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American Veterinary Medical Association  
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# Pet Ownership



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*Brought to you by your veterinarian and the  
American Veterinary Medical Association*

Owning a pet is a privilege and should result in a beneficial relationship for both the owner and pet. However, the benefits of pet ownership come with obligations, and responsible pet owners provide for their pet's needs in many ways.



### Choose Wisely

Avoid impulsive decisions about obtaining a pet, and carefully select a pet that's suited to your home and lifestyle.

### Make a Commitment

Make plans for the full lifespan of your pet. Some pets, such as small rodents, may live for a few years, but large parrots can live for more than 100 years!

### Make an Investment

Recognize that pet ownership requires an investment of time and money.



### Know Your Limits

Keep only the type and number of pets for which an appropriate and safe environment can be provided, including appropriate food, water, shelter, health care and companionship.

### Keep Your Pet Healthy and Happy

Partner with your veterinarian to preserve and protect your pet's long-term health.

- Seek preventive care, such as regular examinations, vaccinations and parasite control.
- Work with your veterinarian to provide timely and appropriate treatment for your pet's illnesses and injuries.



Provide exercise and mental stimulation appropriate to your pet's age, breed and health status.

Socialize and train your pet, which improves their well-being and the well-being of other animals and people.



### Be Responsible

Prevent your pet from negatively impacting other people, animals and the environment through proper waste disposal, noise control and not allowing your pet to stray or become feral.

Do your part to address our country's pet overpopulation problem and avoid unplanned breeding through spay/neuter, containment, or managed breeding.



### Prepare for the Unexpected

Make sure your pet is properly identified (i.e., tags, microchips, tattoos, clear photographs) and that the registration information in associated databases is kept up-to-date.

Prepare in advance to ensure your pet's well-being in the case of an emergency or disaster, including assembling an evacuation kit.

Make alternate arrangements if you can no longer provide care for your pet.

### Know When It's Time

Recognize any decline in your pet's quality of life and make timely decisions in consultation with a veterinarian.

By following these few simple guidelines you will know that you have done everything you can to give your pet a long, healthy and happy life.

