



# Southern Lakes Pet Connection

• Protect your pets this winter • Senior pets • Adopt a pet







# adopt-a-pet

These lovable animals are all up for adoption and hoping you'll give them a happy new home!



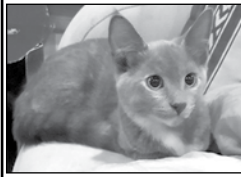
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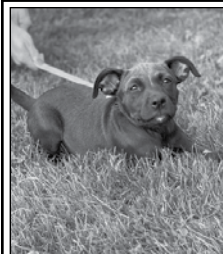
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# A longer, healthier, happier life for your pet

Pets are members of the family. They are the source of some of your best memories, they are your travel companions, your confidantes and your evening snuggle partners. You love them and you want them to live the longest, healthiest and happiest life possible.

Like it is for you, achieving the healthiest, happiest life for your pet is directly tied to the cornerstones of preventive care, nutrition and exercise. To provide insight into how each of these can benefit your pet, Dr. Kurt Venator, chief veterinary officer for Purina, offers the following advice:

## Regular veterinary exams

Your veterinarian and his/her team are the experts when it comes to the health and well being of your pet. Prevention is a key component of regular vet visits; the earlier a potential problem is identified, the easier it is to treat and the greater the chance of success.

The physical examination, routine diagnostics, vaccinations, heartworm prevention and parasite control will help keep your pet in tip-top shape. You can also work with your veterinarian to create a tailored health plan for your pet that takes into account their age, activity level and any medical considerations.

## Nutrition

In a recent Purina survey, three in five dog and cat owners



Exercise, combined with appropriate diet quality and quantity – can reduce the incidence of obesity and associated health conditions, such as osteoarthritis in dogs and diabetes in cats.

STOCK PHOTO Pet Connection

(60%) would consult their veterinarian for food safety and quality advice, while just about half refer to their pet food companies' websites. Furthermore, when it comes to nutrition, it is important to work with your veterinarian to select the ideal diet for your pet that is appropriate for their life stage (i.e., puppy vs. adult) and lifestyle (couch potato vs. sporting dog). It is also important to look beyond just

the ingredient list and marketing claims on the bag.

The nutrients inside should also meet or exceed AAFCO, USDA and FDA standards. Many pet owners are unaware of the rigorous process that goes into ensuring quality and safety in pet food, with three in five pet owners admitting they didn't know about the process after learning more about what goes into the pet food quality-checking process.

For pet owners, it's also important to take the time to look at the company's manufacturing reputation, along with safety and quality standards. Ask these key questions when evaluating different pet foods:

- Who formulates the food and what are their credentials?

Look for brands with nutritionists and veterinarians on staff to formulate the diets.

Purina, for example, has over 500 pet experts globally, including nutritionists, veterinarians, behaviorists and immunologists who use their expertise to improve pet nutrition and care.

- What are the company's quality and safety standards?

Purina conducts more than 30,000 quality checks involving ingredients, packaging, receiving, processing and packing in a typical 24-hour production period.

- Where is the food produced?

Does the company own their manufacturing facilities? At Purina, 99% of food sold in the U.S. is made in our own facilities.

## Exercise and enrichment

An appropriate amount of daily exercise can help reduce the incidence of common behavioral problems in pets. This includes excessive barking, inappropriate chewing and general hyperactivity. Physical exercise can take on

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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# Consider adopting a **senior pet**

Every day, in shelters all across the country, senior animals are passed over by prospective pet owners. Why? Some people are looking for the energy of a new puppy or feel older dogs offer families too little time.

“Any shelter worker will tell you, puppies and kittens get adopted first and older shelter pets have a higher likelihood of being euthanized,” says Andrea Arden, a dog trainer who’s been featured on Animal Planet and the Today Show, and spokeswoman for Tractor Supply Company’s annual Pet Appreciation Week.

“But if you’re considering adoption, there are great reasons to choose a more mature pet,” she said.

Older animals can be just as cute and lovable as their younger counterparts. In fact, they often come with many wonderful qualities that take years to develop in younger animals.

Here are a few benefits to consider while looking for a senior dog:

## **Saving a life**

It’s no secret that senior pets are at a disadvantage in shelters. Not only do they have a lower likelihood of adoption, they are also more prone to depression and confusion as a result of their new environment.

