

10 THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE ADOPTING A NEW PET



1) Identification



- Your pet should have a collar tag with at minimum: their name, your name, phone number, and address. It's also a good idea to attach your pet's rabies tag to their collar.
- Microchips are essential to help a veterinarian or animal shelter link your lost pet back to you. Each has a unique number and once registered will be able to provide your name, contact information, address, and any important info about your pet.
- You should also be aware of your pet's color and markings, any unique scars, and any identifying tattoos if present.
- Dog licenses are typically required by most counties and are very easy to register. You will need to submit to your county Treasurer's office a copy of your dog's vaccination records along with a small fee. Dog licenses in Fauquier county are valid for the dog's entire life.



Further Reading

[Dog tag - FAQ's | Fauquier County, VA](#)

[How Do Pet Microchips Work and Should My Dog Have One? - American Kennel Club \(akc.org\)](#)

[Position Statement on Pet Identification | ASPCA](#)

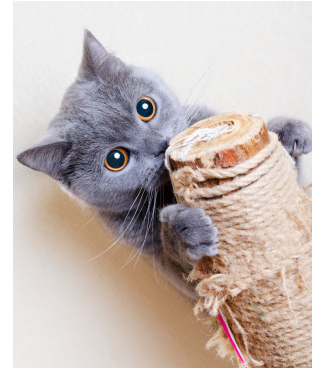
2) Training



- Focus on positive reinforcement with their favorite treats, fun toys, and lots of affection
- Avoid punishment altogether. Dogs and cats may not understand what exactly they're being punished for, causing anxiety and stress. They may also do the bad behavior in hiding to avoid being caught.
- Dogs are den animals, so crate training is one of the best ways to help a new dog be comfortable in your home. Make sure their crate is large enough so they can sit, stand, eat, and sleep comfortably, but not too large that they will be able to mess in one corner and sleep in the other.
- Housebreaking requires a lot of patience and a regular "potty" schedule. Be sure to reward your dog with tasty treats immediately after they go in the right place.



2) Training Cont'd



- Basic obedience training is essential. Your dog should be able to recognize their name and come when called. They should also know how to sit, stay, lie down, and walk properly on a leash. Again, treats will be your best friend!
- Structured puppy training classes can be a valuable resource, especially for teaching your puppy how to listen when there are other distractions.
- Dogs love to chew, and cats love to scratch. It is perfectly normal behavior and a great outlet for stress and boredom. Make sure to have appropriate chew toys and scratching posts available as alternatives to destroying furniture.
- Puppies do so many cute things! But remember, that while it might be cute when your 8 lb puppy mouths your hands and jumps up on you, it may not be so cute when they're 60 lbs. Only allow puppy behavior that will also be appropriate to you when they're fully grown.

Further Reading

[Destructive Scratching](#) | ASPCA

[Potty Training a Puppy: How to House Train Puppies](#) (akc.org).

[How to Stop Puppy Biting and Train Bite Inhibition](#) – American Kennel Club (akc.org).

[Positive Rewards Dog Training Tips](#) (akc.org).

3) Socialization



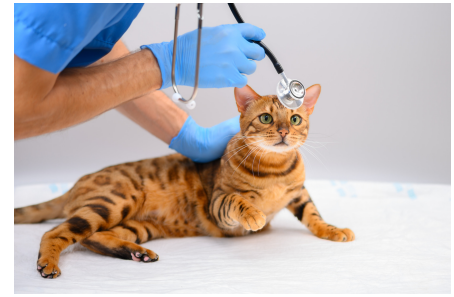
- Introduce your new pets to as many new and different things as you can so that they're more comfortable in our world when they grow up. You should expose them to new locations, different people, other pets, different ways of handling, strange objects, new interactions, weird or loud noises, and slow or fast movements.
- Always socialize in a controlled environment, go slowly at their pace, and reward them with lots of treats and love when they do well.
- If you have other pets in your home, you will want to take time to allow your current pets adjust to their new housemate. The best way to start is to allow your current pets to run the show. At the start, keep your new pet leashed, crated, or separated by a door or gate while they take time to get used to each other's presence. If all goes well, then you can slowly do more involved introductions.



