

- Avoid impulsive decisions. Carefully consider your choice, and select a pet that is suited to your home and lifestyle.
- Recognize that owning a pet requires an investment of time and money.
- Keep only the type and number of pets for which you can provide an appropriate and safe environment. This includes things such as food, water, shelter, health care, and companionship.
- Ensure your pet is properly identified with tags and/or microchips and that their registration information is up to date.
- Be knowledgeable of and adhere to local ordinances, particularly licensing and leash requirements for dogs.
- Provide such preventive health care as vaccinations and parasite control for the life of your pet.
- Socialize your pet to facilitate their well-being and the well-being of other animals and people. If needed, provide additional training.
- Provide exercise and mental stimulation appropriate to the age, breed, species, and health status of your pet.
- Include your pet in your planning for an emergency or disaster, including assembling an evacuation kit.
- Plan for the care of your pet when or if you are unable to do so.

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF DOGS AND CATS

Taking care of animals is a big responsibility. Dogs and cats can be wonderful additions to the home if you prioritize their health and happiness.

Caring for Your Dog

Food:

Whether you're bringing home a new puppy or taking care of an older dog, be sure to stock up on high-quality dog food. According to the [American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals \(ASPCA\)](#), puppies typically need three to four meals per day, but after your dog reaches about one year of age, one meal per day is usually enough. Fresh, clean water should always be available.

Environment:

It's important to maintain a safe environment for dogs. "Start kennel training for times when your pet cannot be under supervision," says Ross Vet alumna Dr. Nisha Sanathara. When caring for animals that will be staying outdoors, you'll need some sort of temperature control system to ensure they remain comfortable.

Ross Vet alumna Dr. Michelle Ward advises to "update their tags, collars, and microchips." A microchip and/or some sort of collar identification is a must for both indoor and outdoor dogs.

Dogs need exercise to burn calories, stimulate their minds, stay healthy, and help prevent boredom. Individual exercise needs vary based on breed or breed mix, sex, age, and level of health. Regular grooming can help reduce shedding and identify tick or flea issues.

Veterinary Care:

Puppies should first visit the veterinarian at about three weeks old, when they will receive a physical exam and testing for worms. This is also a good time to discuss vaccinations and plan for spaying or neutering (usually at about eight weeks). After that, schedule annual vet exams for your dog and always be on the lookout for health issues that may require more immediate attention. Weight loss, changes in behavior, and lack of energy are all signs that something may be wrong.

Taking Care of Your Cat

Food:

Whether you have a kitten or a cat, investing in high-quality food is important. How much food you give your cat will depend on the animal's age and activity level. Some felines are natural grazers and can handle access to food throughout the entire day. Some are prone to overeating and need to have a feeding schedule, such as twice per day.

According to the [ASPCA](#), it's important that cat food includes taurine, which is an essential amino acid for heart and eye health. Work with your veterinarian to determine what is best for your particular cat. No matter the feeding schedule, make sure fresh, clean water is always available.

Environment:

Many pet owners allow their cats to roam the neighborhood, but it's safer for cats to be kept indoors. Indoor cats are not harmed physically or behaviorally if they do not go outside. In fact, indoor cats usually lead much longer, healthier lives than outdoor cats.

However, if the cat (or cat owner) insists on an outdoor existence, identification—whether a collar tag or microchip—is essential. The Humane Society of the United States has a [few recommendations for keeping indoor cats healthy](#), including keeping a well-maintained litter box, providing stimulating toys, and investing in a scratching post.

It's also a good idea to regularly groom your cat. Many cats enjoy brushing and grooming. It is a bonding opportunity for owner and pet, and it helps minimize hairballs.

Veterinary Care:

Guidelines for cats are similar to those for dogs. Whether you're bringing up a kitten or adopting an older cat, be sure to visit the veterinarian to check the animal for worms and make sure you get vaccinations in order. Cats are safe to be spayed or neutered at around eight weeks old. Cats should be taken in for annual vet visits to help ensure their health and happiness.