Consider how they got there – more often than not, a senior animal ends up in a shelter due to owner surrender.

It could be an older owner’s declining health, an unforeseen move or a sudden change in financial situation.

Still, these are wonderful, loving animals that simply had no place to go. By choosing to adopt a senior pet, you’re providing a second chance at life and, with that, can come a lot of fulfillment.

## **Say so long to training**

Lucky for you, the majority of senior animals have already learned the fundamentals – everything from toilet training to various commands to leash walking.

Not having to spend weeks and weeks on training can be a valuable perk of adopting a senior pet.

## **Age is but a number**

However, should you want to teach an older dog a new trick, you’re in luck. Animals can be trained at any age – in fact, more mature animals may have a longer attention span, so you may actually find it easier to teach your senior pet something new.



Adopting an older pet means its size and temperament are established, increasing your chance of finding the perfect companion for your household.

STOCK PHOTO *Pet Connection*

## **Plays well with others**

Have a cat? No problem, many senior dogs have already lived in a home with felines.

## **Lots of love, less destruction**

Senior pets are typically well past the search-and-destroy phase, minimizing the possibility of unwanted accidents and bad behavior.

## **Something for everyone**

The mellow disposition of a senior animal makes them a great companion for people of all ages. Their lower energy level is often a perfect fit for the elderly, while their calm presence can be great for families with children.

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# Tips to protect your pets this winter

The cold weather can be just as hard on pets as it is on people. This winter, consider these tips to keep your four-legged family members safe and warm.

## Stay safe

The salt used to de-slick an icy road can be dangerous and toxic to pets, often irritating the pads of their feet. In addition, coolants and antifreeze may drip from cars, making an easy transfer to sensitive paws.

When returning from a walk, be sure to wipe down paws with a damp cloth before he or she has a chance to lick them.

## Warm up on walks

If you decide to brave the cold for daily walks, there are a few risks to keep in mind. Wind chill can be dangerous, no matter what the temperature is, according to The Humane Society.

Pets can be at risk for frostbite and hypothermia during extreme cold snaps, and exposed skin on noses, ears and paw pads can quickly freeze and suffer

permanent damage.

On walks, keep your pet warm with a sweater or coat. Small booties or paw gel will help keep sensitive paws from freezing.

And if you'd rather not risk a slippery walk outside, try exercising your furry friend at an indoor dog park or doggy daycare.

## Take shelter

It's always best to provide warm, dry shelter indoors for your pets in the winter months, however, if your pets must stay outdoors, there are a few ways to make their shelter safe and comfortable.

The Humane Society recommends raising the shelter a few inches off the ground and covering the floor with cedar shavings or straw. The doorway should be positioned away from the wind, and the shelter covered with waterproof burlap or heavy plastic.

The American Veterinary Medical Association urges owners to provide unlimited access to fresh water. Change the water frequently to avoid freezing, or use a

heated water bowl.

## Keep pets secure

Consider your pet's car safety before pulling out of the driveway. Pet carriers, car seats and back seat barriers can provide additional safety as you drive, especially in the event of an accident or sudden stop.

Also, you may want to explore pet injury coverage. For example, Erie Insurance automatically covers up to two dogs and/or cats that are injured in your vehicle during an accident. For more information, visit [www.ErieInsurance.com](http://www.ErieInsurance.com).

"Your pet's overall health and safety depends on your preparedness," says Cody Cook, Erie Insurance vice president and product manager.

"Check with your insurance company to make sure your pets are covered in the event of an accident. That way, instead of worrying about medical costs, you can have the peace of mind knowing they're protected," Cook added.

(STATEPOINT)

This fall and winter, take care to protect your furry friends by following some simple tips that will help keep them safe and happy.

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# adopt-a-pet

These lovable animals are all up for adoption and hoping you'll give them a happy new home!



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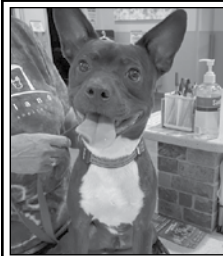
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# Help pets and their families in need

## *Pet food, blankets among several ways to offer support*

More than 34 million Americans face food insecurity every day, according to Feeding America, a non-profit organization and network of more than 200 food banks.