Further Reading

[Socializing your dog | Animal Humane Society](#)

4) Routine Veterinary Care



- Be sure to keep up with yearly physical exams to keep an eye on your pet's general health and keep current records with your veterinarian.
- Every dog should receive the Rabies vaccine and DAPP vaccine (Distemper, Adenovirus, Parvovirus, Panleukopenia) which should be boosted regularly. Depending on where you live and what activities you do with your dog, you may want to consider adding vaccines for Leptospirosis, Lyme Disease, Bordetella (Kennel Cough), and Canine Influenza, all of which should be boosted regularly as needed.
- Every cat should receive the Rabies vaccine and FVRCP vaccine (Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia) which should be boosted regularly.
- Dogs should also receive year-round heartworm and flea/tick prevention. Cats may not need year-round prevention depending on their indoor-outdoor status and other pets living in the household.

4) Routine Veterinary Care Cont'd



Further Reading

[Heartworm Basics - American Heartworm Society](#)

[Keep Your Dog Safe From Fleas and Ticks With 10 Prevention Tips \(akc.org\)](#)

[Routine Health Care of Dogs - Dog Owners - Merck Veterinary Manual \(merckvetmanual.com\)](#)

[Safe use of flea and tick preventive products | American Veterinary Medical Association \(avma.org\)](#)

[Top 10 things you need to know about AAHA's Canine Vaccination Guidelines](#)

[WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT MY CAT'S VACCINATIONS? \(aaha.org\)](#)



5) Emergencies



- Establish a fire safety plan for your home and understand what types of natural disasters your area is at risk for.
- Know where your emergency veterinary hospital is located and how to contact them.
- Keep the ASPCA Animal Poison Control hotline number available (1-888-426-4435).
- It may be helpful to learn how to perform CPR on a pet, a pet-designed Heimlich maneuver, and basic pet first aid.
- You should maintain a pet emergency fund of at least \$1,000 to cover for unexpected injuries and illness.
- Pet insurance can be a very helpful tool to offset the costs of sick visits and emergencies by bringing an overwhelming \$4,000 vet bill down to a more manageable \$400.



5) Emergencies Cont'd

[First aid tips for pet owners | American Veterinary Medical Association \(avma.org\)](#)

[How to Perform Pet CPR | Red Cross](#)

[How to Perform the Heimlich Maneuver for Dogs if Your Dog Is Choking | PetMD](#)

[New guidelines for CPR in dogs, cats | American Veterinary Medical Association \(avma.org\)](#)

[Pets and disasters | American Veterinary Medical Association \(avma.org\)](#)

[What Is Pet Insurance, How Does It Work, & What Is Covered? A Pet Parent's Guide | Pawlicy Advisor](#)



6) Nutrition



- Always discuss your feeding plan with your veterinarian and keep them up to date with any changes in diet or problems you notice.
- Choose a pet food comprehensively analyzed for its nutritional value. Hills, Royal Canin, Purina, Eukanuba, and Iams all do this, among other smaller companies
- Check the AAFCO statement (Association of American Feed Control Officials) to be sure that the food is appropriate for your pet. Food approved for “all life stages” is usually fine unless for a puppy or pregnant/lactating pet for which you should check with your veterinarian.
- Follow the serving guides provided by the pet food manufacturer. If you regularly feed treats, avoid giving too many and consider slightly lowering their daily food allotment to offset the extra calories from treats.



