



## The Companion Animal Risk and Strategies Guide

<b>Risk</b>
<b>Low</b>
<b>Medium</b>
<b>High</b>

### Overarching risks and strategies for pets in residential aged care home (RACH)

Identified Risk	Risk Pre-strategy	Strategies	Responsible	Risk Post-strategy
Microbial risks (bacteria - i.e. Salmonella, Campylobacter, Toxocara, Toxoplasma) and Parasite (i.e. tape worm, fleas, mites)	Medium	Pre-admission (and as required) pet assessment. Care plan with schedule and documentation for vaccinations, worming, flea treatments	Veterinarian/Older person	Low
Co-older persons frightened of animals	Medium	Pre-admission (and as required) assessment of all frightened older persons – physiotherapist (as required) and GP. Care plan of older person to identify and address concerns. Pet alert signage.	RACH/ Older person /Co-older person	Low
Lack of understanding of animal/species body language	Medium	RACH to offer in-house training and information on animal and behaviours. RACH to seek assistance from Veterinarian or animal behavioural specialist	RACH	Low
Co-older persons that don't like animals/particular species	Medium	Pre-admission review of all older persons. Care plan of older person to identify animal of concern and actions.	RACH / Older person /Co-older person	Low
People becoming possessive of animals (causing conflict)	Medium	Ongoing assessment and care planning. Care plan of older person to identify concern and address concerns.	RACH	Low





Tripping/falling over pets		Consideration to pet location and appropriateness of where they can move about – i.e. on a lead, in a pet box. Inclusion in pet care plan with ongoing review.	RACH / Older person	
Owner trip/falls risk		Older person assessment for the ability to safely manage pet – physiotherapist and GP. Identify daily activities when pet will leave the room with older person – i.e. animal walk, older person recreation activities, for assessment and oversight. Inclusion in older person care plan – including health care worker (HCW) oversight and assistance as required.	RACH	
Human Allergies to cat/dog		Pre-admission assessment of all older persons. Care plan of older person identifies allergies. HCW pre-employment assessment information, HCW allergy species documented, consideration to rostering and older person allocation processes. Home cleaning process – including heap filter vacuuming. Pet alert signage. Allergic people to avoid animal areas and not touch animals. Pet grooming outside or off site.	RACH / Older person / HCW	
Animal scratches/bites		Veterinarian pet pre-admission and repeat 2 weeks post admission health and behaviour assessment. Pet care plan – trial period, nail/claw grooming. Care management process/policy for bites/scratches.	RACH / Veterinarian	





Infections spread from humans to animals (salmonella, MRSA)		Veterinarian health and behaviour assessment pre-admission and 2 weeks post admission. Annual (and as required) Veterinarian reviews. Older person care plan including identification and management of infections. Consistent infection prevention and control processes across home. Consideration for alternate pet care.	Veterinarian/RACH	
Infections spread from animals to humans		Veterinarian health and behaviour assessment pre-admission admission and 2 weeks post admission. Annual (and as required) Veterinarian reviews. Pet care plan including identification and management of infections. Hand hygiene should be performed after every interaction with animals -older persons, HCW, visitors. Discourage pets licking the face and mouth. Consistent infection prevention and control processes across the home.	Veterinarian/RACH	
Pet nutrition (older person over/under feeding)		Pet care plan with dietary requirements and feed plan, also to include suitable pet locations to feed, i.e. not in dining areas. Raw meat should not be fed to pets, commercial food only. Fresh water daily. Routine Veterinarian assessments.	RACH / Older person	





Cleaning/disinfection		Home cleaning process and schedule. Cleaning process for pet – including pet grooming, bedding wash, vacuuming of dog hair/cat fur, pet waste management, pest management process. Consistent infection prevention and control processes across the home.	RACH	
Animal noise disturbing co- older persons		Pre-admission, 2 weeks post admission and as required behavioural assessment. Trial admission period and assessment. Behaviour trainer for behaviour management strategies. Pet care plan. Older person room door to remain closed.	RACH / Older person	
Animal smell disturbs co-older persons		Pet care plan – including grooming. Older person room door to remain closed. Pet cleaning process – including waste management.	RACH / Older person	
Animal injury from another older person's animal		Pre-admission, 2 weeks post admission and as required behavioural assessment. Pet to remain in older persons' room. Door remains closed. Pet leaves room at designated time or in pet carrier or on a leash. Pet alert sign on the door.	RACH / Older person	
Animal escapes		Pet to remain in older persons' room. Door remains closed. Pet leaves room at designated time or in pet carrier or on a leash. Pet alert sign on the older persons door and home external doors. All pets are microchipped or wear identification.	RACH / Older person	





Death of an animal leading to older person and co-older person distress		Documented/policy bereavement process, including access to counselling	RACH	
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**Individual risk and strategies associated with dogs in residential aged care home (RACH)**