“People who face food insecurity should not have to sacrifice the unconditional love and companionship pets bring to their lives,” said Joann Fuller, U.S. Shelter Engagement Manager for Hill’s Pet Nutrition.

“Most food pantries also accept pet food donations. So when you drop off a bag of dog or cat food, you’re helping a family in need take care of their best friend,” Fuller added.

Recognizing the need to provide year-round help for families and pets in need, Hill’s has partnered with VCA Charities, the philanthropic arm of VCA Hospitals, to support the organization’s Pet Food Pantry program.

The program’s goal is to provide healthy, nutritious pet food to families that could not otherwise afford it. Created in 2010 in Venice, California, the program and participating pantries have served more than 1.5 million meals to pets in 30 locations across the U.S. and Canada.

“Many people feel financially tapped out after the holidays, but helping families and pets in need doesn’t have to cost a lot,” Fuller said.

Here are some simple ways people can help families in need care for their pets:

### **Donate food**

- Have you ever bought a bag or case of pet food your pet wouldn’t eat? Consider donating it to your local food pantry.

### **Help with collections**

- Many pantries provide volunteers with printed paper bags to use in gathering food donations. Ask your local food pantry for some donation bags and drop them off at homes in your neighborhood. Include a note asking for pet food donations and let your neighbors know when you’ll be back to pick up the filled bags and deliver them to the food pantry.

### **Keep them warm**

- Contact your local homeless shelter to find out what they need to help care for the pets of the homeless people in your



Families struggling with finances likely also find it difficult to purchase food for their pets. Donating pet food and becoming a foster to pets seeking temporary care or a permanent home are just a couple of ways to help those in need.

STOCK PHOTO Pet Connection

community. Donating extra blankets and pet sweaters could help keep those pets warm throughout the winter.

### **Foster pets**

- Shelters for victims of domestic violence may need help with temporary housing for pets of families in transition. Contact your local shelter to see if they have a fostering program that needs volunteers.

### **Support elderly pet owners**

- Seniors who no longer drive may have trouble accessing regular veterinary care for their pets. Check with your local senior center or county’s department of senior services to see if you can volunteer

to drive seniors and their pets to veterinary appointments.

### **Contact a veterinarian**

- Contact your veterinary clinic or others in your area to see if they have programs in place to provide free or reduced-cost medical care to pets in need. You may be able to donate cash or supplies, or simply volunteer your time.

“When families are struggling with food insecurity, homelessness, financial hardship or transition, they need the unconditional love of their pets more than ever,” Fuller says.

“By helping provide for pets, you’re also doing something good for the humans who love them – and that’s something you can feel good about all yearlong.”

(BPT)



# Helping your pet with separation anxiety



With good weather, kids home from school and the increase in flexible work schedules, summer time is the best season for spending extra time with your pet. However, now that fall is here, the kids aren't the only ones in the family experiencing back-to-school blues.

Separation anxiety can happen for many reasons among pets, but with the changing routine and lack of attention due to busy schedules, back-to-school is a common time when pet owners may start noticing changes in their dog or cat's behavior.

To support them during this time Dr. Kurt Venator, Purina's chief veterinary officer offers the following tips to address separation anxiety in pets.

## Get your pet into a routine

Pets love routines because it makes them feel secure. During the summer, kids are always around to make things entertaining and exciting. When they suddenly disappear, some cats and dogs will feel sad and confused while others may experience real separation anxiety.

It's important to get your pet acclimated to the change by replacing their old schedule with a new one.

This new schedule should include allocating time to play after work and keeping a consistent schedule when coming

and going from the house.

## Burn off some energy

Some pets deal with separation anxiety by engaging in negative or destructive behaviors, such as howling, excessive barking or chewing on inappropriate objects.

A great way to keep your dog from doing this is to take them on a walk in the morning before you leave the house to help burn off some of that extra energy.

For cats, consider playing with them at night as well – whether it's making them chase a feather wand or play with a ball.

## Turn up the tunes and start with baby steps

Try leaving some soothing music on at your home while everyone is out of the house. The music will help drown out distracting noises that your dog may mistakenly associate with their family coming home.

Some animal shelters have even found that playing calming music helps animals in their facilities relax. Additionally, help your pets adjust to a new routine by providing them with clear cues.

