Pets are part of the family!

But furry, feathery, and scaly family members can sometimes pass diseases to people with HIV.

Pets can carry bacteria and parasites that cause infections in people with weakened immune systems—such as those living with HIV. Animals can pick up these unwanted hitchhikers in many ways, including through flea bites or contaminated food.

If you have HIV, take these steps to avoid getting sick:

- Wash your hands often, especially after handling pets and before eating
- Avoid contact with animal poop
- Get your pets tested for infections
- Wear gloves when cleaning your pet’s habitat
- Get only vaccinated animals
- Avoid stray animals
- Avoid being scratched or bitten
- Don’t let pets lick any cuts or scratches

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