Low-Maintenance Pets

Low-maintenance domestic animals include such "pocket pets" as gerbils, hamsters, ferrets, guinea pigs, and rabbits. Many people adopt pocket pets instead of dogs or cats because they are easier to take care of, and they don't require as much space or attention as their canine and feline counterparts. Other low-maintenance pets include amphibians, fish, reptiles, and spiders.

Children often want a small pet they can call their own. Low-maintenance pets can be the perfect introduction to how to properly take care of animals. However, when deciding on adopting or purchasing small animals that are easy to care for, you still need to prepare for them. You may need to invest in such living environments as aquariums, cages, terrariums, or hutches, and pick up any specialized food. Many smaller animals need space to run around in, foliage to hide beneath, shavings to burrow into, and toys to play with.

Regardless of the type of low-maintenance animal or pocket pet, they should always have fresh food and water, and their living environment should be regularly maintained. For some species (particularly rabbits, guinea pigs, and fancy rats) daily handling, petting, and play are also important to the animal's well-being.

Low-maintenance pets must also be kept safe from potential risks. If out of their cage, your pet can get stuck behind a large appliance or inside furniture, for example. If you let your pocket pet roam the house, be sure to safeguard electric wires and eliminate choking hazards. Also, keep small critters away from such larger predators as cats and dogs—even children or forgetful adults can pose a threat.

Your pocket or low-maintenance pet may need regular health checks and certain vaccinations. Zoonotic diseases—those that are transmissible between animals and humans—are also a concern. For optimum care and safety, be sure to consult a veterinarian who has experience with these types of pets.

Animal Welfare Tips for Special Events

Large family gatherings, holidays, picnics, and other celebrations are fun for humans but can be frightening or even dangerous for animals. Noisy fireworks, boisterous people, loud music, and other harsh sounds can startle or traumatize your pet and may even cause them to run away.

Human holiday foods can be unhealthy for animals, and pets can be poisoned by or choke on ribbons, wrapping paper, garbage, or other debris lying around. They should be protected from extreme heat during summer events and extreme cold during winter gatherings.

“Have a safe and secure indoor location for your pet,” says Ross Vet alumna Dr. Ashley Nichols. “A crate is preferable, but a bathroom with a lockable door works. Exercise your pet for a long time before festivities. Then feed them early and isolate them in a cool dark place. Lastly, don’t be afraid to reach out to your primary vet. We can help you with medication for pets that need them.”

Whether it’s a New Year’s celebration, Independence Day cookout, or birthday party, it’s important to take precautions to keep your pet as safe and stress-free as possible.

Taking care of animals before a celebration:

- Make sure your pets have identification tags with up-to-date information.
- Talk with your veterinarian about microchipping. If your pet is already microchipped, be sure your contact information is up to date in the registry.
- Keep current photos of all your pets.
- Make sure your environment is safe and your yard is secure enough to keep your pet contained. Evaluate your options and choose the safest area for your animals.

Caring for animals and keeping them safe during a celebration:

- Leave your pets at home when you go to parties, fireworks displays, parades, and other gatherings. Loud fireworks, unfamiliar places, and crowds can frighten many pets.
- Consider putting your pets in a safe room or crate during parties and fireworks.
- If you're hosting guests, ask them to help keep an eye on your pets to make sure they don't escape.
- Keep your pets inside if you or your neighbors are setting off fireworks.
- Keep sparklers, glow sticks, ribbons, wrapping paper, toothpicks, and other small objects away from your pet.
- Don't let pets near the barbecue grill while it is in use or still hot.
- Avoid the urge to feed your pet table scraps or other foods intended for people. Remember, some food may be toxic to your animal.
- Remember that too much sun, heat, and humidity—or too much cold—can be dangerous to pets. Keep them inside during extreme weather. If they are outside in the heat, make sure they have access to shady spots and plenty of water.
- Never leave a pet in the car when it's warm outside. Even a short time in a locked car can be dangerous for pets.
- If you're traveling out of town for a holiday, consider leaving your pets at home with a pet sitter or boarding them in a kennel.

After a celebration is over:

- Check your yard for food scraps or other debris before allowing pets outside.
- Make sure all gates are closed and there are no other potential means of escape.

