

Before Getting a New Companion....

- ❖ Always research the needs of the specific species (such as nutrition, certain hygiene needs, or behavior training required)
- ❖ If he / she came from an animal shelter, ask for previous medical records
- ❖ Know common sicknesses that can befall your pet and what signals those ailments
- ❖ Take a quick but thorough check through your house to be sure it is pet-safe
- ❖ You may want to call the vet to make sure you're ready and possibly set up appointments ahead of time
- ❖ If you have other animals, be ready for an introduction
- ❖ Make sure everyone that will live with the new arrival is ready for a greeting and knows what and what not to do
- ❖ Have certain arrangements, such as litter boxes and food, available
- ❖ Be aware of where potentially dangerous substances are stored in your house
- ❖ Set a time in which when the pet arrives, you will be able to socialize and keep a close eye on him / her during his first couple of hours or so. Whenever you leave, be sure to make proper arrangements or have another family member or friend watch over him / her.

Feeding

What you feed your pet and how often will effect your pet greatly. It is important that their food is right for them, not just something right for that entire species in general.

Things to look for:

Good:

- Shiny coat
- Good amount of energy
- Firm stool

Bad

- Dulling or balding coat
- Flaky skin
- Slackened energy
- Smaller or constantly runny stool

Nutritional Stages

Growth

- Higher levels of protein (to supply the building blocks for muscle)
- Minerals (for bones)
- Fat (for energy to complete the manufacturing process)

Pregnancy

- Should be fed growth diets the last three to four weeks of pregnancy for fetal growth

Adult

- Moderate protein
- Increased fat

Sedentary Adult

- Fewer calories
- Moderate protein
- Lower fat

Senior or Geriatric stage

- Lower fat levels (so they don't gain too much weight)
- Lower levels of protein (so their kidneys aren't taxed)
- Low levels of salt (to help their hearts)

*Note: These tips may not apply to your new arrival. Always check with a local vet about specific needs.

Vaccinations

Always discuss the different needs for Vaccinations with the vet. Mostly cats and dogs get vaccinations. Always be sure to make them timely so as not to risk a very sick pet.

Behavior

There are various ways to encourage the behavior habits of a well-trained companion. Always be sure to use positive encouragement.

- After a pet does something naughty, usually ignoring them for a few hours will make them feel as if they lost a playmate and will effectively stop bad habits.
- After a pet does something good, over do your happiness and praise

For additional information, view the websites at the end of this packet.

Poisoning

Keep automobile antifreeze out of reach

- Ethylene glycerol (EG) is a toxic ingredient in antifreeze (and it's attracting by its sweet taste)
- Pets become weak, lethargic, and stagger when ingested
- Most vomit
- Kidney failure begins as days pass
- Stupor, convulsions, coma, and death follow
- For an ensured recovery, treatment should be instituted within an hour of ingestion (which is difficult in the case that no one sees the pet consume the antifreeze)
- An alternative is putting the more expensive propylene glycol in the radiator of your car. You should not have to resort to this expense if you are careful of where you keep antifreeze and make sure there is no way your pet can get there.

Rat Poisons

- May cause neurological symptoms or bleeding
- Strychnine causes severe convulsions that can paralyze respiratory muscles, causing asphyxiation. Immediate treatment necessary.
- Other rat poisons cause the rat to bleed to death by stopping blood clotting. Other animals that ingest the poisons or a rat that has can also be affected. Sometimes bruises may be prominent all over the body or anemia caused by internal bleeding. Clotting ability is reestablished by administering vitamin K.

Chocolate

- Do not feed to animals. It may cause caffeine highs, vomiting, and diarrhea. It also causes neurological signs such as muscle twitching and seizures, which can lead to death.

Fertilizers and Insecticides

- Typically cause upset diet and vomiting
- Products containing more nitrogen, such as fish fertilizer, cause more serious blood problems

Recreational Drugs

- Can cause the same effects as in humans, but they last longer and may do more internal damage that can result in death or serious illnesses sooner

- Alcohol is equally as dangerous

Petroleum Products

- Lighter consistency products, such as turpentine, are more likely to cause toxicity because it can be rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream.
- Spilled or splashed petroleum products should be thoroughly washed from the effected pet with dishwashing soap
- Products with higher consistency need to be diluted with vegetable oil first

Plants

- Dieffenbachia and poinsettia cause stomach upset and mouth irritation.

Other Poisons

- Metaldehyde in slug bait causes convulsions that can usually be controlled by medication. It causes no permanent damage after cleared from the system.
- Onions can be toxic to dogs. It causes red blood cell breakdown and anemia that can be severe enough to warrant a blood transfusion
- Don't give pets medicine from the human medicine cabinet. With all good intentions, pets could get severe blood problems, liver failure, and death within forty eight hours

What to do

- If poisoning is suspected, call the vet and be as specific as possible about the symptoms, type of poison, and how much was ingested
- If a pet is convulsing, precaution is necessary. Do not put your face close to your companion or try to pull the tongue out. Try to wrap him / her in a blanket to take to the vet.
- Sometimes vomiting should be induced after the ingestion of certain poisons. It should not be induced after the ingestion of petroleum products or cleaning supplies that contain strong acids or alkalis because they can cause severe damage to the esophagus or lung damage. The best way to induce vomiting is to give three percent hydrogen peroxide orally. Give one teaspoon for each five kilograms of body weight. Keep the vomit for analysis
- In the case of a skunk, it is harmless but for the stench. A good remedy is on quart of three percent hydrogen peroxide, one fourth cup baking soda, and one teaspoon of liquid soap. Make sure none of the solution gets in the patient's eyes and rinse thoroughly after 15 minutes. This mixture loses effectiveness after being stored for too long.

Good Places to Research

Cat care

- http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/cat_care/index.html → has a confusing layout, but the information is very good
- <http://www.ddfl.org/tips.htm>

Dog care

- http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/dog_care/index.html → again, confusing
- <http://www.ddfl.org/tips.htm>

The Humane Society's website has a whole bunch of ideas on how to care for your pet properly:

http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/

And other sites to look at:

- <http://betamillion.homestead.com/files/IngredientsAvoid.htm>
- http://www.avma.org/public_health/poisingde.asp
- <http://www.thepetcenter.com/exa/mites.html>