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Q&A

## Petiquette

ENSURE HARMONY AMONG THE ANIMALS AND PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE WITH THIS EXPERT ADVICE.

By Juno DeMelo

**My best friend has cats, and her house smells so strongly of them that I don't feel comfortable visiting. What can I do?**

Be kind but direct. "Say, 'You know I'd never judge you, and I love your cats, but I have trouble coming over because the place smells like them,'" says Jeremy Pollack, a conflict resolution consultant in Washington, D.C. "She might have no idea, or she may not know what to do about it." A possible source of the smell is urine, so you could recommend a steamer vacuum, like the Bissell SpotBot Pet Portable Carpet Cleaner (\$180; [bissell.com](http://bissell.com)), which uses an oxygenated stain remover on rugs and upholstery.

**How do I politely say no when people ask to pet my dog?**

If your dog isn't friendly, you should get in the habit of crossing the street or veering up a driveway when you see someone coming. Then have your dog sit, and give him a treat for doing so. "People are usually respectful when they see a dog in training," says Mikkell Becker, the lead animal trainer for Fear Free Pets in Denver. If the passerby still asks, try, "He's not good with strangers, so it's best you don't," suggests Mary Gardner, DVM, a veterinarian in Boynton Beach, Florida.

**I have a neighbor who never picks up her dog's poop—and it's on my lawn. How do I approach her?**

Assuming you don't already know your neighbor, start by finding an unrelated topic you can connect over ("Can you believe they're finally updating the playground?"). "It's hard for someone to hear you if you don't have a rapport," Pollack says. After a few friendly interactions, bring up the dog-mess situation and offer a solution, he adds. "I might say, 'By the way, I noticed you don't pick up your dog's poop, and I'd really appreciate it if you did. Can I put out some bags for you?'"