

Owning a new pet

Deciding to own a new pet is a large responsibility that needs to be thought out carefully before acquiring that new dog or cat.

Factors that must be considered are:

- **Are you ready for a new family member?** Never try to replace a lost pet. A new pet is exactly that, one with its own personality and traits.
- **Can you afford a new pet?** If you have had dogs or cats you probably realize the costs associated with owning a pet. Crates, collars, leashes, beds, blankets, toys, food, treats, veterinary fees, boarding fees, day care and your time all must be considered. If you obtain a dog or cat for free, realize that there is no such thing.
- **What breed or size do you want? or should you get?** Careful planning is needed when deciding what type of pet to get. A new Rottweiler or Mastiff in the one bedroom apartment should not be choice #1. Some dogs need area to run and to be able to burn off energy. Cats are easy keepers that won't tie you down as much as puppies and dogs do. With cats though, it is not up to you what your cat will be like. Male cats are usually more affectionate but it is up to the cat to decide what relationship you'll have. Puppies can usually be trained, some easier than others. The type of hair a dog has may be important to you. Some dogs shed less or almost don't shed. Some keep Swiffer in business. Most large dogs will shed more than most small dogs.
- **Where are you going to get your new addition?** There are many places to get new animals. Pet stores, puppy stores, classified ads, horse show and the "pound". Pet stores can be a source of great pets with a risk of not knowing exactly where they came from and any way of getting information on your pet. Puppy stores give you more information on the parents and breeders and you can find out exactly where the puppy came from. *Be careful what puppy store you go to. All puppy stores are not created equal. If you feel uncomfortable in a puppy store and are being pressured by the sales staff think carefully with your head, not your heart before purchasing. We work closely with **Top Shelf Puppies** and know the quality and care of their puppies.* Classified ads can yield quality puppies or kittens. You will sometimes be able to meet mom and dad. The horse show always has puppies for sale. Animal Care and Control or Peggy Adams has a lot of animals for adoption. Adopting a puppy or kitten will possibly save its life and has loving animals that appreciate a new loving home, but you don't know what kind of pet your getting until you've brought it home and see if it will be your best pet ever or your worst nightmare.
- **How long do you plan on having your pet?** One of the greatest wrongs in the world is dog and cat longevity. People should get a pet when they are a kid and grow old with the same pet. Unfortunately dogs and cats don't live that long. In general cats and small dogs live longer than large dogs. The largest dogs only live 8-10 years where small dogs and cats can live into their mid to upper teens.

