November is National Pet Awareness Month. Most people are aware of the many great physical and mental health benefits that come from having a pet. But are you aware of the many ways that oil and natural gas help your pets stay healthy and happy?

Plastic and synthetic materials like polyester and nylon are made from petrochemicals—essential building blocks that are derived from oil and natural gas.

So whether you bring your pet home in a hard-sided or soft-sided carrier, petrochemicals are helping you get them home safely.

The disposable syringes that keep them vaccinated against rabies and the dispensers that keep them free of fleas and ticks are also plastic, as is the “cone of shame” that keeps them from licking their unmentionables after they get fixed. (You *did* get your pet spayed or neutered, didn’t you?)

Plastics provide more than just medical protection, however. Whether you’re toting a poop bag or cleaning out the litterbox, you’ve probably had reason to thank the gods for the sturdiness of modern plastics.

Luckily, life with pets isn’t all poop and shots. The synthetic fabrics made from petrochemicals also make your pet’s collar and leash, or stroller/backpack, so that they can accompany you outside. Even their microchip—which increases their chance of being returned, should they have the bad judgment to run away—wouldn’t be possible without petrochemicals.

When it’s dinner time, petrochemicals again come to the rescue. From packaging that keeps pet food fresh to their bowls, feeders, and fountains, petrochemicals are the key to keeping your pets well-fed and watered.

And what would life be without a squeaky toy waking you up at 2 a.m.? Again, petrochemicals are there. From “da bird” cat toys to chew toys that (probably totally fail to) protect your shoes, toys made of plastic and synthetic fabrics help pets safely exhaust themselves. So you can tuck them into the comfy fleece of their dog bed or cat tree that (hopefully) keeps them off the bed, and get a couple of hours of sleep before it’s time to walk and/or feed them.

But hey. They’re our fur babies. They’re worth it. As are the many petrochemical products that help them stay vigorous and long-lived.

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