

Pets are part of the family!

Pets can pass illnesses and infections to people with HIV. Pets include dogs, cats, rodents, birds, and reptiles.



Pets can carry bacteria and parasites that can harm people with weak 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.

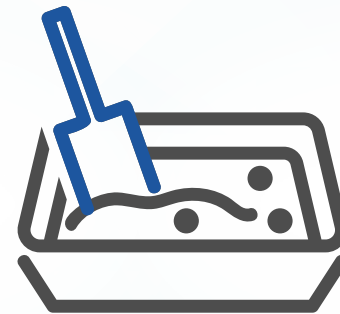
If you have HIV, take these steps to avoid getting sick:



Wash your hands often, especially after handling pets and before eating



Make sure all pets are fully vaccinated



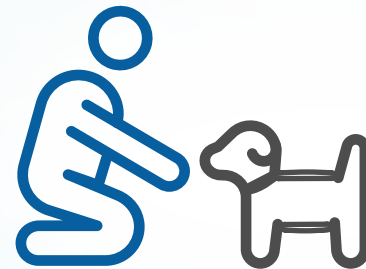
Avoid contact with animal waste



Use gloves and a mask if you must clean litter boxes or other areas



Get your pets tested for infections



Avoid stray animals



Avoid being scratched or bitten



Don't let pets lick any cuts or scratches

For more information, visit [HIVinfo.NIH.gov](https://www.hivinfo.nih.gov).