

If your pet goes outside at all, also ensure they're wearing a collar with an identification tag plus any necessary rabies and license tags.

Do your part

Prevent your pet from negatively impacting other people, animals, and the environment:

- Clean up after your pet.
- Properly dispose of animal waste.
- Obey all local ordinances, including licensing and leash requirements and noise control.
- Keep your pet from roaming free or becoming feral.

Help address national pet overpopulation by getting your pet spayed or neutered, keeping them contained, or practicing managed breeding.

Prepare for the unexpected

Have a pet first aid kit and keep information handy on pet first aid procedures in case of an accident or emergency.

Prepare for emergencies by creating a disaster plan and a pet evacuation kit that contains items like food, any medications, emergency contact information, and important documents.

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

Know when it's time

Monitor your pet for any decline in quality of life. Although the timing of euthanasia is a personal decision, you have help in making that choice. Your veterinarian can help walk you through any questions or concerns you have.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO KEEP YOUR PET HAPPY AND HEALTHY AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, VISIT:

American Veterinary Medical Association
avma.org/PetOwners

PET OWNERSHIP

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



avma.org

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Our pets are always there for us and we want what's best for them. There are certain actions we can take to keep pets happy and healthy for as long as possible and build the bond we share with them.

Your veterinarian can answer any questions you have and make recommendations tailored to the needs of your current or future pet(s), you, and your family.

SELECTING A PET

Choose wisely

Although it can be easy to fall in love with a new animal friend, avoid making any impulsive decisions about adopting them into your household. Instead, carefully select a pet that's suited to your family (including any other pets), home, and lifestyle. Some pets like fish, birds, pocket pets, reptiles, and amphibians require special veterinary care, so make sure there's a veterinarian in your area who can provide that care.

Make a commitment

Make plans for the full potential lifespan of your pet. Some pets, like small rodents, may live for only 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, effort, and money. Think about the needs your pet will have for food, shelter, veterinary care, training, exercise, and more.

Know your limits

Keep only the type and number of pets that you're able to provide a suitable home for. This includes nutritious food, adequate water and shelter, timely veterinary care, and sufficient exercise and companionship. Some types of pets need more frequent exercise, feeding, or attention, and



may not be good choices for owners who have busy lifestyles or spend long periods away from home.

Investigate whether local laws or your housing arrangements limit your choice of pet.

Consider your family

Think about your current household members—both people and pets. Certain types of pets may not be suitable for households with young children, elderly people, or immunocompromised individuals due to the risk of infectious disease or harm to those people or the pets themselves. Also consider your current pet(s) and whether a new pet would be compatible with them.

CARING FOR YOUR PET

Keep your pet healthy and happy

Partner with your veterinarian to support your pet's long-term health and wellbeing. Regular checkups are key, as they allow your veterinarian to get to know you and your pet and to catch problems early, before they become bigger and costlier.

Follow your veterinarian's recommendations for vaccinations, parasite control, dental care, nutrition, weight management, and other pet needs.

Provide exercise and mental stimulation as appropriate for your pet's age, breed, and health status. Your veterinarian can help with this.

Socialize and train your pet—this can strengthen your relationship with them and improve both their wellbeing and the wellbeing of other animals and people.

Contact your veterinarian whenever you notice changes in your pet or their behavior that could indicate something is wrong. Seek timely treatment for any illnesses or injuries.

Identify your pet

Get your pet microchipped and keep your contact information up-to-date in the microchip registry database to boost the chance of being reunited should the animal get lost.