# How Pets can help improve Mental Health

Pets bring joy and comfort to people every day and pet owners can confirm it.

A survey by US veterinary group, Banfield Pet Hospital, shows the effects that lockdown has had on pets and their owners.

The study shows that the bond between people and their pets can help us through difficult times in our lives. Owning a pet is also good for our health.

Taking our dogs for walks mean that we can exercise, be outside and meet other people. Taking our dogs for walks and playing with them can decrease blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Having a pet as a companion can help manage depression and loneliness.

October is Mental Awareness Month. The aim of Mental Awareness Month is to educate the public about mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and stress. Being under lockdown, and not being able to see friends and family because of the pandemic, has escalated these problems for many people.

Pets lower stress and reduce unhappiness. Stroking your pet can make you feel calmer and ease tense muscles. Playing with your pet also increases the levels of the feel-good hormones in your brain.

Pets are aware of humans' moods, like when we are unhappy, sad, depressed, or happy. Caring for our pets reduces stress, anxiety, and depression. They keep us company and add joy to our lives.



## Questions

1. Which veterinary group did a survey on how pets can help people through difficult times?
2. What do most pet owners say, do their pets bring them every day?
3. How do people benefit by having pets? (List only two benefits)
4. In what way has lockdown affected people, and why has it affected them?
5. Explain how playing with a pet affects people.
6. Why do we have Mental Awareness Month?

## Collocations and Difficult Words

* **Cholesterol** – it is a waxy, fat-like substance that is found in all the cells in your body.
* **Hormones** – help control how cells and organs do their work in your body e.g., insulin.
* **Reduces** – to make smaller/less.
* **Feel-good** – a feeling of happiness.
* **Increases** – to make bigger/more.
* **Mental health** – your emotional state.
* **Mental awareness** – to make us aware of the importance of being happy and feel good and not being depressed and sad.
* **Stroking your pet** – rubbing your hand over your pet's fur.

## Countries, Languages, and Demonyms

* US – America
* English
* Americans

## Highlighted vocabulary

words: **225** - **19** / **8** / **6** / **0** / **0**

***Pets*** bring joy and comfort to people every day and **pet** owners can **confirm** it.  
  
A **survey** by US veterinary group, Banfield **Pet** ***Hospital***, shows the ***effects*** that lockdown has had on ***pets*** and their owners.  
  
The study shows that the **bond** between people and their ***pets*** can ***help*** us through difficult ***times*** in our ***lives***. ***Owning*** a **pet** is also good for our health.  
  
Taking our dogs for walks mean that we can exercise, be outside and meet other people. Taking our dogs for walks and playing with them can **decrease** blood **pressure** and cholesterol levels. Having a **pet** as a **companion** can ***help*** manage **depression** and loneliness.  
  
October is **Mental** ***Awareness*** Month. The **aim** of **Mental** ***Awareness*** Month is to ***educate*** the ***public*** about **mental** health problems such as **depression**, **anxiety**, and **stress**. Being under lockdown and not being able to see friends and family because of the pandemic, has ***escalated*** these problems for many people.  
  
Pets lower **stress** and reduce unhappiness. ***Stroking*** your **pet** can make you feel calmer and **ease** **tense** muscles. Playing with your **pet** also increases the levels of the feel-good hormones in your **brain**.  
  
Pets are **aware** of ***humans***' moods, like when we are unhappy, sad, **depressed**, ***or*** happy. ***Caring*** for our ***pets*** reduces **stress**, **anxiety**, and **depression**. They keep us **company** and adds joy to our ***lives***.