



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Falling for Fido

Nonfatal Fall-Related Injuries Associated with Dogs and Cats — United States, 2001–2006

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

A well-trained pet can be a wonderful addition to a family, but even the best-behaved dog or cat can present a household hazard. A recent CDC study found that, each year in the United States, nearly 90,000 people are injured in an accidental fall involving their pet.

Dr. Judy Stevens is an epidemiologist with CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. She's joining us today to discuss potential hazards when you have a pet. Welcome to the show, Judy.

[Dr. Stevens] Thank you very much.

[Dr. Gaynes] Judy, how many people own pets in the United States?

[Dr. Stevens] About 43 million households have dogs and about 38 million households have cats. And interestingly, about 64 percent of these households have more than one pet.

[Dr. Gaynes] What's the most common type of injury people get related to their pet?

[Dr. Stevens] The most common injuries were falls and we found that falls were most frequent among young children and adults age 35-54. But the highest injury rates occurred among people who are 75 and older and this is very serious because these falls often caused fractures which have very serious effects for older adults.

[Dr. Gaynes] Which is more likely to cause an injury – a dog or a cat?

[Dr. Stevens] We found that dogs were much more likely to cause a fall. Eighty-eight percent of these fall injuries, these 90,000 injuries, were related to dogs or items related to dogs, like pet toys.

[Dr. Gaynes] What can pet owners do to prevent injuries?

[Dr. Stevens] Pet owners should be aware that there are certain situations that are more likely to lead to falls, such as when they're walking their dog or if they're chasing their pets. Second, they should recognize that both pets and pet toys and other pet items can be a fall hazard. And third, that it's very important to get obedience training for dogs so that you can reduce behaviors such as pushing and pulling that can lead to falls.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about keeping their home safe for themselves and their pet?

[Dr. Stevens] We have a lot of great information on preventing falls at our website which is www.cdc.gov/injury.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks Judy. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Judy Stevens about the potential hazards of pet ownership.

Remember that falls with injury can occur when you walk or chase your pet and put your pet toys away to keep your home safe.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.