



Pet Owners: 'Butt Out!'

From: Pet Age Magazine / American Veterinary Medical Association

Cats that live with smokers are twice as likely to develop cancer and dogs face risks from secondhand smoke, too. That's why the American Veterinary Medical Association (Schaumburg, Ill.) continues to push people to quit smoking, even if it's for the sake of their pets.

"We're all aware of the scientific research that shows that people who smoke are more likely to get certain types of cancer and other diseases, a lot of people don't know that the same goes for the pets of smokers," said Dr. Ron DeHaven, a chief executive officer of the AVMA, in a video encouraging smokers to quit. The video and related podcast are part of the organization's recent campaign, "Kick the Habit, for You and Your Pets."

Felines that live with smokers are twice as likely to develop malignant lymphoma - a condition that is fatal to three out of four cats within a year. They're also more likely to get mouth cancer, according to the AVMA.

The picture is just as bleak for dogs. Short-nosed canines like bulldogs have double the risk of developing lung cancer from secondhand smoke, compared with dogs that live in smoke-free homes, in part because their short noses offer less pollution filtration. Dogs with long noses, like Dobermans and Collies, are 2.5 times more likely to develop nasal cancer because pollutants lodge in nasal passages of long snouts.

An August 2009 study found that about 28 percent of pet owners who smoke would try to quit if they knew that secondhand smoke endangered their pets. The researchers, from Henry Ford Health System's Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in Detroit, conducted a Web survey of 3,293 adult pet owners. About 21 percent were current smokers, and 27 percent lived with at least one smoker.

For more information, visit www.avma.org.

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Old Dog Learns New Trick: How To Read

New York dog recognizes written commands.

Dog trainer Lyssa Howells says her 12-year-old English Terrier mix, Willow, recognizes written commands such as "sit up" and "wave." She even plays dead when Howells silently holds up a flash card with the word "bang" written on it. Whether Willow can actually read or has just matched the shape of letters to a command is debatable in the veterinary community. But there's no argument that after six weeks of practice, Willow's new trick is impressive.

- from Veterinary Economics Magazine.



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