For example, jingling your car keys prior to leaving for work each day can provide your pet with an important audible cue and

ultimately, help with the transition to a new family schedule.

## Create an interactive environment

Back-to-school season is a great time to buy your pet a new, interactive toy to play with. This will help mentally stimulate them and keep them occupied during the day when children are away at school.

For dogs, chew toys are a way for them to relieve their anxiety, frustration and boredom. For cats, creating a play area – including scratching posts and cat furniture – can keep them entertained even when you're not home.

## Spend time with your pet

It's important to remember that while you may have had a long day, your pet may have been sitting at home feeling lonely, waiting for you to come home.

It may be tough to fit into a busy work schedule, but be sure to build some interactive time – whether it's a walk or cuddle session – to benefit both you and your pet.

For more information on helping your pet deal with separation anxiety, check out [Purina.com](http://Purina.com).

(BPT)

Spending some quality time with your pet at the end of the day is critical to helping reduce their anxiety after being alone throughout the day while also helping to keep them active and mentally sharp.

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# How to protect your pet from obesity

The most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that more than one-third, or 78.6 million of U.S. adults are obese. While the issue is well recognized among the public, many don't realize there is a second obesity epidemic occurring simultaneously – a pet obesity epidemic, which is even more severe.

Research from the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention shows an estimated 52.6 percent of dogs and 57.6 percent of cats in the U.S. are overweight or obese.

These numbers are at an all-time high, according to the Banfield Report, which says that 37 percent more dogs and 90 percent more cats are obese today than just five years ago.

So how do you know if your pet is overweight or obese? Pet360.com contributor Patrick Mahoney, VMD, points to the following signs to look out for:

## **Excess fat over the ribs**

A thick layer of fat inhibits easy feeling of the ribs.

## **Lack of a waistline**

When looking down on your pet from above, there is a lack of visible narrowing just behind the last rib.

## **Pendulous abdominal fat**

Fatty tissue dangles from the underside of your pet's abdomen, which may even swing while your pet is walking or running.

Just like with people, obesity can lead to other health complications in pets. Veterinarian and pet health expert Dr. Jennifer Coates notes that overweight pets are at an increased risk for multiple health conditions, including ligament ruptures, intervertebral disk disease, osteoarthritis, congestive heart failure, dermatological disorders, infections, heat exhaustion and heat stroke, as well as complications during surgery and some types of cancer.

"The complications that can arise from obesity in pets are just as detrimental to their health as for people who are obese," says Dr. Ellen Lowery, associate director of U.S. Veterinary and Professional Affairs at Hill's Pet Nutrition, which manufactures

Hill's Prescription Diet Metabolic Advanced Weight Solution.

The specialized line of products work together to ensure safe and healthy weight loss and easy weight maintenance, and is available alongside other pet food options from Hill's.

"Pet parents should consult with their veterinary healthcare team to first determine whether their pet is in its ideal weight range, and if not, what the best weight management strategy should be to support a longer, healthier and happier life," she added.

One tool that vets can use to conduct a pet weight assessment is the Hill's Healthy Weight Protocol, which was developed by Hill's and the University of Tennessee for veterinary professionals to more accurately determine an estimated ideal body weight for overweight pets. It is also used to calculate the best range of caloric intake for a weight-loss program.

The calculator allows the veterinary healthcare team to create a feeding and monitoring plan that is simple for pet

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Pet parents should consider their pets' health in the same way they view their own and incorporate nutritious food and physical activity into their daily routine for healthy weight management.

FILE PHOTO Pet Connection



# Tricks to keep your pup active and happy all winter long

No matter how hearty and fun-loving your dog is, as a pet parent you know there will come a time when it's just too cold, snowy, icy, wet or windy for your pup to comfortably exercise outdoors.

When the weather outside is frightful and the fire inside delightful, it's important to find ways to help your dog stay active indoors where it's safe and warm.

PetMD recommends dogs get 30 minutes to two hours of physical activity every day, with the specific amount that's best for a dog depending on her age, size, breed and overall health. Pets who get plenty of exercise are happier,

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healthier and less likely to engage in destructive behaviors like chewing.

