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Pet Care

GUIDE



Great reasons to
**ADOPT YOUR
NEXT PET**

How to care for
**AQUARIUM
GOLDFISH**

**POTENTIAL
THREATS**

to pets in your
yard

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GREAT REASONS TO ADOPT YOUR NEXT PET 10

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Build a

STRONG RELATIONSHIP

with your pet's vet

Routine well visits are an important part of maintaining overall health for adults and children. The same can be said for ensuring family pets are thriving as well.

Veterinarians should be consulted for more than just illnesses. Their input is a key component of proper pet care. Having a solid relationship with the vet is in the best interests of the pet and its owner.

Open communication and familiarity

with companion animals helps to avoid health issues before they appear, according to Dr. Krista Magnifico, DVM, and founder of Pawbly.com. Wellness exams facilitate discussion when the animal is not under duress and the general health of the pet can be properly assessed.

According to the pet resource iHeartDogs.com, common components of well visits include the vet asking questions



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about exercise frequency, appetite, behavior, and any breed-specific issues. A vet will examine the pet, check gait and movement, as well as look at the eyes, ears and mouth. Routine vaccinations also are typically discussed and administered.

Veterinary Practice News advises taking a new pet to the vet a few days after he or she comes home, even if the pet's medical history has been documented extensively. This establishes a clinical file and a relationship between pet and vet and vet and pet owner.

The frequency of vet visits is often determined by the veterinarian, breed and age of the animal, and the preferences of the pet owners. The vets at The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine say that kittens or puppies may need to come in once a month for preventative shots until they reach 16 weeks of age. New pet parents also may need more guidance on training and housebreaking and can benefit from more frequent interactions with a vet early on. After pets receive all of their initial immunizations, vets typically see healthy pets annually for well visits. If the pet has a specific condition, he or she may require more frequent visits.

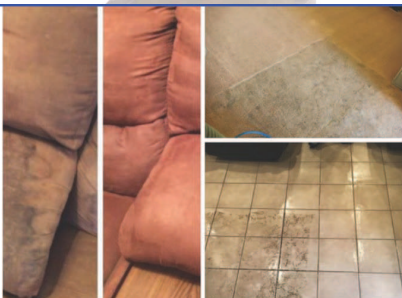
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Veterinarians play an essential role in maintaining the health, happiness and comfort of pets. A great relationship is established early on.

*Having a solid
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Birds

FOR FIRST TIME BIRD OWNERS



Birds are friendly, loyal and intelligent pets that can learn to replicate human speech and interact with their owners in very unique ways. Such attributes have helped make birds increasingly popular pets.

Although there are many different bird species that can make wonderful pets, certain birds may make better companion animals, particularly for first-time bird owners, because of their amenable personalities. Before getting a feathered friend, prospective owners are urged to learn about bird care, including researching the type of caging, exercise, food, and attention required to care for birds.

When considering birds, here are some of the more popular species, courtesy of PetMD and PetSmart.

FINCHES

For people who like to watch birds more so than handle them, finches might be the ideal fit. These little birds thrive in small flocks and are content to pay more attention to their cage mates than humans. They'll flit from perch to post, and their delicate tweets can fill a room with vitality.



CANARIES

Canaries are another type of bird that can be watched instead of cuddled. They're popular thanks to their prolific, operatic



songs. Some are even bred to perform specific songs. When properly provided for, canaries can live from five to 10 years.

PARAKEETS

The average parakeet has a life span of seven to 10 years, and their docile personalities make parakeets great companion birds.

Also known as Budgies, parakeets are good for people new to bird-keeping. Parakeets are quite intelligent and can learn a few basic commands. Some may be able to pick up some human words. Parakeets thrive on interaction with their owners and should be handled for around a half-hour or more per day. Early socialization and handling is advised to raise a parakeet that's part of the family.



COCKATIELS

These personality-heavy birds can also be great pets for first-timers. Well socialized cockatiels recognize and respond to their owners. Cockatiels are a bit larger than parakeets and require medium-sized cages. They can benefit from socializing time outside of their cages and require mental stimulation to stay healthy.



Those interested in pet birds can speak with employees at local pet stores or avian specialty shops to get detailed guidelines on caring for these increasingly popular pets.

RECOGNIZE PICA in HOUSE CATS



Cats can have some strange eating habits, preferring dog kibble to their own canned food or munching on a blade of grass here and there. However, when culinary choices are especially strange, and particularly when cats have the urge to eat nonfood items, a condition called pica may be to blame.

Pica can be quite common in cats. While certain cats may be predisposed to pica, others, particularly cats that may have been weaned too young, can suck

or consume many items. These include wool, fleece, stuffed animals, or even hair. Asian breeds are known to do this more often than other breeds.

Other suspected causes of pica stem from mineral deficiencies, and cats may be eating abnormal items to provide for sustenance they're lacking. However, pica also may be linked to feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus, according to the Canidae pet food company. Other suspected causes of pica concern diabetes and brain tumors.

