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In The News

[Wildlife species provide clues to spread of antibiotic resistance in Africa](#)- The National Science Foundation

[Hoping To Curb Antibiotic Resistance, NIH Study Will Spend \\$4.8 Million To 'Teach' An Old Drug To Fight Superbugs](#)- Medical Daily

[Vaccination campaign targets a 'Polio-free' Nigeria after decade of political, terrorism conflicts](#)- International Business Times

[ID Specialists: Linchpin in Improving Antibiotic Stewardship](#) - MedPage

Practicing Safe Pet Ownership for a Healthy Family

By Dr. Laurel Redding, VMD, PhD

According to the [Humane Society of the United States](#), more than 60 percent of American households include at least one pet. Owning pets can have a variety of [health benefits](#). For example, pet owners have increased opportunities for physical activity, and there is evidence that owning pets can help to lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and even feelings of loneliness. While our furry (and sometimes scaly) best friends have a lot of positive attributes, it is important to remember that animals can also carry and spread diseases. Responsibly caring for your pet, keeping your household clean, and maintaining a healthy family is important for pet owners.



DOGS AND CATS

Most diarrheal illnesses transmitted from dogs and cats to humans occur through the fecal-oral route – that is, handling of fecal material from the infected animal. Parasites such as Giardia or Cryptosporidium or parasite eggs such as those from nematodes (intestinal worms) found in the feces of dogs or cats can infect humans and cause diarrhea along with other symptoms. Other bacterial diseases such as Campylobacter and Salmonella can be shed by pets and transmitted to humans.

The best way to avoid these diseases is to:

- 1) Practice good hand hygiene (wash your hands frequently, especially after coming in contact with infected animals).
- 2) Avoid direct handling of pet fecal material.
- 3) Keep your pet on a monthly parasite preventative (“de-wormer”).
- 4) Get the pet’s stool checked for parasites on an annual basis.

REPTILES

Most, if not all, reptiles carry salmonella in their digestive tracks. These pets are generally not recommended for homes with children under the age of 5 or with family members whose immune systems are compromised, such as transplant recipients and those with an existing chronic illness.

The [Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians](#) suggests these basic safety precautions for reptile owners of any age:

- Wash hands with soap and hot water after handling reptiles or after cleaning reptile enclosures.
- Limit the part of your home that your reptile is allowed to inhabit, and wash your hands after being in that area.
- Never allow reptiles in areas of the home where food is prepared. Don't share food or drink with reptiles, and don't eat, drink, or smoke while handling them. Don't kiss these pets, no matter how cute you think they are.
- Do not put reptiles into bathtubs or sinks. Buy a separate tub for bathing these pets. Pour the water down the toilet, and do not use sinks or bathtubs to clean the reptile bathing tub -- or any reptile housing or gear.
- Supervise older children to be sure they don't touch the pets and then put their fingers in their mouths. Make sure thorough hand-washing follows each exposure to these pets.



Ask the Expert!

Please send any questions you may have to knowwhentosayno@pa.gov.

Your questions will be featured in the upcoming newsletters with answers from our collaborators.

If you have any ideas for future newsletters or would like more information, please feel free to contact us.

To unsubscribe, please email us.

Get Smart Team:
Knowwhentosayno@pa.gov



Art Competition Reminder

We are accepting art competition submissions now through October 31, 2015. Before the school year begins and children have homework, sports practice, and piano lessons starting up again, take this opportunity to participate in a great contest and win some cool prizes. The three winning entries in each age group will be awarded Amazon gift cards. That's 15 prizes! Plus, our first place winner in each age group will also receive a hardcover children's book.

For all childcare directors – if at least 70 percent of your children participate, you will be entered into our group submission drawing to win one of three \$50 Kaplan Company gift cards. Entry forms are online at www.KnowWhenToSayNo.org.

The Four Core Actions to Fight Resistance

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are [four core actions](#) to fight resistance. In this month's newsletter, we will address the fourth action:

4) DEVELOPING NEW DRUGS AND DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

While overuse and misuse of drugs lead to antibiotic resistance, the natural process of bacterial evolution also results in resistance. Antimicrobial resistance can be slowed, but not stopped. Development of new drugs and new diagnostics tests will help us to keep up with resistant bacteria. The antibiotics we have now are a precious resource that should be valued and conserved for when they are truly needed. President Obama's recent call for action and funding to develop a new generation of antibiotics and boost antimicrobial stewardship efforts is an important step for the nationwide initiative.

The Get Smart Pa. Program is working to educate and inform residents about the importance of stewardship through outreach projects, publications, and research.

Thank you for reading! You now know all four steps in fighting resistance.

Looking Ahead...

- △ Get Smart will be visiting the Guthrie Memorial Library in Hanover, Pa. on September 2, 2015, for a Charlotte Cowan book reading and a Glo Germ demonstration.
- △ In October, Get Smart will be at the State Museum of Pennsylvania for the Night of the Great Pumpkin. Bring your friends and family for this exciting seasonal event held October 16, 2015, from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM. See you there!

CALLING ALL CREATIVE KIDS!

2015 Get Smart Competition for Young Artists and Writers

Draw a picture, design a poster, or write a story about keeping healthy!

The Pennsylvania Get Smart Program invites all children (up to 12 years old) to help build the National Campaign to say "NO!" to germs and "YES!" to being healthy! This involves ideas like washing your hands (to wash germs away), getting vaccines or "shots" (to help prevent illness), and using medicines called antibiotics appropriately (to fight bacterial infections).

Here are a few ideas:

- Draw icky germs on dirty hands!
- Make a poster with tips for what to do if someone coughs on your toy. Yuck!
- Write about a classroom where you are sharing books and toys, when one day your best friend gets sick. What happens? Does she or he go to the nurse? Do you wash your hands?
- Make a drawing of yourself getting a flu vaccine!
- Show examples of children sick with germs that don't need antibiotics – like colds or the flu. They need a Kleenex box and lots to drink but no antibiotics!
- Design a comic book of everything "germy" you might touch in a day.
- Write a poem about how vaccines help keep you healthy.
- Create a germ-fighting hero who uses soap, water, and vaccines to fight off germs.

Deadline for submission is 10 P.M., October 31, 2015

Three children each from five different age groups will win prizes! Winning entries will be displayed on the Get Smart website.



For guidelines, information, and where to submit your entries, visit www.KnowWhenToSayNo.org.