With more than 50 years serving pets and their families, Petmate is committed to delivering the best in pet products to keep your four-legged friends healthy, happy, safe and warm. The Petmate team offers five tips for helping your dog stay active indoors throughout the winter:

### **Play fetch indoors**

Your dog's favorite game doesn't have to be just for outdoor fun. Be sure to select soft toys such as the Chuckit. Indoor Ball and Flyer for your indoor game of fetch, since plushy items will be less likely to cause damage in the house. Score bonus pet parenting points for tossing the toy in such a way that your pooch gets the extra exercise of navigating a furniture obstacle course to retrieve it.

### **Hide and seek**

You loved this game as a kid and your dog will too. Sneak off to a far part of the house and call her name. She'll love the mental challenge of hunting for you and the sense of victory when they find you – and you make a big fuss over them for it.

For even more fun, take along a toy

that features a squeaker to help the dog find your hiding place. You can also hide a favorite toy and encourage them to find it. Reward them with pats and praise when they bring it back to you.

### **Twice the treat**

Every dog loves a treat, but just as you're susceptible to packing on pounds during less active winter months, your pooch can be at risk for weight gain, too.

This does not mean no snacks at all, just be sure to work in some exercise and double the enjoyment by making your dog work for a reward. Slip your dog's favorite treat inside a treat pod or roller toy and let them figure out how to retrieve the treat from inside it.

### **Walk in a winter wonderland**

A dog's tolerance for cold temperatures depends on many factors, including their size, breed and personal preference. A big dog with lots of hair will probably be better equipped to handle cold better than a small, short-haired pooch, but you know your dog best and you can tell when it's too cold outside for them.

Use common sense; keep your dog (and yourself) off ice and out of deep

snow during walks, and bundle them up in a warm sweater and booties if they need them.

Since evenings and nights are darker in winter, check out pet glow collars and leashes. They absorb light throughout the day and then glow at night to help make your dog more noticeable in the dark.

### **Cater to comfort**

Everyone experiences the winter blues from time to time, during the winter months, when you're stuck indoors. The climate and atmosphere can affect your dog, too.

Be aware your dog may need some extra comfort and safety measures to weather the winter. Just as you dress them in a warm sweater for outdoor playtime, your dog may appreciate a warm, snug bed during the winter.

One choice is a self-warming pet bed with reflective heat technologies, no batteries or plug needed to keep your pet warm and toasty.

For more information on how to care for your dog and other pets throughout the year, or to learn more about the wide variety of pet products available, visit [www.petmate.com](http://www.petmate.com).

(BPT)

When the weather outside is frightful and the fire inside delightful, it's important to find ways to help your dog stay active indoors where it's safe and warm.

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# adopt-a-pet

These lovable animals are all up for adoption and hoping you'll give them a happy new home!



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# How to prevent lost pets



Millions of dogs, cats and other animals are beloved companions to individuals and families around the world. People often do all they can to keep their pets safe and healthy, which includes providing nutrition, shelter and medical care. They also need to take steps to prevent pets from getting lost.

The American Humane Association estimates that more than 10 million dogs and cats are lost or stolen in the United States each year. One in three pets will become lost at some point during its life.

Pets that go missing may end up in shelters and humane societies, potentially facing euthanization if not reunited with their owners.

Below are various steps that can be taken by pet parents to safeguard their animals.

## License your pet

Pets must be licensed in many towns and cities. Licensing establishes a legal attachment to a pet.

In the event that an animal is stolen or becomes lost, having that pet license in place can be essential to recovery.

## Microchip your pet

Another safeguard is to have pets

microchipped. A microchip is very small, roughly the size of a grain of rice, and injected just under the skin of the animal. The chip's data can be read by a universal device that many shelters and veterinarians have in their offices.

Pet owners should immediately update the contact information with the microchip company database any time their address or phone number changes.

## Get an ID tag and collar

Collars are more than just fashionable accessories for pets. Collars can be used to hang identification tags as well as tags indicating vaccination and whether the pet is licensed.

Should a pet get out or break away from a leash while on a walk, the pet has a better chance of being quickly reunited with its owners if he or she can be identified.

## Develop a relationship with the vet

Annual well visits are an important component pet health care. But they go beyond that. Vets who are familiar with pets and owners may be able to identify animals that come across lost pet channels.

