Stay healthy around small pets!

Pet rodents (such as mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, and guinea pigs) and other small pets (such as hedgehogs, sugar gliders, chinchillas, and ferrets) can sometimes carry germs that can make people sick. These germs can cause illnesses ranging from serious diarrhea to birth defects.

- Small pets can carry germs even if they look healthy and clean.

- Germs are shed in their droppings and can easily contaminate their bodies, habitats, toys, bedding, and anything in areas where they live.

  » These germs can spread to people after they touch these animals or anything in their habitats.

But there's good news! You can take steps to stay healthy while enjoying your pets.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FROM GERMS

PICK THE RIGHT PET FOR YOUR FAMILY.

Rodents and other small pets are not recommended for children under 5 years old, adults over 65, or people with weakened immune systems because they are at a greater risk for serious illness from germs that pets can carry.

WASH YOUR HANDS.

Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching, feeding, or caring for your pets or cleaning their habitats.

- Adults should supervise hand washing for young children.

- If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer until you are able to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

KEEP IT CLEAN.

Keep small pets and their supplies out of kitchens and other areas where food is prepared, served, stored, or consumed.

- Clean habitats, toys, and supplies outside the house when possible.

- If you clean supplies indoors, use a laundry sink or bathtub, and thoroughly clean and disinfect the area right after.

PLAY SAFELY.

- Don't kiss, snuggle, or hold small pets close to your face.

- Don't let them roam free in your home.

- Don't touch your mouth after handling small pets.

- Don't eat or drink around animals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
WWW.CDC.GOV/HEALTHYPETS

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases

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