

## DOES YOUR CHILD WANT A BUNNY FOR EASTER?

Easter is right around the corner, so instead of buying your children a live rabbit....buy them a stuffed bunny. Every year after Easter, hundreds of rabbits are given up to shelters because small children and rabbits may not be an appropriate match. Rabbits are sensitive animals, they are not cuddly and passive. They prefer to keep their feet on the ground and can feel frightened and insecure when picked up. Children tend to want a pet they can pick up, carry around and snuggle with. That is why a stuffed bunny toy is the perfect gift for your child's Easter basket.

Be careful of Easter Lilly and Tiger Lilly plants in your house. These plants can be toxic to your cat if eaten.

Once again there may be lots of chocolate around your home this month. It's important not to let your pets eat any chocolate or candy. It can make them sick, or worse can kill them.

Make sure your pets are current on their vaccinations and pet license. Often times, booster shots are due in the spring.

Now that the weather is getting warmer, people start keeping their dogs outside more often. If your dog is outside often or all the time, make sure he has access to adequate shelter and fresh water at all times..it's the law! Also, if your dog is tied up in the yard, make sure he has a collar or harness and is tied with a chain, cable or rope that is not too heavy for him.

April has been chosen as Prevention of Animal Cruelty month by the ASPCA. Acts of violence or neglect against defenseless animals is considered cruelty. Some examples of these horrendous acts include children torturing cats, dog fighting and cock fighting as sport, or pets being denied basic necessities of care, such as no food, shelter, water or necessary veterinarian care. If you suspect animal cruelty, please report it to your local animal control right away.

Take the time this spring to prepare your pet for possible disaster. Have a safe place to take your pet in case of an emergency situation, as the red cross does not accept pets. Assemble a portable pet disaster kit and include a first aid kit, leashes, pet carriers, muzzles, food, potable water disposable bowls and a current photo of your pet. Be sure your pets have all the proper identification on their collars, including rabies tags, pet license and owner name and address tag.

Warmer weather can also mean more baths for your pet. Bathing and grooming is a good way to enhance the bond between you and your dog. Make sure to brush your dog thoroughly before bathing to remove dead hair and mats. Gather all needed items before you start, and then get your dog. Be sure to use a gentle shampoo, one that won't dry out the coat too much. Local pet stores and some department stores have a variety of pet shampoos. Also, make sure your pet is thoroughly dry before letting him go outside if it's chilly.