



### **Socialize them**

Socialization is the process of getting pets used to different situations and teaching them acceptable behaviors. Properly socialized pets are enjoyable pets and are less likely to injure other pets or people. Basic obedience training is very important for dogs and can make them better companions and reduce the risk of dog bite injuries.

### **Consider insuring them**

Purchasing pet insurance to cover the costs of unexpected illness or injury is a personal choice and not a requirement. There are multiple options for pet insurance. If you choose to purchase insurance, evaluate all of your options and choose a plan that works best for you and your pet.

### **Special needs pets**

“Special needs pets” are pets that have medical conditions that require long-term care and/or special management. Although their care can be more demanding, if you are willing to go the extra mile, they can make wonderful pets. If you’ve adopted a special needs pet, discuss your pet’s condition with your veterinarian so s/he can help you provide the best care for your pet and give it the best chances for a happier, longer life.

*When you acquire a pet, you are making a promise to accept responsibility for the health and welfare of another living creature for its lifetime. You also agree to be responsible for your pet’s impact on your family, friends, and community. Choose your pet wisely, keep your promise, and enjoy one of life’s most rewarding experiences!*

For more information, go to [www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org).

# **Keeping Your Adopted Pet Healthy**



*Brought to you by your veterinarian and the American Veterinary Medical Association*



## **Congratulations on adopting your new pet!**

Adopted dogs and cats can be wonderful companions for you and your family, not to mention the great feeling that comes with knowing you're giving your new pet another chance at a loving, long-term home. A big part of that second chance is providing for your new pet's health and welfare, and that's where your veterinarian comes in.

## **Get an early start**

Take your new pet to the veterinarian right away to get it checked out and make sure it's healthy. It's also a great time to talk with your veterinarian about what you can do to keep your pet healthy with good preventive care — exercise, feeding, vaccinating, and preventing parasites are among the topics you should discuss with your veterinarian. As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure — and in the case of medical care, preventing a disease is much cheaper than treating a pet that has a preventable (and potentially deadly) disease.

## **Tag them**

One of the first things you should do is get ID tags for your new pet. Yes, even for a cat. Consider it an inexpensive investment that will help you get your pet back if you become separated.

Many rescues and shelters implant pets with microchips, which is the best and most reliable way to make sure you're reunited with your lost pet. Keep in mind, though, that a microchip is only effective if the registration information is correct, so make sure you find out how to get your information into the microchip database and how to keep it updated.

## **Keep them healthy**

Our pets are living longer, happier lives than ever before, and improvements in medical care for pets have played a big role in this trend. Keeping your pet healthy includes keeping it at an appropriate weight (not too fat, not too thin) and providing good preventive care. By working together, you and your veterinarian can give your new pet the best chance of a long, healthy and happy life.

## **Spay or neuter them**

Please do your part to prevent unwanted litters by spaying or neutering your new pet if it hasn't already been done. Spaying and neutering can also make your pet less likely to roam and may reduce your pet's risk of certain cancers.

## **Vaccinate them**

Vaccines protect pets from potentially deadly diseases. Talk to your veterinarian about what vaccines your pet needs. Some vaccines, such as rabies, are recommended for all pets, while other vaccines may or may not be necessary based on your pet's risk of exposure to the disease prevented by that vaccine.



## **Keep them parasite-free**

Internal parasites, such as intestinal worms, can cause serious problems for pets. External parasites, such as fleas and ticks, can not only be a nuisance, but can carry diseases that can threaten the life of your pet. Dogs and cats can both become infested with heartworms, which can be deadly. Keeping your pet free of parasites is important for its health — and your family's health, too, because some of these parasites can cause or carry diseases that can affect people.