Further Reading

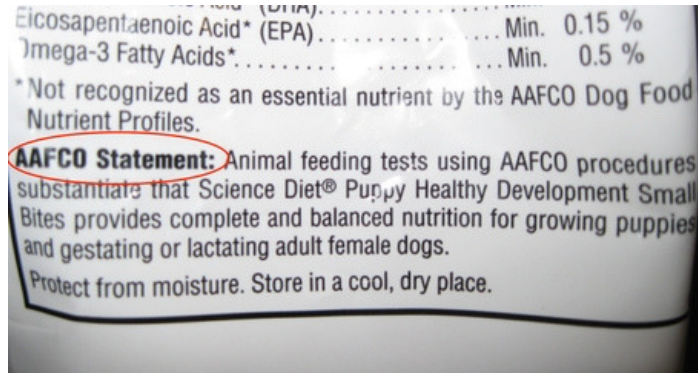
[Dog Nutrition Tips | ASPCA](#)

[Nutrition - General Feeding Guidelines for Dogs | VCA Animal Hospital \(vcahospitals.com\)](#)

[Nutritional Requirements and Related Diseases of Small Animals - Management and Nutrition - Merck Veterinary Manual \(merckvetmanual.com\)](#)

6) Nutrition cont'd

Examples of AAFCO Statements



Example Serving Size Guide from Iams

100% Complete & Balanced for Adult Maintenance

RECOMMENDED DAILY FEEDING GUIDE FOR ADULT DOGS

WEIGHT OF DOG		AMOUNT PER DAY	
lbs	kg	c	g
50	23	2 2/3 - 3	265 - 298
60	27	3 - 3 1/2	298 - 348
70	32	3 1/2 - 4	348 - 397
80	36	3 3/4 - 4 1/2	373 - 447
100	45	4 1/2 - 5 1/4	447 - 522
120	54	5 1/4 - 6	522 - 596
140	64	5 3/4 - 6 3/4	571 - 671

MIX IT UP
WET
DRY
DOGS LOVE IT

Replace 1 1/4 cup for each can of IAMS Chicken and Rice (369g can)

lbs = pounds kg = kilograms c = cups g = grams 1 c = 99 g

7) Grooming



- Grooming requirements will vary depending on your pet's breed and size.
- Dogs should be routinely bathed with appropriate products and their coats should be appropriately managed (clipping, brushing, de-matting etc.)
- Dogs and cats should have their ears cleaned regularly or when excessively dirty.
- Dogs nails should be regularly trimmed as well as cats' if they are not provided with adequate scratching materials

Further Reading

[Dog Grooming Tips | ASPCA](#)



8) Travel - By Car

- Make sure your dog is secured with a seatbelt harness or travel crate. Many cats don't travel well in cars, so they should be secured in a travel carrier too.
- Don't let your pet ride in the front seat since the airbag can injure them as it deploys in event of an accident.
- Plan for rest stops, potty breaks, and stretch breaks.
- For anxious dogs, another riding buddy can help them calm down whether that's another calm dog used to car rides or another person. Severe anxiety may require supportive medication which your veterinarian can provide.
- Never leave your pet alone in the car without proper air conditioning or heat. Outdoor temperatures below 40°F and above 70°F can create dangerous conditions inside the care, putting your pet at risk for hypothermia or heat stroke.



8) Travel Cont'd - By Plane

- Understand the airline's requirements for any animals flying in their care.
- Try to arrange for your pet to fly in the cabin with you. If they must fly in the cargo area, ask to supervise your pet being loaded and unloaded at the airport.
- Make sure your pet and their carrier have all proper identification.
- Notify the captain and flight crew if your pet will be flying in the cargo area.
- Flying can be very stressful for your pet, so consider all possible alternatives before booking your flights.



8) Travel Cont'd - Pet Friendly Destinations

- If you are traveling for multiple days, check that your lodging will be able to accommodate pets. Understand their health requirements (usually proof of vaccinations) and restrictions.
- Do some research into pet friendly businesses and establishments at your destination. Many restaurants and cafes with outdoor seating may allow pets. Search for dog parks and dog friendly trails to allow your dog opportunity for some fun exercise.