Owning a pet is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have. You may even discover a passion for caring for animals and become a veterinary professional. If the idea appeals to you, check out the Ross Vet [Doctor of Veterinary Medicine \(DVM\) program](#) to see what it takes, or [contact us](#) for more information.

FAQS

Question : What is the best pet for depression?

Answer : Cats and dogs are observant and intuitive, and they may seek physical contact if they sense depression or sadness in their human companions. But even if the animals are unaware of it, cats and dogs can ease human depression simply by being there. Petting an animal or having an animal nearby can cause the human brain to release endorphins and other chemicals that counteract pain and cause a sense of pleasure or well-being. Cats and dogs are the best pets for depression, but many animals, including birds, guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits, and horses, can also help support good human mental health.

Question: What pet can I cuddle?

Answer: Many pets enjoy physical contact and affectionate cuddling, but some do not. Regardless of the type of animal, it will send clear signals that it is happy or unhappy being cuddled—so test the waters first. That said, cats, dogs, guinea pigs, hamsters, and rabbits all tend to be affectionate cuddlers, as do fancy rats and potbellied pigs.

Question: What is a cuddly low-maintenance pet?

Answer: Birds, goldfish, frogs, iguanas, snakes, tarantulas, and turtles are all low-maintenance pets but don't qualify as cuddly. Guinea pigs and hamsters check both the cuddly and low-maintenance lists. Cats can be low-maintenance—but not always—and they are often super cuddlers.

Question: What pet is the cleanest?

Answer: Cats are famously fastidious in their cleanliness, but they will leave trails of litter, fluffs of hair, and the occasional hairball (or other things) for their human to clean up. The cleanest pets include amphibians, fish, reptiles, and rodents.

Keeping your dog healthy takes more than just daily feeding and exercise. To be healthy, dogs require regular veterinary checkups, grooming, and a safe home environment.

How Often Should My Dog See a Veterinarian?

- Adult dogs: At least once a year for a full checkup.
- Puppies: Every 3 to 4 weeks until 4 months old.
- Senior dogs (over 7–8 years old): Twice a year or more. Because older dogs are more likely to get sick, they need to see the vet more often. Your vet might suggest blood tests or x-rays to catch health issues early.

How Can I Tell If My Dog Is Sick?

Your dog might be sick if it is:

- not eating
- less active
- vomiting or having diarrhea
- urinating either more or less often than usual
- coughing or sneezing
- oozing fluid or mucus from its eyes, ears, or nose
- losing hair, seems excessively itchy, or develops red spots on the skin
- limping or not putting weight on a leg

If your dog shows any of these signs for more than a day or two, it's a good idea to schedule a vet visit.

How Do I Give My Dog Medicine?

- Pills: You can hide the pill in a piece of cheese, some peanut butter, or a pill pouch treat. Sometimes, gently holding your dog's mouth closed until it swallows the pill can help.
- Liquid medicine: Use a syringe to squirt the medicine into the back of your dog's mouth, aiming near the back teeth. Keep your dog's head tilted slightly up to avoid spills.

- Topical medicine: Apply directly to your dog's skin or coat (at the top of the neck so your dog can't lick it). For eye drops or ear medicine, ask your vet to show you what to do.

Always read and follow the instructions on the medicine's label.

Administering liquid medicine to a dog

Puppies can leave their mother at about 7–8 weeks old. At this point, they can feed themselves. Puppies need a lot of care, including vet visits, feeding, socialization, and training.

Does My Puppy Need Vaccines?

Puppies get some protective immunity against infections from their mothers at birth and through her milk. Vaccines won't work well until this immunity fades, so puppies need to be vaccinated frequently (every 2–3 weeks) until they are about 4 months old. Because puppies are susceptible to infections until they have all their shots, they should be kept away from unvaccinated dogs, or dogs whose vaccine status is unknown, until then.

Will My Puppy Get Worms?

Puppies often have intestinal [worms](#), which can be passed to them by their mother. They usually get treated with deworming medicine as a precaution a few weeks after birth. Your vet will check your puppy's poop for worms every 2–4 weeks until it has two negative tests in a row.

