

fact sheet for cat and dog owners



Cats have been companions to humans as far back as 7500BC; an 8-month old kitten was discovered buried with the skeleton of a human. Dogs, the probable descendant of the grey wolf, have had demonstrable relations with humans as far back as 10,000 to 15,000 years ago! Dogs were primarily used for hunting, herding and to warn against approaching enemies. Cats were used primarily for rodent and pest control in old buildings and ships. Whether or not your pet is for utilitarian purposes or for friendly companionship some guidelines are useful for their good mental and physical health.

your pet's general health:

If you are a first-time pet owner be prepared for the responsibilities of pet ownership. An average lifespan for a dog is 10 to 13 years and for an indoor cat the expectancy is 14 to 20 years. Both pets need physical and emotional tending. Dogs need daily walks, cats need clean litter boxes. Both need loving attention to stimulate their mental health. Dogs have been known to become depressed if their owners cannot give them enough personal time. Cats can become loners if not physically handled when they are younger. Provide your pet with the care and attention they need.

Consider micro-chipping your pet. Many pets run away or sneak out. A microchip has a unique ID number that can be cross-referenced to its owner. You can possibly avoid expensive kenneling bills, finder's fees and personal trauma by having your pet micro-chipped. Also consider getting your pet spayed or neutered. It is estimated that over 3-4 million cats and dogs are euthanized per year, most because they were strays or lost and the owners could not be located.

Vaccinations are also important and in many states mandatory. Dogs are susceptible to many diseases and ailments, many of which can affect humans. Many states require a rabies vaccination for dogs; if your dog is impounded and quarantined without vaccinations, its owner will be subject to heavy fines.

Lee County Ordinance requires that all cats, dogs and ferrets that are 4 months of age or older be vaccinated against rabies and licensed by the county. Veterinarians are required by Florida State Statute to notify Lee County Domestic Animal Services that their clients' pets have received a rabies vaccination and whether a Lee County license was purchased. As of January 1, 2010 there will be an increase in the fee for a Lee County License if your pet is not micro-chipped. The following are the fees that will become effective as of January 1, 2010 and applies to all pets living in Lee Count for 30 days or more per year.

- Juvenile license (for all pets under 12 months of age) - \$8.00
- One- year license for sterilized & micro-chipped pets - \$8.00
- Three- year license for sterilized & micro-chipped pets - \$15.00
- One- year license for unsterilized pets or sterilized pets without a microchip - \$35.00
- Three -year license for unsterilized pets or sterilized pets without a microchip - \$65.00

Consider making your kitty an indoor cat. Many vets recommend this due to the hazards of outdoor trekking. If Kitty has never been outside she will never miss it and she will lead a longer, happier and healthier life because of it. Also be aware of natural predators that may live in your area, coyotes, wolves, bears, alligators and crocodiles all prey on small animals.

Lastly, make sure your pet wears a collar. The collar should include your pet's name, a way to contact you and all current vaccinations. Kitty's collar should include a bell to help alert potential prey. Note that if your puppy has bitten someone and does not have a current rabies tags he may be subject to euthanasia.

poisons:

Many household items and plants can be deadly to your pets. Household cleaners, antifreeze and solvents are some of the obvious ones so it is important to keep your pets out of the garage. Consider storing your household cleaners on an upper shelf, not under your sink; pets are very curious creatures and they can get into the most surprising places.

Plants may be pretty but some plants are poisonous, even deadly. As little as a single leaf from any lily variety can be lethal to cats. Other plants to avoid are:

- *Aloe*
- *Amaryllis*
- *Andromeda Japonica*
- *Asparagus Fern*
- *Australian Nut*
- *Autumn Crocus*
- *Azaleas*
- *Belladonna*
- *Bird of Paradise*
- *Bittersweet (Am. & Eur.)*
- *Black Locust*
- *Branching Ivy*
- *Buckeye*
- *Buddhist Pine*
- *Caladium*
- *Castor Bean*
- *Ceriman*
- *Christmas tree pine needles*
- *Chrysanthemum*
- *Clematis*
- *Cordatum*
- *Corn Plant*
- *Cycads*
- *Cyclamen*
- *Daffodils*
- *Devil's Ivy*
- *Dieffenbachia*
- *Dumbcane*
- *Easter Cacti*
- *Elephant Ears*
- *Emerald Fern*
- *English Ivy*
- *Eucalyptus*
- *Ferns*
- *Fiddle-leaf Philodendron*
- *Florida Beauty*
- *Foxglove*
- *Glacier Ivy*
- *Gladiolas*
- *Golden Pothos*
- *Gold Dust Dracaena*
- *Heavenly Bamboo*
- *Holly*
- *Honeysuckle*
- *Hurricane Plant*
- *Hyacinth*
- *Hydrangea*
- *Iris*
- *Jerusalem Cherry*
- *Jimson Weed*
- *Kalanchoe*
- *Lantana*
- *Lillies (all Liliium species)*
- *Lily of the Valley*
- *Lupine*
- *Marble Queen*
- *Mistletoe*
- *Morning Glory*
- *Mother-In-Law*
- *Mountain Laurel*
- *Mulch with cocoa beans*
- *Narcissus*
- *Needlepoint Ivy*
- *Nephtysis*
- *Nightshade*
- *Oleander*
- *Panda*
- *Philodendron*
- *Poison Hemlock*
- *Poinsettias*
- *Precatory Bean (Rosary Pea)*
- *Privet*
- *Red Emerald*
- *Rhododendron*
- *Ribbon Plant*
- *Sago palms*
- *Satin Pothos*
- *Schefflera*
- *Striped Dracaena*
- *Sweetheart Ivy*
- *Tulips*
- *Water Hemlock*
- *Wisteria*
- *Yew*
- *Yucca*