8) Travel Cont'd - International

- Communicate with your veterinarian about your travel plans including destination country and mode of travel.
- When travelling internationally, your veterinarian will need to examine your pet within a certain time period before you depart and complete health certificates as required by the destination country.
- Your pet will need to be up to date on all vaccinations required by your destination country and will usually need to be microchipped by a universal ISO-compliant microchip.



Further Reading

[Travel safely with your pet by car, airplane, ship or train | The Humane Society of the United States](#)

[Leaving Dogs in a Car: Is it Too Hot or Cold? | Hill's Pet \(hillspet.com\)](#)

[USDA APHIS | Take your pet from the United States to a foreign country \(Export\)](#)

[Pets and International Travel - United States Department of State](#)

9) Lifestyle and Home Environment

- Consider your home environment. Do you live in a small city apartment on the 7th floor, a suburban neighborhood with limited yard space, or a rural area with acres of land?
- Consider your work and/or school schedule. Will there be someone home to feed, train, and walk your dog? Will you be able to spend time playing with and socializing your pets on a daily basis?
- **Size** – Dog sizes vary much more widely than cats and can range from toy dogs at a whopping 4 lbs to giant dogs weighing in at over 100 lbs. A dog's size is going to impact their nutritional requirements, medical needs, and their necessary living space. It is best to discuss your home environment with your veterinarian and the breeder or shelter from whom you are adopting to ensure that you can accommodate your new pet.



9) Lifestyle and Home Environment - cont'd

- **Age** – young puppies/kittens and senior pets are going to require a much greater time investment than adult animals. Between time spent training and more frequent medical visits to cover puppy shots or senior chronic health problems, the extra hours add up. Additionally, puppies/kittens and seniors will incur much higher financial costs to cover their social, nutritional, and medical needs than the typical adult animal.
- **Activity level** – Dogs and cats can range in activity level from lazy couch potatoes to bouncing off the walls with constant zoomies. Some pets will have a consistent activity level and others' may fluctuate throughout the day. Also, their activity needs will change as they age as well as after spaying/neutering. Before you make a final decision on adoption, be sure to observe your new pets behavior and ask questions about their activity level. You should know what kinds of activity they like to do and compare that with your lifestyle to determine if you can meet their needs.

Further Reading

[How Much Exercise Does a Dog Need Every Day? \(akc.org\)](#)

[What's the best dog for your lifestyle? | Find Embark \(embarkvet.com\)](#)

[Selecting a pet cat | American Veterinary Medical Association \(avma.org\)](#)

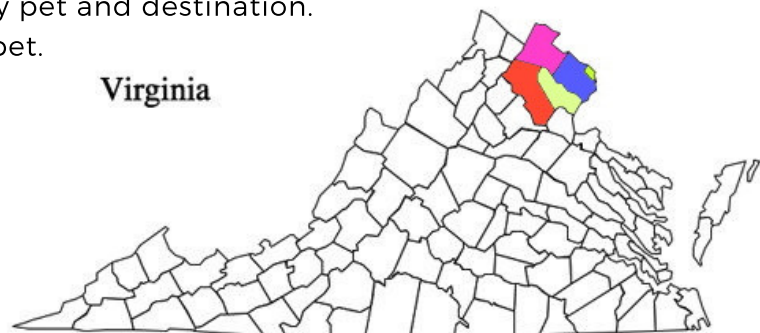


10) Financial Costs

Annual Cost of...	Dogs	Cats
Food	\$120-360	\$55-135
Recurring Medical (Annual exams, vaccinations, preventives)	\$180	\$130
One-time Medical (Spay/neutering, microchipping)	\$360-\$900	\$240-740
Emergency Medical Budget (Sick visits, minor injuries, illness to life-threatening)	\$1000 minimum	\$1000 minimum
General Dog Supplies (Collar, leash, crate)		
General Cat Supplies (Litterbox, scratching post, carrier)		
Toys/Treats	\$50	\$50
Dog License	\$10	-
Grooming	Varies	-
Training Classes	\$50-380	-
Travel/boarding	Varies	Varies
Pet Insurance	Varies	Varies