What Should I Feed My Puppy?

Proper nutrition is crucial for puppies. They need special puppy food that provides enough calories, fat, protein, vitamins, and minerals for growth. Look for puppy foods that have the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) label, which means the food meets certain nutritional standards. Most dogs reach adulthood at 9–12 months, but large and giant breed dogs can take almost 2 years to become adults. Depending on their breed, once puppies become adults, they should be switched from puppy food to adult dog food.

Puppies must be fed several times a day when they are young to keep up with the demands of growing. The number of times a day they need to be fed decreases as they age. Adult dogs generally do well with feeding just once or twice a day.

Table
Feeding Schedule for Puppies

How Do I Train My Puppy?

The first thing to work on with your puppy is housetraining, so that your puppy doesn't poop or pee in the house. Start early, and show your puppy where to go to the bathroom. With patience and consistency, this usually takes just a few weeks. Take your puppy outside several times a day at first, and praise it when it goes. As puppies age, they can go longer without pooping or peeing and will not need to go out as often.

Times When Puppies Naturally Go to the Bathroom

- First thing in the morning
- Last thing at night
- After meals
- After drinking a lot of water
- After waking from a nap
- After playtime
- During the night (for very young puppies)

In addition to learning where to go to the bathroom, all dogs should learn basic commands like "sit," "stay," and "come." Socialization is also important, especially between the ages of 2 and 4 months. Interacting with people and other animals helps them get used to new people and experiences, and it can prevent fear or behavior problems in the future.

Many resources are available for training, including books and local puppy classes. Some training classes accept puppies as young as 8 weeks old, as long as they have been vaccinated. Training is a fun way to bond with your dog and teach it good behavior. Talk to your veterinarian about recommended training resources.

Pet Guide

The Ten Golden Rules of Puppy Care

Rule 1:-

Training starts on day one:

It's never too early to start training your puppy through training your dog will learn to understand what you expect of him and be better equipped to fit into his environment.

Rule 2:-

A puppy needs a balanced diet:

What you feed your puppy really matters, in fact, he needs special nutrition with just the right amounts of protein, fats, minerals and vitamins and always make sure your puppy gets plenty of fresh clean water.

Rule 3:-

Keep your puppy well groomed:

Start grooming your puppy at an early age. The earlier your dog gets to know the procedure, the more readily he will get used to it.

Rule 4:-

Puppies need regular dental care:

Taking care of your puppy's teeth now will prevent a lot of problems later on in his life. In fact,

the number one health problem for dogs, is periodontal disease. So start brushing your puppy's teeth now.

Rule 5:-

Exercise your puppy daily:

Part of the normal routine for a healthy puppy is regular exercise. The amount your dog needs will depend not only on his size, but also on his breed.

Rule 6:-

Regular vet check ups is a must:

Your puppy in home, you should take him into the vet within the next day or so for an overall check up. When your puppy reaches adulthood, at least one visit a year is required to ensure his ongoing good health.

Rule 7:-

Give your puppy home health checks:

You can play a big role in keeping your puppy healthy by doing health check ups at home. Frequently check his weight, coat and skin, eyes and ears, teeth and gums to prevent small problems from turning into big ones.

Rule 8:-

Introduce your puppy to other dogs:

One of the best ways to teach good canine manners is to allow your puppy to interact with an adult dog. Most adult dogs won't be aggressive though some times, a big dog will find a way to put a puppy in its place. Perhaps with a growl or a snap.

Rule 9:-

Reward good behaviour:

Positive reinforcement is a powerful way to make your puppy a well behaved member of your family. Reward him with a treat or praise when he does what you tell him.

Rule 10:-

Be patient:

Raising a puppy requires a lot of love and patience. Educate yourself by reading, talking to other dog owners and communicating with your vet. This will eliminate many "Surprise" along the way, and will help you build a strong enduring relationship with your puppy.

