

## Pets



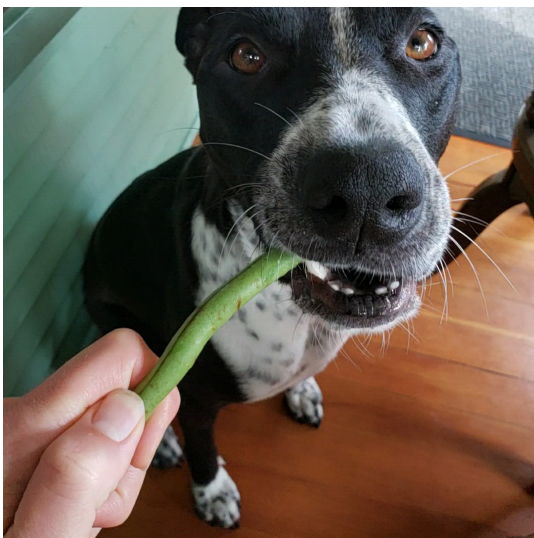
Owning a pet can create a lot of waste from packaging in addition to all the waste pets create themselves. However, there are steps you can take to reduce the amount of waste associated with having an animal companion.

### Treats

Make your own treats or offer pet-safe whole foods to cut down on packaging waste. You can also grow your own catnip for your feline and air dry it for storage.

Check with your veterinarian for advice and questions, and always make sure that the “people food” you are going to serve your pet is safe for them to consume. The American Kennel Club has a list of foods that dogs can and cannot eat ([akc.org/expert-advice/nutrition/fruits-vegetables-dogs-can-and-cant-eat](http://akc.org/expert-advice/nutrition/fruits-vegetables-dogs-can-and-cant-eat)).

Some simple options that make great snacks in moderation are carrots, raw green beans, apples, and bananas. Small bits of unseasoned and cooked lean meat, fish, or eggs are safe treats for cats.



### Pet waste

Look for cat litter made from pine, cedar, wheat, walnut shells, newspaper, or corn rather than clay, which must be mined. If your cat will use it, plain sawdust from untreated wood is also a cheap and effective option that uses an otherwise wasted resource. Cat litter should go in the trash - there is no good alternative. It is not compostable, and it is not recommended to flush litter (even if it says natural or flushable) as that can clog pipes and sewer systems.

Bedding such as pine and newspaper from herbivores including alpacas, chinchillas, horses, gerbils, guinea pigs, and rabbits can be composted in your bin at home.

Rather than buying new plastic bags to collect your pet waste, reuse old bread bags, food-soiled zipper bags, or other soft plastic bags like newspaper bags or online retail bags. Or use a scooper to pick up your dog's waste. Dog waste can be flushed down the toilet or put into the trash.

### Gear



Look for bowls, leashes, kennels, beds, clothing, and more that are gently used on online sale and sharing sites such as Buy Nothing groups, Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist, or NextDoor or at your local animal shelter. You can also make your own pet bed, clothing, or other gear out of surplus or repurposed materials. Making your own allows you to customize them and save money.

## Enrichment

Boredom can lead our pets to destructive behaviors that cause waste, such as- chewing clothing, shoes, or rugs, scratching couches and chairs, and more! There are a lot of low-waste options to entertain your pet before you run to the store and buy another toy.

For dogs, hunting and searching for food and treats is a great way to direct their energy. You can repurpose things like unlined cardboard boxes, paper egg cartons, and newspapers to hide kibble or treats and then toss the shredded paper into your compost bin once they had their fun (always supervise to make sure they don't swallow it). The Animal Humane Society has easy ideas for enrichment ([humanesociety.org/resources/easy-enrichment-ideas-pets](https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/easy-enrichment-ideas-pets)), and you can find lots of ideas from passionate pet owners online.

If you'd like to build an outdoor enclosure for your cat so they can safely get sunshine and fresh air, think about building your own or having a handy person build it. Incorporate used building materials such as wood and screens or repurposed items such as ramps and enclosures. Find some design ideas at [paws.org/library/cats/home-life/outdoor-enclosures](https://www.paws.org/library/cats/home-life/outdoor-enclosures)



*"My cat is perfectly happy with toys like crumpled newspaper balls, cardboard boxes, old feathers, and even a wire from a notebook binding. It's great to just recycle or compost these things when she's done with them. She is also a big fan of two homemade toys: a crocheted ball with something crinkly inside and a little fleece pillow with catnip. You don't need to buy the whole pet store aisle of plastic toys that are ultimately trash." – Pet owner from Mound*