Data Sources:

- Food costs based on average prices for similar quality dry kibble available from Iams and Purina. Data sourced from Chewy.com.
- Preventive costs includes year round protection for heartworms, intestinal worms, fleas, and ticks. Costs were considered for Heartgard, Interceptor, Nexgard, and Bravecto. Cost data sourced from Chewy.com.
- Medical services cost data obtained from veterinary practices in the following counties: Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Fairfax, Arlington.
- General supplies, toys, and treats cost data sourced from Petsmart.
- Dog license cost sourced from Fauquier County.
- Grooming costs will vary by individual pet needs.
- Training class cost data sourced from PetCo.
- Travel/Boarding costs will vary by pet and destination.
- Pet insurance costs will vary by pet.



Ready to Adopt?

MHF has cats, dogs, livestock, even pocket pets who would love to join your family. We work with each family to ensure our animals find their forever home.

General requirements for adopting:

- Must be at least 21 years of age.
- For equines, a home check is completed before adoption.
- For companion animals, we require that your current animals be spayed/neutered and up to date on vaccines.
- Cats adopted from MHF may not be declawed under any circumstances.
- Dogs adopted from MHF may not be confined by tethering at any time or outdoors in a run or yard overnight.

Any animal adopted from MHF cannot be sold, traded or given away. If at ANY time, you are unable to keep or provide for the care of your animal, it MUST be returned to the Middleburg Humane Foundation.

Please note: MHF reserves the right to deny an adoption for any reason at its sole discretion and is not obligated to state any reason for such denial.

To begin the adoption process, you must:

1. Fill out the appropriate questionnaire. An adoption counselor will review your questionnaire and contact you for an appointment.
2. Visit the MHF shelter to meet eligible animals. Animals are not released on the first visit.
3. After meeting an animal, we ask that you and your family go home and discuss the prospective addition to your family.
4. Call us the following day with your decision.

Upon your confirmation, we will complete a reference check (for equines, we will do a home check). If you are a current/past cat or dog owner, we will speak with your veterinarian to confirm that your animal(s) are/were current on vaccines and spayed or neutered.

www.middleburghumane.org/adopt

Ready to Adopt?



www.middleburghumane.org/adopt



This educational booklet was created as part of a clinical rotation externship made possible by Middleburg Humane Foundation's partnership with Virginia Tech and the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. Middleburg Humane Foundation welcomed its first VMCVM veterinary student in February 2020 and continued working with students even throughout the growing COVID-19 pandemic in virtual experiences. In May 2021, MHF returned to offering on site clinical rotations to students who wanted to learn about shelter administration and management first-hand. Student externship experiences at MHF cover a wide variety of learning objectives which include shadowing and interviewing the various administrative positions to understand their roles and responsibilities, reviewing established shelter guidelines and learning how to evaluate a shelter's compliance, developing clinical veterinary skills, and conducting a final research project.

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to Middleburg Humane Foundation and their wonderful staff for taking me under their wing this summer. I enjoyed this opportunity to learn about the other side of shelter medicine that makes everything possible from community cat programs, to adoptions, to business management, to volunteer and community outreach. I would recommend that all of my classmates and future colleagues take the time to reach out to some of their local shelters to understand how they fit into their communities and how they can help each other as veterinarians. This has been such a valuable experience, and I wish MHF all the best as they continue to build and grow at their new facility.

- Michael Karchner, DVM Candidate at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech - Class of 2023





Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine

**Michael Karchner
DVM Candidate,
VMCVM c/o 2023**





"Saving one pet won't change the world, but for that one pet the world will change forever."