Identified Risk	Risk pre strategy	Strategies	Responsible	Risk after strategy
Mites		Pet care plan identifies monthly parasiticide (to include mites). Grooming requirements.	Veterinarian / Older person	
Sarcoptic mange		Pet care plan identifies monthly parasiticide (to include mites). Avoid interaction with stray dogs. Grooming requirements.	Veterinarian Older person	
Dog jumping/scratching		Pre-admission and 2 weeks post admission behavioural assessment, admission trial period. Behaviour trainer for behaviour management strategies. Discourage dogs licking. Pet care plan. Dog leashed or in container when in common areas.	Veterinarian / Older person	
Dog barking		Pre-admission and 2 weeks post admission behavioural assessment. Trial admission period. Behaviour trainer for behaviour management strategies. Medical treatment if required depending on diagnosis and assessment. Pet care plan. Older persons room door to remain closed.	Veterinarian / Older person	





Dog bite	Red	Pre-admission and 2 weeks post admission behavioural assessment. Trial admission period. Behaviour trainer for behaviour management strategies. HCW and older person education on dog body language, positive reinforcement training, careful and safe handling of dogs, avoid triggers, provide dog a safe zone to rest and retreat. Pet care plan. Dog bite protocol.	RACH	Yellow
Dog sleeps on owners' bed	Green	Co-sleeping is not recommended, however consideration to older person choice. Trial admission period. Pet response to environment and HCW actions. Pet care plan. Pet sign on the door. Routine linen management.	Older person	Green
Dog waste management	Yellow	Pet care plan. Allocate area for pet to void. Dog waste should be collected daily using gloves and apron and disposal bag, dog waste spills are managed as routine spills. Hand hygiene should be performed on donning and doffing PPE.	RACH /Older person	Green
Dog has inadequate exercise	Red	Pet care plan identifying exercise requirements in relation to age and health status. Engage designated person/volunteer assistance as required.	Older person/Guarantor	Green
Dog doesn't settle into home	Yellow	Dogs should be de-sexed. Week 2 post admission re-assessment health and behaviour. Admission trial period. Veterinarian and/or animal behavioural specialist advice on changes in environmental management, behaviour modification and medication if required. Pet care plan.	RACH /Veterinarian/ Older person	Green





### Individual risk and strategies associated with cats in residential aged care home (RACH)

Identified Risk	Risk pre strategy	Strategies	Responsible	Risk after strategy
Cat litter disposed inappropriately	Green	Tray to be checked and managed daily. Management of soiled/used kitty litter is to be attended outside. Gloves and apron should be worn when handling used kitty litter. Kitty litter is to be bagged and tied before placing in external general waste bin. Kitty litter cannot be placed down waste shuts. Hand hygiene should be performed on donning and doffing PPE. HCW and older person education on waste management. Pregnant women or those with allergies not to assist with kitty litter disposal or manage urine / faeces spills. Staffing allocation.	RACH / Older person	Green
Cat scratch/bite	Yellow	Pre-admission and 2 weeks post admission behaviour assessment. Pet care plan identifies claw clipping schedule and responsibilities. Trial admission period. Protocol for bites and scratches. Reduce cat stress, especially when HCW cleaning or attending care. HCW entering room to be aware of cat body language.	RACH /Veterinarian/ Older person	Yellow





Fur balls (vomiting and diarrhoea)		Pre-admission and 2 weeks post admission health assessment. Pet care plan. Ongoing observation by older person / HCW. Odour and frequent kitty litter management. Avoid abrupt dietary change. Veterinarian advice.	RACH / Older person	
Cat yowling at night/other times		Trial admission period. Veterinarian assessment for cause. Behaviour usually reduced once cause rectified. Older persons room door to remain closed.	Veterinarian / Older person	
Cat maintenance - claw clipping		Pre-admission and 2 weeks post admission health assessment. Pet care plan identifies claw clipping schedule and responsibilities.	Veterinarian / Older person	
Cat sleeps on owners' bed		Co-sleeping is not recommended, however consideration to older person choice. Trial admission period. Pet response to environment and HCW actions. Pet care plan. Pet sign on the door. Routine linen management.	Older person	
Trip/fall risk to others when walking cat on harness or in carry container		Pre-admission and 2 weeks post admission health assessment. Trial admission period. Harness and carry container to remain close to older person while walking, identify acceptable times for movement out of room. Pet care plan.	Older person / RACH	
Trip/falls risk for older person		Pre-admission and 2 weeks post admission health assessment. – physiotherapist and GP. Trial admission period. Monitor cat behaviour, especially entwining around legs. Older person assessment to step over cat. Cat to remain in older persons room or on harness.	Older person / RACH	
Cat doesn't settle into home		Can be identified by cat toileting outside of kitty litter tray. Act on first notice, can usually be resolved if less than 3 weeks since first incident. Admission trial	RACH / Veterinarian / Older person	







		period. Veterinarian advice on changes in environmental management, behaviour modification and medication if required. Pet care plan.		
Cat confined to enclosure to long		Cat has freedom of older person room, unless older person care or cleaning provided, then cat is placed in carry cage. Older person door to remain closed. Cat has confined outdoor cat area. Pet alert sign on the door.		

(Based on the 'Safe Animal Friendly Environments' framework by the University of South Australia - <https://www.scas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/UniSA-Safe-Animal-Friendly-Environments-7-2022-LowRes.pdf>)

