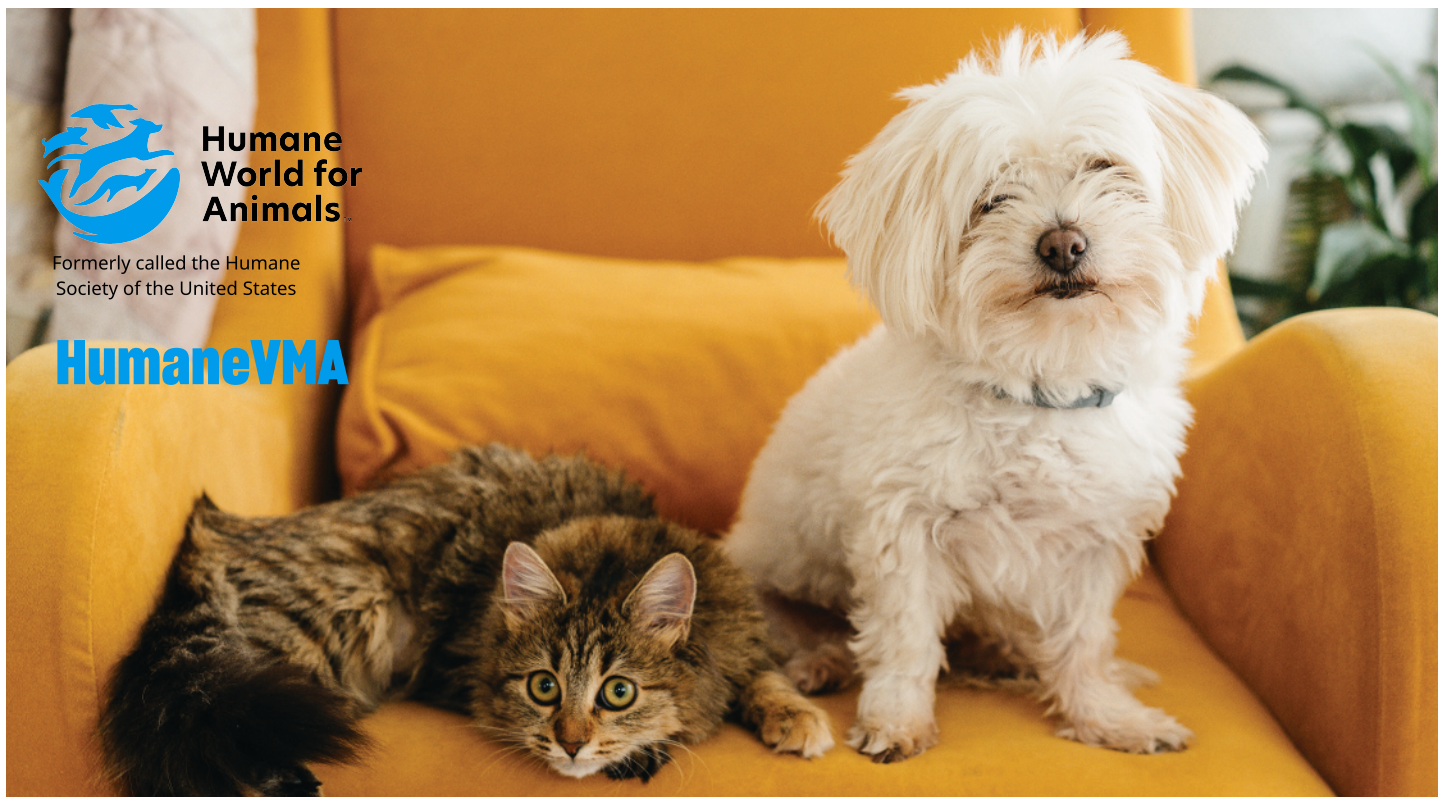




**Humane
World for
Animals**

Formerly called the Humane
Society of the United States

HumaneVMA



MELKINIMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

Is your pet trying to tell you something?

Everyone misses messages from their pets sometimes—after all, they can't talk! But if you see these signs, get your pet to a veterinarian as soon as you can.

The longer you wait, the more serious (and expensive!) it could get.

Not eating well (or not eating at all)

You should seek prompt medical attention for a pet who has had a dramatic reduction in appetite or who isn't eating. This may be a serious sign that your pet isn't well. They could have ingested a foreign object or a toxic substance. Or they may be injured, in pain, bloated, or suffering from an infection or other illness.

Ear scratching, earwax eating, head shaking, smelly ears

Your dog or cat suddenly and violently scratches inside one ear, licks earwax off their paw, then shakes their head so hard their ears flap. This could be a sign of itchy mites, allergic dermatitis, a mass in the ear, a ruptured eardrum, a foreign object (such as a foxtail) or a painful ear infection.

Stinky breath, drooling, swallowing treats whole, pawing at cheeks

Foul-smelling “dog breath” is normal, right? Well, no, and it isn't normal for cats, either. Your pet might have a painful tooth or gum infection or even a foreign object stuck in their palate or under their tongue.

Butt scooting, carpet surfing

It's hilarious when your dog or cat starts scooting around the house like they're riding a magic carpet, right? Not so fast: Your pet may have mess stuck to their skin or fur, causing a rash or preventing them from going to the bathroom. They may also be trying to empty their anal sacs, which can fill with fluid and become itchy and painful or even cause an abscess. Another possibility is your pet may have a foreign object in (or an injury near) their rectum.

For tips on finding low-cost vet care, ask your veterinarian or local animal shelter or check out [humaneworld.org/affordpet](https://www.humaneworld.org/affordpet).

This information is provided by Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance, the veterinary division of Humane World for Animals. Visit [humaneVMA.org](https://www.humaneVMA.org) to learn more.