

The vets will see you now

LET THE FUR FLY! ANSWERS TO YOUR HAIRIEST PET QUESTIONS.

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Q.

Dinner debate How bad is it to feed my dog Thanksgiving leftovers?

J. P., via Facebook

A. Keep your pooch away from the doggie bags. It's a risky move to let him chow down on Turkey Day fixings. High-fat foods—even just a scoop of butter-laden mashed potatoes—“can inflame the pancreas, causing vomiting and dehydration,” says veterinarian Ann Hohenhaus.

What's more, stuffing made with onions, garlic, or chives contains compounds that can damage a dog's red blood cells. The one treat that gets the green light: turkey without the skin. “It's a lean meat that's safe for dogs in controlled amounts,” says veterinarian Gayle O'Konski, whose recommended servings are a tablespoon for small dogs and a quarter cup for larger dogs. Worried that guests might sneak your pup some extra? Two weeks before the holiday, start giving him a daily probiotic, suggests veterinarian Jim Lowe.

(O'Konski's pick: Nutramax Provable health supplement, \$34 for 80 capsules, amazon.com.) It helps prevent gastrointestinal distress, keeping your holiday healthy and happy.



Q.

Feeble offerings

Our cat leaves little “surprises” (dead lizards and birds) on our stoop. Can I train her to stop?

C. D., via Facebook

A. Believe it or not, those icky gifts are a sign of affection. Your cat may think that she's bringing food to her hungry family, says O'Konski. Or she may think that she's helping you rid the yard of pests, says Lowe: “She's showing you, ‘Hey, I'm doing my job!’” Curbing a cat's hunting instinct is a nearly impossible task, say the pros, but you can cut down on the “presents” by keeping your cat on a leash when she's outside. Another (easier) option: Affix a small bell to her collar. The noisy accessory will warn prey that she's coming, keeping them alive and off your stoop.

THE PET EXPERTS

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run the idea by your vet. If she signs off, acclimate the animals slowly. Walk the dog past the caged ferret, giving treats to reinforce tame behavior. Repeat once a day, closer to the cage each time. Once the dog sits calmly (which could take a few weeks to several months), you can take the ferret out of the cage. The first few times, have one person hold the ferret as another holds the dog. If there's no aggression, you can put them on the floor together, keeping the dog on a leash for the first few weeks. Always keep a close watch: A ferret's movements can stress a canine, causing him to lash out, warns McLaughlin, “and a dog bite could be fatal for the ferret.”

Q.

Pet pals

My son wants to adopt a ferret, but we have a dog already. Would they get along?

S. G., via Facebook

A. Ferrets aren't exactly a dog's best friend. Most bite when playing, which can incite a pooch to snap back, says veterinarian Alicia McLaughlin. And because some hunting breeds (hounds, terriers) are prone to attacking small animals, it's best to

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