Cats also may feed on items due to behavioral compulsive disorders. Boredom and lack of stimulation may drive cats to seek entertainment elsewhere, which may lead to compulsive grooming or eating weird things.

Pica tends to show up most frequently in young cats, but that does not rule out problems in older cats. Concerns about eating strange things should be addressed with a veterinarian, who may ask if there are any stressful or environmental changes that may have instigated this sort of behavior. Testing may be done as well to rule out underlying medical conditions.

Removing targeted items and giving cats something else to divert attention may help alleviate pica. Eating non-food items, and even some natural items, such as plants or potting material, can lead to intestinal distress. That is why it is key for owners to help their cats get the help they need as soon as symptoms are noticed.

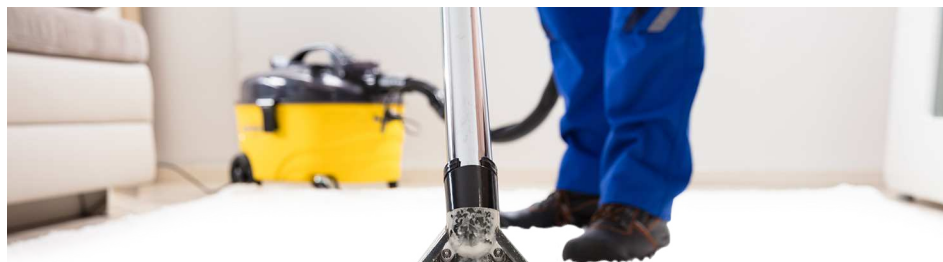
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POTENTIAL THREATS TO PETS IN YOUR YARD



Pets love to roam free, and homeowners with outdoor space often let their pets get some exercise and play time in their backyards. While it's important for pets like dogs and even some cats to get some time outdoors, pet owners should recognize the potential threats to pet health looming in their lawns and gardens.



MULCH

According to the Pet Poison Helpline, mulch made from cocoa beans can pose a threat to pets. This type of mulch is made of discarded hulls or shells of the

cocoa bean. These byproducts of chocolate production contain varying concentrations of the toxins theobromine and caffeine. When ingested in high concentrations, these toxins can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, seizures, and, in some instances, death. The amount of these toxins present in a given batch of this type of mulch may not be readily known, so homeowners should avoid applying it.



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FERTILIZERS

Certain types of fertilizer also may be harmful to pets. According to the PPH, fertilizers that contain blood meal, bone meal, feather meal, and iron can be dangerous to dogs. When ingested in large doses, such products can form a concretion in the stomach, which can obstruct the gastrointestinal tract and cause severe pancreatitis. Fertilizers that are high in iron also can contribute to iron poisoning if ingested by pets.



FLOWERS/PLANTS

Of course, some flowers and plants can pose a threat to pets as well. Before planting new plants and/or flowers in their gardens, homeowners should inquire at their local gardening center or speak with their veterinarians to confirm if the plants or flowers are safe to ingest. If not, do not plant them or plant them in raised garden beds that cannot be accessed by curious pets.



COMPOST

Compost is a great and natural way to enrich soil. But compost piles should be cordoned off so curious pets cannot access them. As the organic matter within compost piles decomposes, mold can begin to grow. If ingested by pets, moldy materials inside compost piles can make pets sick in as little as 30 minutes. Pets who have ingested moldy compost may appear agitated, pant, drool, or vomit, and some may even suffer from tremors or seizures.



SLUG/SNAIL BITES

The PPH notes that the active ingredient in slug and snail baits is metaldehyde, which is highly poisonous to cats and dogs. Symptoms of distress, including restlessness, vomiting, seizures, and high body temperature, can appear as soon as one hour after these baits are ingested. The baits are typically available in pellet, granular, powder, and liquid form, but each should be avoided by pet owners who allow their pets to play in their yards.



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There is no end to the companionship, love and joy a pet can bring to one's life. That is perhaps one reason why the number of pets surrendered to shelters each year so greatly upsets animal lovers. But the same places that house animals that were lost or abandoned can be the very locations where families find new pets to love.

The ASPCA estimates that 6.5 million companion animals enter animal shelters in the United States each year. According to its most recent report, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies says around 82,000 cats and 35,000 dogs were taken into Canadian shelters in 2015.

Animal shelters, rescue groups, pounds, and humane societies are great places to begin searching for new companion animals. The organization DoSomething.org states that, each year, approximately 2.7 million dogs and cats are euthanized because shelters are too full and there aren't enough adoptive homes. Homeless animals outnumber homeless people five

to one. While private breeders and reputable pet stores may have purebred animals that make great pets, to relieve the problems of relinquished or homeless pets residing in crowded shelters, prospective pet parents are urged to first consider adopting shelter pets. The following are reasons why adopting shelter dogs or cats is such a great idea.

WELL-BEHAVED ANIMALS

The Humane Society of America says most shelter pets end up in facilities not because of behavioral issues or something they did wrong, but due to circumstances affecting their owners, such as moving or divorce. That means there are thousands of housebroken, behavior-trained pets just waiting for a new family.