Furthermore, should a thief try to

parade a pet around as his or her own, a vet familiar with a given animal can attest to the animal's true owner.

## Be aware of loud noises and crowds

Some pets become skittish during harsh weather or noises, such as fireworks. Extra caution is needed during these times, or when company is over, as pets may seek to escape the noise.

Keep the scared pet in a calm room or space away from the noise so they can't dart out the door and become lost.

## Secure the yard

Check for points of egress that can make it easy for pets to slip away. This includes fence gates and spaces underneath the fence. Block exit locations as best as possible.

## Spay or neuter the pet

Intact animals may be more likely to roam in search of mates. Spaying or neutering pets reduces that desire, resulting in pets who are more content to stay at home.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Pets that go missing may end up in shelters and humane societies, potentially facing euthanization if not reunited with their owners. Pet parents can take various steps to safeguard their animals.

STOCK PHOTO *Pet Connection*

a variety of forms, from leash walks to ball fetch to playtime at the local dog park. For those dogs with a predilection for the water, swimming can offer a fun and effective alternative.

And don't forget that mental exercise is just as important as physical exercise. Obedience training, food puzzle toys, chew toys and trick training – such

as roll over or paw – are all beneficial for pets.

Before starting any exercise regimen with your pet, be sure to consult with your veterinarian to find answers to your questions and learn what activities would best support your pet based on their breed, age and needs.

(BPT)

## **SENIOR PETS** • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

### **Wonderful years ahead**

Arden urges pet parents not to let the shorter lifespan of an older pet keep you from adopting one.

Depending on the breed, a dog of 7 or 8 years may have at least as many good years left ahead, and most breeds of domestic cats can easily live to be 15 or older.

It's also important to note that while veterinary attention and medication are needed for animals of all ages, old age doesn't necessarily mean higher costs.

"You wouldn't avoid making a human friendship just because the new person in your life is mature," Arden says.

"When you adopt an older animal, you can still have

plenty of time to enjoy their companionship. Because they're older, you'll be inspired to make every moment with them as loving and rewarding as possible."

### **Preparing for senior pets**

Good nutrition and regular veterinary checkups are important for all pets, especially seniors. Look for a specialized food such as 4health Premium Pet Food to ensure your pet is receiving the vitamins and minerals needed to stay healthy.

You can also find walk-in PetVet Clinics at Tractor Supply stores where you can save off the cost of yearly vaccinations, micro-chipping and other preventative treatment options.

(BPT)

## **OBESITY** • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

owners to follow.

Additional tools, such as PetMD's Healthy Weight Calculator, can help pet parents learn about proper weight management and key questions to ask their veterinarian.

Pet parents should commit to a daily exercise schedule that provides consistent activities for their pets. For dogs, workouts could include a brisk walk outdoors or a game of fetch. As much as cats enjoy their snooze time they can still get in some exercise through toys and games.

It's important to also pay attention to the feeding guidelines on pet food packaging, which are intended to instruct on the proper feeding portions for pets in certain weight ranges.

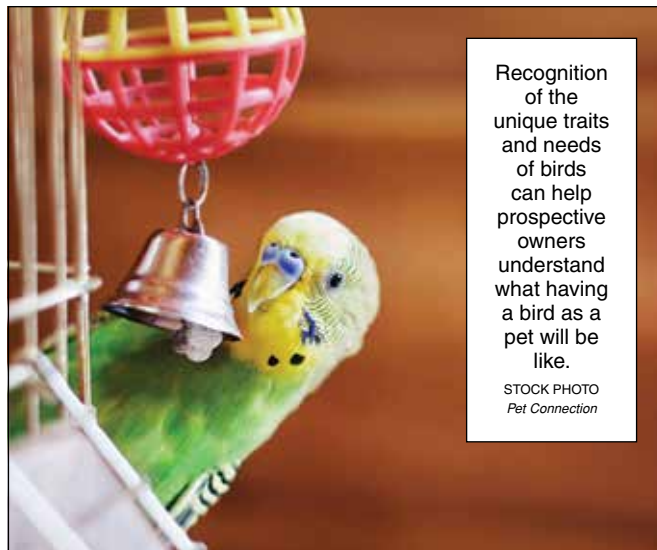
This, of course, is a general recommendation and should be

modified to reflect your pet's daily activity level as well as any extra calories he is getting from treats, which should be no more than 10 percent of the pet's total calories for the day. Your veterinarian can help determine how many calories your pet should be given daily and how many calories they can receive in treats.