Also maintain a record of medications. Be aware that animals may think of pills as play-toys or treats. Acetaminophen, a popular painkiller found in over 200 prescriptions as well as Tylenol, Vicodin and Lorcet, can cause liver damage in dogs. One pill containing Acetaminophen can kill your cat. Dogs are most commonly poisoned by Ibuprofen found in Advil, Midol and Motrin. The Animal Control Center also notes that as few as seven (7) grapes can be toxic to dogs. Other poisonous items to dogs include:

- *Acetaminophen*
- *Advil*
- *Alcoholic drinks*
- *Avocados*
- *Bread dough Chocolate*
- *Garlic*
- *Grapes (~7)*
- *Ibuprofen*
- *Lorcet*
- *Macadamia nuts*
- *Midol*
- *Motrin*
- *Onions*
- *Raisins*
- *Raw yeast*
- *Tea Leaves*
- *Tylenol*
- *Vicodin*
- *Xylitol (found in sugarless gum)*

Lastly consult your veterinarian on the best products for flea control; some flea products are more dangerous than the fleas themselves. If your pet has ingested any harmful item call the Pet Poison Helpline: **800-213-6680**.

traveling & moving:

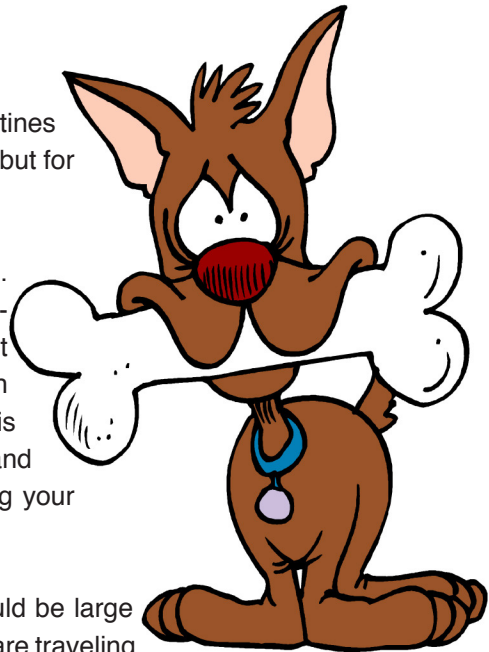
Pets are creatures of habit and can become stressed if their routines are changed. For some pets a trip in the car can be very exciting but for others it can be a stressful, nauseating experience.

Before traveling make sure your pet's vaccinations are up to date. Carry all of your proof of vaccination documents. Laws vary state-by-state and pets may be quarantined if it is found they have not been vaccinated. Make sure your pet always wears its collar with its proper ID tags and consider getting your pet micro-chipped. It is no fun being in an unfamiliar place and losing your pet. Collars and micro-chipping will greatly increase the probability of you getting your loved-one back.

Always use a pet carrier to transport your pet. Pet carriers should be large enough to allow the pet to stand, turn around and lie down. If you are traveling by plane consult the airline to find out what their pet travel policies are. If your pet is small enough it may be able to travel in the passenger compartment with you (the airline can inform you of the proper carrier sizes.)

If you are traveling by car you should still consider a pet carrier. Loose pets in cars can, at the least, distract the driver and at the worst cause an accident. Cats are usually much happier in a nice cozy secure place (ex. a pet carrier) while traveling. Also if you get into an accident your pet will have a better chance to survive injury free. Lastly, if your pet gets overly anxious when traveling speak with your vet about using a mild tranquilizer.

If you are planning on an overnight stop call ahead to find out what the policy is concerning pets - many hotels do not allow pets in their rooms. Check out www.officialpethotels.com or www.petswelcome.com for pet-friendly hotels.



Moving can be an especially stressful time for your pet. Consider kenneling your dog while you are packing and moving. Create a “safe-zone” for your cat that is away from the noise and disruption, some soft music or white noise can also mask many of the sounds that can cause stress. Once you arrive at your new destination immediately start routines that make your pet feel comfortable. Unpack the pet beds, bowls and toys first. Say familiar phrases like “Be Good” or “I’ll be right back” whenever you leave your new place. Your pet may also require more attention while they get used to their new environment. Take frequent walks with your dog and allow them to become accustomed to the new sights and smells so he can identify his new neighborhood. Lastly, locate the nearest 24-hour veterinary clinic in your area.

Be aware of heat if you are leaving a pet in your car. On an 80-degree day the heat inside your car can easily rise to levels that will cause severe dehydration and possible death. On a 90-degree day the temperature inside your car can easily exceed 120 degrees in a very short time!

These few suggestions will help you and your pets enjoy many healthy and happy years together.



i Information is from petinsurance.com. See petinsurance.com/healthzone for additional information.

Source: Deborah Owen, October 22, 2009 for www.swcaonline.com