**For Pet Owners Guide
vaccination Schedule**

Vaccine	Recommend Period
1. Parvo, Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parainfluenza, Adenovirus vaccine	
Primary	8th week
Booster	12th week
Revaccination	every year

Vaccine	Recommend Period
2. Corona Virus vaccine 16th necessary	
Primary	6th week
Revaccination	every year
3. Anti Rabies vaccine	
Primary	14th week
Booster	18th week
Revaccination	every year

Note:- Sick animals and those with severe ecto and endoparasite infestations should not be vaccinated. Do not fail to have revaccinations carried out which are indispensable for the maintenance of immunity against rabies, parvo, distemper, hepatitis leptospirosis & coronavirus

Feedings Schedule For Your Dog

(Suggested Approximate Schedule for your pet dog)

Type of breed	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-9 months	9 months
Large breeds (Great Dane)	5-6 feedings (3 milk & 3 semi solid food) 300 ml of milk/300 mg of semi solid feed/beef and rice with egg.	4 feedings (2 milk & 2 solid food) 400 ml of milk/500 g of beef and rice vegetables/egg	3 feedings (3 milk & 1 solid food) 500 ml of milk/600-750 g of beef and rice vegetables/egg	2 feedings (1 milk & 1 solid food) 500 ml of milk/650 g of beef and rice with vegetables
Medium breeds (Alsatian (GSD) Labrador)	250 ml of milk/250 g of semi solid food (Cereals, corn, beef bread-cums of puddly, biscuits, minced meat, egg, etc.,)	300 ml of milk/300 g beef and rice cereal mixture biscuits of bread crumbs.	350 ml of milk/time 500 g of beef and rice	400 ml of milk/500-700g of beef depending
Medium lean breeds (Dobermann)	200-250 ml of milk/200g of semi solid food(cereals, corn,minced corn,	250 ml of milk/250g of beef and	300 ml of milk/300g of minced beef and rice/egg/vegetables	350 ml of milk/400-500g of beef and

Type of breed	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-9 months	9 months
	minced meat, egg) and vegetables	rice/cereal mixture bread crumbs		rice, egg and rice
Small breeds (Spitz Pomeranian)	100-150 ml f milk/200g of semi solid food cereals, minced, meat.	150-200 ml of milk/150g of beef and rice vegetables and rice	250 ml of milk/200g of minced beef and rice vegetables/egg	250 ml of milk/300g of beef and rice vegetables and rice

- Keep the food separately in a bowl meant for your pet
- Adjust the height of the bowl by using the adjustable feeding stand
- Always give fresh food, if your pet is not in a mood to take the food remove and feed it afterwards
- Avoid keeping the food in the bowl continuously, this may lead to spoilage and digestive problems
- Provide fresh and clean water

Training your pet

Every dog owner has a responsibility to train his pet to be well behaved and disciplined member of the community

Training your puppy to come, sit, lie down and stay down are most important both for the safety of your dog and for harmonious relations with family, friends and outside the home. A disobedient uncontrollable dog is a nuisance and can be a menace for you and your family. Generally professional training should be started around 4 to 5 months of your pet's age. But your puppy can be trained from the first month of age onwards

Teaching his name

First teach your puppy his name by using it frequently. He will soon understand that when you or any one else says his name you mean him. The dog's name should be of double sounding in nature "Tiger" "Rambo" and so on

Collar and Leash:

Get your puppy accustomed to collar and leash. Start with a narrow, soft collar at first and allow it wear constantly. Attach a light lead and allow it to drag for few days. Then by gently holding it walk along the pup so that it can't feel the lead too much

Choke Chain:

During training, your pup should wear a correctly positioned choke chain (Choker or choke chain). With this a short, quick tug with the lead will teach him that he is doing wrong

Sit:

"Sit" can sometimes be taught using a non-physical method. Hold some biscuits in the hand and show it to him. The pup will be interested in the hand and will watch it. Move the hand back over the pup's head. While it is watching the hand. This act probably cause him to sit. When he does so, say sit. If the pup is not responding to it, follow physical methods. Attach the lead to the pup's collar and use it to keep him close. Push down gently in the dog's hind quarters and pull

up slightly on the lead, saying "Sit". In both the methods the final step is to practice the puppy when he does it

Training schedule:

The training syllabus of dog should start from organizing natural urges like hunger, urination, defecation, rest and housing. This should be followed by training for obedience and then specialized training for guarding, house breaking, search and seizure, etc. The training should be divided into several lessons and different courses may be followed for the training of dogs for specialized purposes. In this chapter essential obedience training for house dogs has been briefly described

Practice to call name by natural urges: Natural urges include hunger, thirst, urination and defecation.