Therapeutic pet foods, typically available through your vet, are also an option for healthy weight loss and management.

The Hill's Prescription Diet Metabolic Advanced Weight Solution for instance, works with each pet's unique metabolism to deliver the right amount of essential nutrients your pet needs while keeping them full and satisfied between meals.

(BPT)



Recognition of the unique traits and needs of birds can help prospective owners understand what having a bird as a pet will be like.

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Pet Connection

# **What to know about having a bird as a pet**

Pets make wonderful additions to a home and family. One of the best things about welcoming a new pet into a home is that no two pets are the same, which means pet owners will get an entirely unique experience each time they bring a new animal home.

Birds are among the most unique pets. Brightly colored feathers give pet birds their own distinctive look, but there's more to birds than just vivid plumage.

Individuals considering a pet bird can consider these needs and character traits commonly associated with birds so they have a good idea of what to expect.

• **Birds have unique veterinary needs** – The American Veterinary Medical Foundation notes that pet birds have special veterinary needs, and recognition of those needs can help prospective bird owners determine if a pet bird is for them.

The Association of Avian Veterinarians (aav.org) can help individuals find an avian veterinarian in their area, and such professionals can discuss the unique veterinary needs of various bird species.

• **Most pet birds are diurnal species** – The AAV notes that most pet birds awake at dawn and settle in to sleep at dusk. Prospective bird

owners should be comfortable with and willing and able to accommodate that sleep-wake cycle. If they can't accommodate that, a pet bird could suffer as a result.

The Association reports that artificially long days resulting from household lights or televisions can cause sleep deprivation in birds and compromise their health.

• **Birds need exercise** – Pet birds live well in a cage, but that does not mean they don't need exercise. The AAV notes that birds need exercise to maintain their cardiovascular and respiratory systems.

The AVMA recommends choosing a cage that affords birds space to climb, walk around and fly.

• **Birds can be trained** – Individuals may associate pet training with dogs, but birds, and their owners, can benefit from training, too.

The AAV recommends reward-based training and notes that some good resources include Goodbirdinc.com and the International Association of Avian Trainers and Educators (iaate.org.)

Birds make for wonderful pets. Recognition of their unique traits and needs can help prospective bird owners understand what bird ownership will be like.

(METRO CREATIVE)





# Types of fish that can share a tank

*Fish can be territorial but some species get along better than others*

Parents with more than one child know that sometimes separation is the best solution when kids aren't getting along. Though that same approach can be applied to many pets, it's likely not an option for people with fish tanks.

Unless pet owners have a spare, clean and functioning fish tank on hand for those moments when fish aren't playing well together, they'll have to find species that can safely share the same tank.

The pet experts at PetSmart note that fish can become territorial, so there's no guarantee that typically neighborly species will get along. However, the following are some species that should be able to share the same tank without issue.

- **African cichlids:** PetSmart describes these active fish in a somewhat paradoxical way, noting their territorial and aggressive tendencies while also noting they do better when crowded together.

African cichlids should be monitored closely after introducing them to a tank and removed if they become too aggressive. When choosing a tank, pick one that's at least four feet long.

- **South and Central American cichlids:** PetSmart notes larger varieties of these cichlids can be very aggressive and, unlike their African counterparts, do not do well in overcrowded tanks.

When picking South and Central American cichlids, ask the pet store professional to select fish of similar sizes, diet and temperament. The tank for these fish should be able to accommodate their size as an adult.

- **Community fish:** As their name suggests, community fish are compatible

when placed in a tank with other non-aggressive species.

PetSmart notes that schooling species do best in quantities of five or more. Examples of community fish include rasboras, danios and cory cats.

- **Semi-aggressive fish:** Unlike community fish, the name of this category of fish suggests a peaceful tank might be difficult to establish. However, PetSmart notes that semi-aggressive fish can get along with others if all fish are the same size.

But PetSmart urges fish owners to avoid pairing semi-aggressive fish with smaller fish, which can bring out their less friendly tendencies.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Though fish can be territorial, there are some species that should be able to share the same tank without issue.

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