



Want to keep spoiling your pets during the coronavirus pandemic? Here's the latest in 'pet tech'

Marc Saltzman Special to USA TODAY

Published 6:00 a.m. ET Aug. 8, 2020

While the global [coronavirus pandemic](#) has been tough on humans, our beloved pets have never been so pampered.

After all, we've spent more time at home than ever before, giving us more time to cuddle our cats and take longer walks with our dogs. So, for our furry friends, at least, 2020 has been, well, doggone fun.

To keep the puppy love going, perhaps you'll want to pick up a tech treat for your pet?

While you might not find them at your local bog box store, plenty of smart products are available – whether it's a high-tech toy to keep them entertained, an automated feeder, a cat cam for your favorite feline, or a way to track a curious canine that wanders off.

Dancing Dot Laser Cat Toy

From PetSafe, the same folks that once brought us the [Automatic Ball Launcher](#) to keep a dog entertained for hours, comes another playful gadget – but this time it's for cats.

Stimulating natural feline instincts to chase, stalk and pounce, the aptly-named [Dancing Dot Laser Cat Toy](#) (\$19.95) could be a fun way to keep your cat active and engaged with a random laser display. You can wave it around yourself, but when you need to be away it works automatically.



Placed on a flat surface or hung from, say, a doorknob, the toy has two play options: one that turns on for 15 minutes and another that turns on for 15-minute intervals every two hours (say, if you're leaving for the day). The company says this is a Certified Class 1 laser, which is safe for your cat. Three AAA batteries are required, but not included.

Furbo Dog Camera

If you haven't seen "The Secret Life of Pets" movies, curl up with your pet and stream them. But when you need to be away you can keep an eye on your pet while at work, and even dispense treats on demand with behind the [Furbo Dog Camera](#) (\$199.99).



Simply connect this HD camera to your Wi-Fi network, install the free app on your smartphone or tablet, and then kiss your canine goodbye as you leave the house. Now, wherever life takes you, launch the app, talk to your pet (using its built-in audio), snap a pic or shoot video, and dispense a treat from the Furbo's launcher by swiping your screen.

Other features include night vision to see your dog in the dark, and a barking alert option, if you'd like to receive notifications to your phone.

NiteDog Rechargeable LED Leash



Be seen while walking your dog in the dark – that's the premise behind the [NiteDog Rechargeable LED Leash](#) (\$29.99) from Nite Ize.

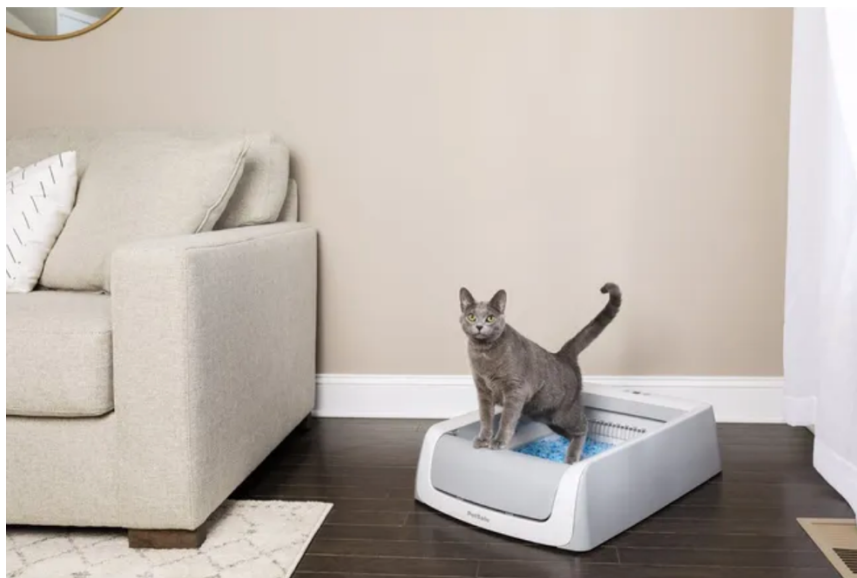
Available in blue or lime green, these 5-foot leashes have two embedded ultra-bright LEDs, which send light through an integrated optical fiber. You get up to 6.5 hours between charges; when it's time to juice up the leash, simply insert a micro USB cable (not included) and plug the leash into a computer, AC wall socket or power strip.

This eye-catching and water-resistant leash has a soft grip, durable cable, and can be used in either constant glow or flash mode.

ScoopFree Self-Cleaning Litter Box

Just like a Roomba can vacuum your floors for you, there's an automatic litter box that doesn't require scooping, cleaning or refilling for weeks at a time.

The second-generation [ScoopFree Self-Cleaning Litter Box](#) (\$139.85) uses disposable trays pre-filled with crystal litter, which is said to quickly absorb urine and dehydrate solid waste to provide fewer odors than regular clumping litter. An automatic rake sweeps solid waste into the waste trap 20 minutes after your cat uses the litter box, so you never have to see or touch it. If your cat re-enters the box before the cleaning cycle starts, detection sensors automatically reset the rake timer.



Every few weeks you remove the litter tray, cover with the lid, and dispose of it in the trash. And a health counter keeps track of how many times your favorite feline uses the box. Manufacturer PetSafe also has a [Smart Feed Automatic Dog and Cat Feeder](#) (\$169.95).

SpotOn Virtual Smart Fence

Finally, while not inexpensive, the [SpotOn Virtual Fence](#) (\$1,495.00, plus optional cellular service) is a patented dog containment and tracking system that goes wherever you go.

Before putting the GPS- and cellular-enabled collar on your dog, you walk around the area – say, for example, you're at a park for the afternoon – to establish an invisible perimeter. After clipping the collar back onto your pet, the dog hears tones that warns it's about to leave the containment area you've established, so that it would return back to you. Of course, you'll need to first train your dog to do so, but SpotOn's professional training plans are included.



Choose from various sizes of the collar, which can store up to 10 virtual fence locations. An optional cellular service fee (\$6.95/month) alerts you if your dog breaches the perimeter, via a companion app on a smartphone, and then lets you locate your dog, in real time, including turn-by-turn driving directions or close-range compass mode.

Follow Marc on Twitter: [@marc_saltzman](https://twitter.com/marc_saltzman). Email him or subscribe to his Tech It Out podcast at <https://marcsaltzman.com/podcasts>.

