining
- Throw away and replace dull nail trimmers, as they can crush and split the nail and hurt your cat

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published January 31, 2017.

Taking excellent care of your feline family member means paying attention to small things — things you might not even realize need to be cleaned or repaired or discarded.

Veterinary journal dvm360 offers some great tips on kitty supplies you probably need to "trash right now" for the sake of your cat's health and well-being.

5 Things Most Cat Parents Need to Toss Right Now

1. **Toss this: Well-used litterbox** — If you're like most people, your cat's litterbox is plastic. Plastic litterboxes can be purchased almost anywhere, are inexpensive, lightweight and easy to clean. But there's also lots of downsides to plastic — including the fact that it scratches.

When Fluffy digs down through the litter to cover her "deposit," her sharp claws scrape the bottom and sides of the box. After awhile, these nicks and scuffs attract germs and odor that can remain even after you disinfect the box.

It's a good idea after cleanings to check your litterbox for scratched or abraded plastic. Budgeting for a new box each year is a good idea.

Replace with this: A brand new litterbox

2. **Toss this: Plastic food and water bowl** — Plastic food and water bowls are inexpensive and convenient. Unfortunately, not only are they impossible to thoroughly sanitize, but as the plastic begins to break down, it can leach into your cat's food and water.

In addition, bacteria and oils can get trapped in the peeling plastic, which can cause skin irritation or worse. Kitties can develop feline acne, also called chin acne, and plastic bowls have been linked to the condition.

In addition, some cats can develop an allergy to the materials and dyes in plastic bowls, and they've also been linked to tear staining.

Replace with this: Stainless steel, porcelain or glass food and water bowls

3. **Toss this: Grubby or damaged toys, and toys covered with fur** — Old, dirty cat toys can harbor bacteria, and broken or damaged toys can be a choking hazard for your cat. And then there are those tiny, furry mice that so many cats love to bat around. Unfortunately, they can present a major health hazard for your kitty. According to dvm360:

*"Cats are motivated by their strong prey instincts to chase and hunt the toy, and it's not a large leap to eat the toy if it is covered in real rabbit or mouse fur. Many cats have ended up on a surgery table because of these 'harmless' fake mice."*¹

Replace with this: New or homemade toys (minus anything tiny and fur-covered)

4. **Toss this: Dull nail trimmers** — Nail trims are never the highlight of a cat's day, but one thing that can make a bad situation worse is a pair of dull clippers. If the cutting surface isn't sharp, instead of a quick clean snip, the trimmers can crush and split the nail.

Not only is this uncomfortable or even painful for kitty, but it tends to make you — the human at the other end of the clippers — tense up. Your cat, in turn, picks up on your stress, which increases hers.

In a worst-case scenario, a nail trim marred by dull trimmers can make your cat dive under the bed every time they come out. Soon, your feline pal has talons instead of nails.

Replace with this: Freshly sharpened or new nail trimmers, or a battery-operated rotary tool (e.g., a Dremel)

5. **Toss this: Expired or inappropriate medications** — Hopefully your cat hasn't and won't need veterinary medications, but just in case she does, it's important not to hang onto out-of-date or unsuitable drugs.

When your vet prescribes a medicine for your kitty, it's only for her, and only for the specific condition being treated at that time. It's a really bad idea to give a cat medication intended for another cat, and it's also risky to hang onto an old prescription so you'll have it on hand "just in case."

In addition, many substances that are safe for humans and dogs are highly toxic for cats, so you should never give a drug intended for your dog or yourself to your cat. When in doubt, call your veterinarian.

Replace with this: Fresh prescriptions as required

As your kitty's guardian and advocate, it's your job to keep her safe and healthy. The five items listed above are potential hazards that many pet parents never even think about.

Sources and References

[dvm360, October 4, 2016](#)

¹ [dvm360, 5 Cat Items to Toss Right Now \(Archived\)](#)