1. The dog should be given a single name on arrival in the house
2. The place for feeding and watching should normally be fixed
3. Fix place for urination and defecation; the dog should not be allowed to urinate or defecate at any other place in the house or yard. Dogs normally defecate immediately after awaking and eating or drinking
4. Practice to come back when called

Training for obedience: The dog should be taught to understand the common instruction by practice like sitting down, lying down, getting up, go fetch, bark and like forelimbs

Does My Dog Need Vaccines?

Vaccines help protect your dog from serious diseases. Core vaccines recommended by nearly all veterinarians prevent illnesses like distemper, parvovirus, and rabies. Vaccines for other illnesses, such as Lyme disease or *Bordetella* infection, are important in certain areas. Your vet will tell you which vaccines your dog needs based on where you live and your dog's lifestyle.

- **Booster shots:** These are given throughout your dog's life to keep it protected. Some vaccines only need boosters every few years. Others should be boosted every year. Your vet will tell you how often your dog needs booster shots.

Can My Dog Get Parasites?

Yes, dogs can get various [parasites](#), such as roundworms, hookworms, and [heartworms](#). These can harm your dog's health and can sometimes affect humans, especially children or those with weak immune systems. Your vet will test your dog's poop once a year with a fecal test to identify and treat any parasites your dog has. Common parasites in dogs include:

- **Roundworms and hookworms:** These parasites live in a dog's intestines and can infect people if they accidentally ingest them if poop gets on their hands when petting or cleaning up after their dog. Cleaning up poop and proper handwashing help prevent infections in people.
- **Heartworm:** This serious parasite is spread by mosquito bites and lives in your dog's heart and bloodstream. Dogs should be tested for heartworm every year and should receive heartworm prevention medicine year-round. Many heartworm medicines also help prevent intestinal parasites.

Should I Brush My Dog's Teeth?

Yes, brushing your dog's teeth is important for good dental health. You can help your dog by:

- feeding it dry dog food
- giving it dental care toys made for dogs
- brushing its teeth regularly using a special toothbrush and toothpaste made for dogs
- taking it to the vet for professional teeth cleanings as needed

Good dental care in dogs helps prevent plaque and tartar buildup, which can lead to gum disease, just as it does in people.

Should I Brush My Dog's Hair?

Yes, it's important to regularly brush your dog to remove loose hair and prevent mats. This is especially important for dogs with thick or long fur. Matted hair can irritate the skin and lead to infections. Don't use scissors to remove mats, because it's easy to accidentally cut the skin. Instead, use electric clippers made for clipping pets' hair. Bathe your dog with pet shampoo about once a month, depending on the season, or whenever your dog's coat gets very dirty or smells bad.

Does My Dog Need to Be Spayed or Neutered?

The surgery to prevent a dog from breeding is called spaying in females and neutering in males. All dogs should be spayed or neutered unless they are being bred. This helps prevent the birth of unwanted puppies and can decrease the risk of certain health issues later on.

- Females: Female dogs should be spayed at around 6 months old, before their first heat (breeding) cycle. Doing so helps prevent [mammary \(breast\) cancer](#) and uterine cancer.
- Males: Male dogs should be neutered when they are 5–10 months old. This can help prevent urine marking and other behavior problems.

How Do I Make My House Safe for a Dog?

Be sure to keep harmful chemicals like cleaning supplies, antifreeze, and certain plants out of reach of pets. Puppies, who love to chew, are especially at risk for ingesting these toxic substances. Try to tie up electrical cords out of reach of puppies to prevent chewing. You can also use bitter-tasting sprays (like bitter apple) on electrical cords to discourage chewing.