

## Keeping Pets And Their People Healthy

(NAPS)—A pet's health is an important consideration for families—and not just because they care about their four-legged friend.

Although rare, it is possible for pets to pass certain diseases to humans. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control estimates between 1 and 3 million people are zoonotically infected (meaning made ill by their pets) each year in the U.S. Additionally, as many as 4 to 20 percent of children in America contract roundworms from their pets each year.

The good news is that these types of illnesses are completely preventable. Experts at [www.growingupwithpets.com](http://www.growingupwithpets.com), a Web site dedicated to pet and family health, say the best place to start is with basic hygiene. Parents should wash the family's pets regularly. Also, kids should be taught to wash their hands after playing with pets, after playing outdoors and before eating. The site offers these additional tips:

- Wash your hands with soap and running water if you have come into contact with pet feces.
- Take your pet to the veterinarian on a regular basis and keep up with all vaccinations recommended for the area.
- If your dog bites you, wash the area right away with soap and water.
- Wash your hands after handling your pet—especially before eating or preparing food.
- People with weakened immune systems should take spe-



**Frequent hand washing can help children avoid contracting diseases from their pets.**

cial precautions, including never letting pets lick them on the face or on an open cut or wound, never touching animal feces and never handling an animal that has diarrhea.

- Don't let your pet drink from toilet bowls or eat feces.

### Protective Measures

You can also reduce the risk of zoonotic infection by keeping your family's and pet's indoor and outdoor environments clean:

- Remove your pet's fecal matter from your lawn or surrounding outdoor environment daily. Feces can be bagged and put in the trash, burned or flushed down a toilet.
- Cover your children's sandboxes when not in use.
- Use appropriate methods to reduce mosquito populations in your outdoor environment.

For more information and tips, visit [www.growingupwithpets.com](http://www.growingupwithpets.com).

### Did You Know?

Experts at [www.growingupwithpets.com](http://www.growingupwithpets.com), a Web site dedicated to pet and family health, say simple steps such as frequent hand washing can help keep children from contracting diseases from their pets. Visit the site for additional tips and information.

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