

## Tips for All Pet Owners

### What's a Pet Owner to Do?

- Carefully consider your pet selection:
  - Before and after selection, your veterinarian or local shelter are the best sources for information about behavior and suitability.
- Make sure your pet is socialized as a young animal, so it feels at ease around people and other animals:
  - Expose your pet to a variety of situations a little at a time and under controlled circumstances; continue that exposure on a regular basis as your pet gets older.
  - If you're not sure how your pet will react to a large crowd or a busy street, be cautious.
  - Don't put your pet in a position where it feels threatened or teased.
- Train your pet:
  - The basic commands "sit," "stay," "no" and "come" can be incorporated into fun activities which build a bond of obedience and trust between pets and people.
  - Don't play aggressive games like wrestling or tug-of-war with your pet.
- Have your dog or cat vaccinated against rabies at four months of age and preventable infectious diseases appropriately.
  - Parasite control is important to how your dog feels and behaves.
- Be a responsible pet owner:
  - License your dog or cat, it required by law.
  - Obey leash laws (this applies to both dogs and cats).
- Spend time with your pet:
  - Pets that are frequently left alone have a greater chance of developing behavior problems.
- Be alert. Know your pet:
  - You naturally would be alert to signs of illness, but you must also watch for signs your pet is uncomfortable or feeling aggressive.
- Never allow your pets to roam. Your pet most likely will come in contact with wildlife and could be exposed to rabies. Your pet may be struck by a vehicle, injured or killed.
- Always license your animals and place that license on the animal's collar. Current licenses can be traced immediately by animal control. A license is your pet's ticket home!
- Keep your rabies vaccinations current. Rabies is 100% fatal.
- Dogs bark for a variety of reasons. Dogs may bark excessively because of boredom or stress. Dogs should be adequately exercised daily (through walks or play), consider changing out dogs toys frequently for consistent stimulation. Be sure that there is no debris in the dogs living area to prevent entanglement. Lastly for problem barkers consider leaving your dogs in your home when you are away.
- Cats can be trained! Cats can be kept indoors with a little diligence and household rules. Look down as you exit your home, if your cat is there waiting to run out, firmly give a command of NO or DONT. This will be successful with diligence. Set up rules in the household that all should practice looking down before exiting the home.
- Spay or Neuter your pet
  - The following information originated from the Humane Society of the United States. For more information on this topic and many others visit their website at <http://www.hsus.org> . The most important thing to know about spaying and neutering is that it saves lives.
  - MYTH: It's better to have one litter before spaying a female pet.  
FACT: Every litter counts.

Medical evidence indicates just the opposite. In fact, the evidence shows that females spayed before their first heat are typically healthier. Many veterinarians now sterilize dogs and cats as young as eight weeks of age. Check with your veterinarian about the appropriate time for these procedures.

- MYTH: But my pet is a purebred.  
FACT: So is at least one out of every four pets brought to animal shelters around the country. There are just too many dogs and cats—mixed breed and purebred. About half of all animals entering shelters are euthanized.
  - MYTH: I don't want my male dog or cat to feel like less of a male.  
FACT: Pets don't have any concept of sexual identity or ego. Neutering will not change a pet's basic personality. He doesn't suffer any kind of emotional reaction or identity crisis when neutered.
  - MYTH: My pet will get fat and lazy.  
FACT: The truth is that most pets get fat and lazy because their owners feed them too much and don't give them enough exercise.
  - MYTH: But my dog (or cat) is so special, I want a puppy (or kitten) just like them.  
FACT: Your pet's puppies or kittens have an unlikely chance of being a carbon copy of your pet. Even professional breeders cannot make this guarantee. There are shelter pets waiting for homes that are just as cute, sweet, and loving as your own.
  - MYTH: It's expensive to have my pet spayed or neutered.  
FACT: Many low-cost options exist for spay/neuter services. Most regions of the U.S. have at least one spay/neuter clinic within driving distance that charge \$100 or less for the procedure, and many veterinary clinics provide discounts through subsidized voucher programs. Low-cost spay/neuter is more and more widely available all the time.
- Consider spaying or neutering your pet! Animals that are fixed are less likely to roam or attract unaltered animals into your yard.

### **Warm Weather Tips:**

- In hot temperatures, never leave your dog in a vehicle for any length of time. Temperatures in vehicles can soar past 100 within minutes.
- Always provide accessible water for your pets.
- For dogs that tip their water bowls, the owner can partially bury a 5 gallon bucket of water. This will prevent tipping.
- A toddler pool filled with water can give access to play and relief.
- Never take your dog jogging with you in hot temperatures. Your dog can easily become overwhelmed from the heat.
- If your pet is overcome with heat, with cool water (not cold) spray the dog down, saturate from the neck down and immediately bring your pet to a Veterinarian.
- When traveling bring potable water with you.
- In Hampton roads, mosquito season begins with the warm temperatures, be sure provide prevention for heartworms.

### **Cold Weather Tips:**

- For outside dogs provide blankets in their shelter for added warmth.
- Animal crates are not considered adequate shelter; never use them for primary shelter.
- Dog houses should allow the dog to stand and move freely yet small enough to contain ambient temperatures.
- For extremely cold temperatures (39 and below) bring your pets inside your home.

## Definitions:

- **Adequate Care or Care** - the responsible practice of good animal husbandry, handling, production, management, confinement, feeding, watering, protection, shelter, transportation, treatment, and, when necessary, euthanasia, appropriate for the age, species, condition, size and type of the animal and the provision of veterinary care when needed to prevent suffering or impairment of health.
- **Adequate Shelter** - provision of and access to shelter that is suitable for the species, age, condition, size, and type of each animal; provides adequate space for each animal; is safe and protects each animal from injury, rain, sleet, snow, hail, direct sunlight, the adverse effects of heat or cold, physical suffering, and impairment of health; is properly lighted; is properly cleaned; enables each animal to be clean and dry, except when detrimental to the species; and, for dogs and cats, provides a solid surface, resting platform, pad, floor mat, or similar device that is large enough for the animal to lie on in a normal manner and can be maintained in a sanitary manner. Under this chapter, shelters whose wire, grid, or slat floors (i) permit the animals' feet to pass through the openings, (ii) sag under the animals' weight, or (iii) otherwise do not protect the animals' feet or toes from injury are not adequate shelter.
- **Adequate Water** - provision of and access to clean, fresh, potable water of a drinkable temperature that is provided in a suitable manner, in sufficient volume, and at suitable intervals, but at least once every 12 hours, to maintain normal hydration for the age, species, condition, size and type of each animal, except as prescribed by a veterinarian or as dictated by naturally occurring states of hibernation or fasting normal for the species; and is provided in clean, durable receptacles that are accessible to each animal and are placed so as to minimize contamination of the water by excrement and pests or an alternative source of hydration consistent with generally accepted husbandry practices.
- **Adequate Feed** - access to and the provision of food that is of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain each animal in good health; is accessible to each animal; is prepared so as to permit ease of consumption for the age, species, condition, size and type of each animal; is provided in a clean and sanitary manner; is placed so as to minimize contamination by excrement and pests; and is provided at suitable intervals for the species, age, and condition of the animal, but at least once daily, except as prescribed by a veterinarian or as dictated by naturally occurring states of hibernation or fasting normal for the species.
- **Ambient Temperature** - refers to the temperature surrounding the animal.