

First Time Pet Owner

What to consider:

Being a first time pet owner can be extremely exciting but will also require a lot of dedication and work. Just like human kids, furry friends don't come trained. The first several months you bring your pet home will be the most important as you will both learn to trust each other, communicate, and learn to set boundaries.

Having a pet is like having a new family member. There are many things to consider: If you move, are you prepared to take your new family member with you? If not you should refrain from adopting until you are and consider fostering.

Are you financially prepared? Dogs and cats can have accidents just like kids. This can get costly. A great way to manage your expenses is by getting pet insurance. They also require annual checkups, vaccines and preventative care.

Are you prepared to be on a schedule? The best results often require a schedule, at least in the beginning.

When you are ready:

First ensure you have all the supplies you need. Here is a list to get you started:

- Food bowls (clean after every meal)
- Food (talk to your vet about what type of food they recommend for your pet)
- Toys (easy to wash, hard to destroy)
- Leash
- ID tag (with the pet's name and your phone number)
- Collar (if you have a puppy or kitten make sure you check that their collar isn't too tight as they will be growing quickly)
- Crate (make sure this is big enough for your pet to stand up and turn around in)
- Bed (a place where they can call their own)
- Monthly heartworm and flea/tick preventative
- Grooming supplies
- How to books (read these prior to bringing your pet home so you are fully prepared)

House Training:

Dogs: House training is much easier when the puppy's meals, exercise and playtimes are on a regular schedule throughout the day.

Cats: House training a cat is easier as they know almost immediately to go in the litter box once you've shown them where it is. Ensure you keep their litter box clean to avoid out of the litter box accidents.

Their Own Place:

Dogs: decide where to put the crate, and have it set up and ready for his/her arrival. Where to keep the crate will depend on what's most convenient for you as well as the dog's response. They don't like to be isolated in one part of the house while their family is in another but sometimes puppies won't settled down in their crates if there's too much activity going on around them. You might have to experiment with different locations until you learn what works best for both you and the dog.

Cats: Cat can also learn their area so keep a bed and play area for them to know where to go when they want to be in their space.