

PETS

Pets are rather like children: our own are delightful, other people's can be intolerable or even frightening. However, never consider your pets before your guests.

Guidelines

Dogs should not be allowed to intimidate guests with their barking and jumping up; if you have a noisy dog, shut it in another room before opening the front door.

Pet owners should always ask before taking their pets to someone else's house. Once there, the pet should be kept well disciplined and any 'mistakes' should be cleared up immediately by the profusely apologetic owner. Pets should not be allowed onto other people's furniture even if they are allowed to do this at home.

You should never shy away from saying that you don't like or are allergic to animals; owners should respect this and take their pets away. Tell owners if you don't want their pets on your furniture or even in your house.

On the other hand, you may love all sorts of animals, but it is not a good idea to be over familiar with someone else's pet unless you know it well: boisterous games and teasing may irritate an animal, and could end in tears. You should never feed a pet titbits without asking its owner; many owners do not like their pets to learn to beg, and just one kindly meant titbit might teach the animal to beg from other guests.

ROMANCE

Although the intricate rules of chivalry no longer govern romance, there are still some key courtesies that can make relationships between men and women easier and more enjoyable. Couples should, however, not think only of themselves – they should consider those around them: it can be very tiresome for other people if a couple is involved in kissing, petting or simply flirting in public. Furthermore, lovers should not abandon their friends for the sake of a relationship: friendships usually last longer than romantic attachments.

Making a date

When two people have met and enjoyed each other's company, it is perfectly acceptable for the man or the woman to contact the other and suggest meeting again. It is best if the caller suggests a specific reason for meeting – such as a meal or a theatre trip – rather than just saying 'can I see you?'. This makes it easier for both partners to know what to expect and what to wear.

If you are invited out by someone you really would rather not see again, refuse the invitation as diplomatically as possible and continue to refuse further offers without suggesting alternative dates that would suit you. Eventually, the caller should realize that you don't want to see him or her again. If you are doing the inviting you should not put too much pressure on the other person; certainly don't resort to saying 'well, when are you free then?', so that they are forced to name a day or to say outright that they do not want to see you again. If someone appears to be evasive but would genuinely like to see you again, he or she will

suggest an alternative date. Even after a first date, one partner should not barrage the other with invitations: if someone really likes you, he or she will find time to call you.

The first date

When a man invites a woman on the first date he should pick her up or – in any event – be sure to reach the rendezvous early so that the woman does not have to wait for him. If a man invites a woman out for a meal or to the theatre the woman is under no obligation to offer to pay, although many women like to contribute. It is, however, rude to argue over paying if the person who instigated the outing has insisted. Some women like to 'go Dutch' so that they do not feel indebted to the man or under any pressure to sleep with him. However, if the man has insisted on paying, a woman should not feel threatened by this; nowhere is there any code that says men can expect sexual favours from women for whom they have bought a meal.

At the end of the date, the man should accompany the woman home and should check that she gets through the front door safely. If the woman asks the man in, this is often interpreted as a sexual invitation: if it was not intended that way, the woman should make that very clear.

Etiquette and sex

There are two very important things to remember about sex: first, that it is illegal to force someone to have sex, and second, that both partners should discuss and be in agreement about contraception. In order to protect themselves from AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, couples who have not known each other long should use a condom. It is acceptable and even common for girls to carry condoms now, and many girls will say that they are not on the pill, even if they are, and invite their partner to use a condom. It is important that everyone,

man or woman, should have a responsible attitude towards contraception, and not assume that their partner has taken precautions.

During or after sex it is cruel to criticize a lover's performance, especially if he or she asks you about it, as this is a sign of insecurity. If you have to leave shortly after making love, do not do so abruptly and make it clear whether you would like to see the other person again. Ideally, couples should know in advance whether they are embarking on what could be a long-term relationship or simply a one-off encounter. If you do not intend to get involved with someone, you may hurt him or her more by getting in touch again after a one night stand. But if you are truly smitten by someone, he or she may be touched if you send a small gift the following day as a sign of your affection and esteem.

