

Responsible pet ownership

A lifelong commitment that brings health, companionship and joy.



Animal Care Australia

THE COMMITMENT

Pets depend on us for their whole lives. Cats can live 15–20 years, dogs 10–20 years and birds up to 80 years.

Owning a pet is a lifelong responsibility but there are many positive benefits..

THE FIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Choose well

Not every pet is right for your circumstances

Buy responsibly

Get your pet from a responsible breeder not car boot seller

Keep them healthy

Ensure you provide them with fresh food, water, shelter, clean housing and appropriate enrichment

Teach children

Pet respect is important. Accidents happen when left unsupervised and uneducated about their pet

Breed responsibly

If you are going to breed your pet, ensure they are healthy, do not over-breed them and ensure genetic diversity and preservation. Animal welfare first

Be a responsible buyer - pick the right pet

Research the basic requirements of the animal before bringing it home. The right match supports both your family and the animal's wellbeing.

Consider your life & circumstances:

- ◆ Your working hours and social life.
- ◆ Time away from home, including holidays.
- ◆ Whether you can walk a dog every day or are home often enough to keep a cat company.
- ◆ Who will care for your pet when you are away.

Consider the pet's life & needs:

- ◆ Food, water and appropriate shelter.
- ◆ Species-appropriate daily stimulation and exercise.
- ◆ Grooming, bathing, play and entertainment.
- ◆ Training—mental stimulation helps prevent boredom, bad habits and behavioural issues.

Ask yourself before adopting or buying

Long-term fit?

- ◆ How long will this animal live?
- ◆ How large will it become?
- ◆ Can I take my pet if I move home?
- ◆ If I am a tenant, are pets allowed where I live?

Time & cost:

- ◆ What are the ongoing costs?
- ◆ What does the pet eat?
- ◆ How much exercise and what type of habitat does it need?
- ◆ Can I afford veterinary care and the time needed to clean up after the pet?

MAKE THE CHOICE CAREFULLY

Before adopting or buying, research the specific needs of the animal and your family's ability to meet them.



Keep pets healthy and safe

Life-long care supports the health of your pet, your family and the wider community.

Safe transport:

- ◆ Ensure the animal is transported appropriately; many states have legal requirements.
- ◆ A secure carrier shows the buyer understands the animal's need for safety and reduced stress.

Everyday care:

- ◆ Provide a good diet, fresh water, clean bedding and plenty of exercise.
- ◆ Keep up with vaccines, de-worming and flea and tick control.
- ◆ Give animals appropriate shelter and regular grooming.
- ◆ Contact your veterinarian with health questions or if your pet may be sick.

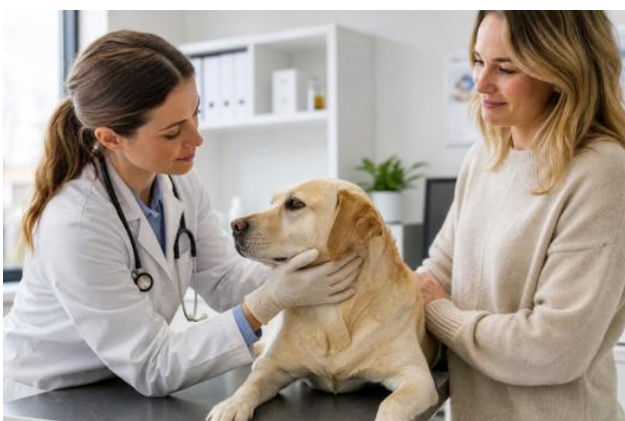
Veterinary care:

- ◆ Regular veterinary visits are essential for good pet health.
- ◆ Talk with your veterinarian about preventive care for your dog, cat, horse, bird, small mammal, reptile or other pet.
- ◆ Keeping your pet healthy helps keep you and your family healthy too.

Breeding & De-sexing

PLAN RESPONSIBLY

If you are not going to breed your pets, de-sex them. If you do breed, commit to responsible planning, appropriate care and lifelong support for every animal.



Teach children how to interact with animals

Supervise & respect:

- ◆ Children should be supervised with animals to protect both child and pet.
- ◆ Teach children to read body language and recognise when an animal needs space.
- ◆ Pets can teach compassion and responsibility when interactions are respectful.

Good hygiene:

- ◆ Wash hands after playing with animals or handling cages, beds, food or water dishes.
- ◆ Do not let children kiss pets or put hands or objects in their mouths after handling animals.

Be a responsible seller

A responsible seller helps the animal and the new owner succeed for the lifetime of the pet

A responsible seller will:

- ◆ Ask about the new owner's knowledge of dietary, housing and husbandry needs.
- ◆ Provide written resources or credible links, and education to help the animal settle in.
- ◆ Be transparent about the animals, enclosures and living conditions.
- ◆ Share local community groups and clubs for the species
- ◆ Provide a contact point of support for the lifetime of the animal—the most important responsibility.

JOIN ANIMAL CARE AUSTRALIA

Animal Care Australia invites you, your club or group to join us.

ACA has quickly established itself as a reputable experience-based animal welfare organisation.

Join ACA and help us continue to advocate for all of our animals.

ACA offers memberships for small and large animal organisations, as well as individual Supporters and businesses.

Join online or download the membership application: Join online or download the membership application:

animalcareaustralia.org.au/join/