LOWER COSTS

When a person adopts a pet, micro-chipping, first immunization costs, neutering/spaying, and some vet costs may be covered by the adoption fee. Plus, that adoption fee can be hundreds of dollars less than purchasing a pet from elsewhere

LONGER LIFE EXPECTANCY

The Canine Journal says “mutts,” or animals whose genetic makeup are a combination of at least two breeds, tend to have fewer health problems and live longer than their purebred counterparts. But shelters also house many purebreeds for those who prefer to go that route.

ROOM FOR OTHERS

For every adopted cat or dog, room is freed up to take in more pets that need assistance.

HURT PUPPY MILLS

Puppy mills produce pets in factory-style facilities that seldom take the welfare of animals into consideration. Adoption hurts puppy mills’ bottom lines and helps fight against their inhumane breeding techniques. Animal shelters can be the first and last stop for animal lovers looking to welcome companion animals into their lives.



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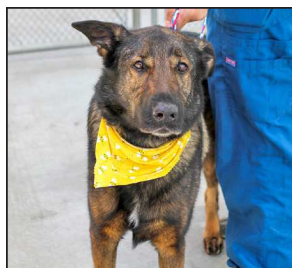
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The Harker Heights Pet Adoption Center is located at 403 Indian Trail in Harker Heights, Texas and is open on the following days and times.

Sunday: 10am - 2pm

Monday: 1pm - 4pm

Tuesday - Friday: 1pm - 7pm

Saturday: 10am - 6pm

To contact the Pet Adoption Center during normal business hours call
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After normal business hours and on holidays please contact the Harker Heights Police Department at
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SHOULD PETS EAT A GRAIN-FREE DIET?

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Veterinarians play an essential role in maintaining the health, happiness and comfort of pets. A great relationship is established early on.



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Parents eager to instill a sense of responsibility in their children may turn to pets to facilitate such lessons. But dogs or cats may not fit in with everyone's lifestyle or living arrangements. In such instances, fish may be parents' best friends.

Freshwater fish tend to be inexpensive and relatively easy to care for. Goldfish, in particular, can make ideal primary companions because they are hardy and are especially inexpensive. "Feeder" goldfish cost mere cents per fish, and while they may be primarily bred to be used as live food for larger prey, these goldfish can still provide many of the same pet care lessons as other pets.

LEARNING ABOUT GOLDFISH

On the way to becoming fish experts,

it's important to point out that, despite their low price tag and availability, goldfish should not be viewed as disposable. These are live animals and deserve the same care and consideration as other pets. National Geographic says that goldfish are descendents of carp and originate in China. There are hundreds of varieties of goldfish found around the globe. In fact, koi are cousins of the traditional aquarium goldfish.

Despite their name, goldfish come in a variety of colors. Commercial goldfish are typically yellow, gold and red. Wild goldfish are almost exclusively olive green or dark gray, according to PetMD. They're one of the most common aquarium fish and also have some of the longest life expectancies. The oldest recorded living goldfish reached the age of 49. Goldfish come in different sizes, but the average aquarium goldfish grows to between four and seven inches.

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CARING FOR GOLDFISH

Goldfish that are won at state fairs may come home in plastic bags or small bowls, but they are best cared for in traditional aquariums. Goldfish are omnivores that will thrive on a healthy diet made up of pellets, vegetables, algae, and flakes. These fish tend to produce a lot of ammonia waste, so if they are kept in a bowl, the water will need to be changed quite frequently and the bowl should be large. Many aquarium experts say a tank that's between 10 and 20 gallons is ideal for a goldfish. Such tanks will not stunt its growth and will keep it healthy and comfortable.

Goldfish like relatively low water temperatures, advises the fish resource The Goldfish Tank. They should not be mistaken for tropical fish. Goldfish are typically best kept alone or with other goldfish so that their living environments are easily maintained. Also, some goldfish will try to eat smaller fish.

A clean tank is vital to the health of goldfish. Filtration is ideal, as is an air pump to help agitate the surface of the water and make oxygen more accessible. It's important to use a dechlorinator product to remove chlorine and other chemicals from tap water so that the fish can thrive.

According to CaringPets.org, people who choose a bowl for their goldfish instead of a standard tank should follow the rule that the greater the amount of surface area, the more oxygen in the water. For this to be achieved, choose a wide goldfish bowl over a tall narrow one. In addition, the water will need to be changed every few days, and 50 to 75 percent of the water in the bowl should be replaced with fresh water.

Keeping goldfish as pets can introduce children and even adults to the task of caring for a living animal. With the right care, these fish can thrive and provide many hours of entertainment and enjoyment.



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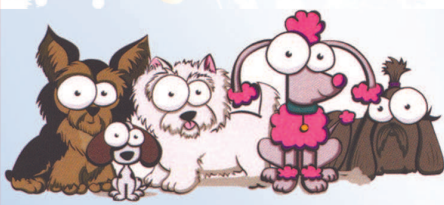
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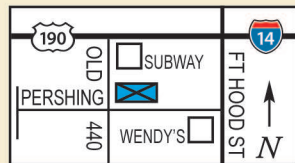




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