Saying goodbye

The end of a relationship is very difficult for both partners. The person who is instigating the break up should try to do it as

ROMANCE – CHECKLIST

Important dos and don'ts

- ✓ **DO let someone know you noticed them**
- ✓ **DO establish what you feel about each other before someone gets hurt**
- ✓ **DO talk about contraception before having sex**
- ✗ **DON'T bombard someone with invitation**
- ✗ **DON'T abandon your friends because you have a new lover**
- ✗ **DON'T kiss intimately in public**

BASIC RULES

quickly and gently as possible; if you keep trying to patch up differences or you haven't the courage to make a clean break, you only cause your partner additional pain. Wherever possible you should discuss a break up in person: a letter may appear cold and heartless, and a telephone call is lazy and offhand.

If your partner tells you he or she is leaving you, try not to argue or to beg your loved one to stay; this will only damage your pride further and may make you even more bitter about the break up.

SMOKING

Smoking is a source of pleasure and relaxation for a minority of the population and of misery and discomfort for the majority. It can, therefore, cause awkward confrontations and feelings of resentment. In the last ten years the number of people who smoke has fallen rapidly. Smoking in public has become less acceptable and many public places, such as restaurants and cinemas, as well as public transport, have banned smoking altogether.

Do you mind if I smoke?

Before lighting a cigarette, cigar or pipe, you should consider the circumstances carefully. If you are in a public place, you should check first for 'No Smoking' signs and, if applicable, move to a designated smoking area. Check also that there is an ashtray close at hand.

Always ask people with you or nearby whether they mind you smoking, especially if you are in a confined space or if anyone is eating. Asking other people whether they mind you smoking was once something of a formality, but nowadays non-smokers may well take the opportunity to tell you they would prefer you not to smoke. In this case, you should respect their wishes and, if possible, move somewhere else to smoke.

You should make a particular point of asking if you are in the home, office or car of a non-smoker. People who live in a smoke-free environment are especially sensitive to the lingering smell of tobacco smoke. It would be most discourteous to argue if they asked you not to smoke.

Even if you are outside and not actually with other people, your smoke can still inconvenience those near you. If you are in a crowd or walking along a street, smoke may be blown straight into the faces of other people, and you might even inadvertently burn someone.

When you are smoking

Once you have established that no-one minds you smoking, it is polite to offer cigarettes to your companions. It is also polite to offer a light to anyone with an unlit cigarette.

While you are smoking, try to keep your cigarette and its smoke away from other people. Turn your head away from people when you are exhaling smoke, and tip the ash off your cigarette regularly so that it does not fall.

If you light a cigarette without asking those near if they mind, you may find that someone objects strongly and asks you to put it out. In these circumstances it is best to avoid confrontation by extinguishing your cigarette or by moving away so that you are no longer inconveniencing him or her.

Non-smokers

It is increasingly common for non-smokers to ask friends or even strangers not to smoke, especially if they are eating or are in a confined space. If someone's cigarette smoke would genuinely inconvenience you, it is perfectly acceptable for you to ask him or her not to smoke, and they should respect your wishes. On the other hand, it would be unfair to deny them the pleasure of a cigarette simply because you disapprove of smoking.

If someone has lit a cigarette and you are finding it unpleasant, it is best to move away or quietly ask the smoker to extinguish the cigarette. You will achieve little by trying to wave the smoke away, and will only engender resentment if you make a fuss.

SMOKING - CHECKLIST**Important dos and don'ts**

- ✓ **DO** make sure you're not in a **NO SMOKING** area
- ✓ **DO** ask if people mind you smoking
- ✓ **DO** offer people cigarettes
- ✓ **DON'T** blow smoke into people's faces
- ✓ **DON'T** smoke while people are eating
- ✓ **DON'T** smoke if someone has expressly asked you not to