

Choosing a Pet

Consider the following before adopting a pet:

- Do I have the time and a lifestyle to properly care for a pet?
- Can I afford food and medical care for this pet?
- Who will care for this pet?
- Who will care for this pet if I am away or incapacitated?
- Do any family members have any allergies to pets?
- What are the characteristics of this breed? (size once full grown pet, inside vs. outside animal, friendly and outgoing vs. protective/aggressive)
- Should I go to a breeder or adopt a shelter/rescue animal in need of a home?
- Do I have the space for a pet?
- Does my landlord permit pets?

Choose a veterinarian with whom you and your pet are comfortable. To find a list of veterinarians in your area, visit www.nfvs.us

Does the veterinarian have hours that fit with your lifestyle? Do you need a veterinarian with specialized training?

Ask about the office policies, philosophies, any specialties, emergencies, payment practices and so forth.



Selecting a Veterinarian



The Niagara Frontier Veterinary Society

- Promotes public awareness and understanding of veterinary services and pet care
- Offers a timely source of information on small animal health topics of concern to the community
- Works cooperatively with other animal welfare and health organizations to control and prevent disease
- Advances understanding and interest in the veterinary profession among young people
- Creates a dialogue among practitioners fostering a spirit of cooperation and discussion of opportunities and challenges facing local veterinary professionals

The Niagara Frontier Veterinary Society is comprised of more than 75 small animal hospitals and more than 200 practitioners in Erie and Niagara Counties.

This not-for-profit professional organization serves to advance public awareness and understanding of companion animal health care, veterinary services and the veterinary profession

The NFVS has numerous educational programs and offers advice to those seeking to learn about companion animal pet care. The NFVS annually donates more than a quarter of a million dollars in free and reduced cost services to the community through such vehicles as its Free First Exam program through the Erie & Niagara County SPCAs, animal rescue organizations and area pet stores, and by providing services at free rabies clinics, education programs and many other events.



Niagara Frontier Veterinary Society

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Choosing a Pet

Selecting a Veterinarian

Nutrition

Emergencies

Pet Identification

Health Maintenance

Signs of Illness

Training

Neutering

Caring for Your Pet



Nutrition

Your pet should eat pet food—not people food. Table scraps can cause nutritional deficiencies, obesity and can make pets sick. Studies show that pets that are overweight are more likely to develop health problems and have a shorter lifespan.

Consider your pet's age, nutritional requirements and any special health needs. Ask your veterinarian about feeding schedules and reliable brands.

All pets should have unlimited access to water.

Training

Pet training should begin as soon as possible. This begins with house-breaking, and then basic obedience. There is no excuse for an uncontrolled pet. It takes a bit of time, patience and continued positive reinforcement, but will make your pet a welcome and civil member of your family and community. Ask your veterinarian for a list of trainers and other resources.

Neutering

Pet overpopulation is a serious problem. Unfortunately, there are not enough loving homes to go around. Unless a cat or dog is to be used for breeding, it should be neutered before six months of age.

A dog or cat that becomes a member of your family after six months of age should be neutered as soon as possible. Talk with your veterinarian about the health advantages to spaying and neutering.



Health Maintenance

Just like other family members, your pet should have its own personal health care consultant – a veterinarian. Pets age much faster than we do and often hide signs of illness.

For canines and felines vaccinations start early in life, routine boosters and mandatory rabies inoculations plus heartworm, flea, tick and intestinal parasite prevention are vital to your pet's long and healthy life.

Did you know your pet can suffer from many diseases common to people such as dental disease, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and cancer?

It is very important to have your vet examine your pet at least once a year for a complete wellness exam.



Pet Identification

All pets should have identification. This is true even if you have an "indoor" pet. Indoor pets can slip out and may not be experienced enough to find their way home. Ask your veterinarian about "micro-chipping."

The chip is about the size of a grain of rice and will always be there to ensure the best chance for your pet's safe return.



Signs of Illness

Between regular veterinary visits, contact your veterinarian immediately if any of these symptoms occur. They may signal a serious or life-threatening condition.

- poor appetite
- persistent diarrhea, constipation, blood in stool
- red, inflamed, runny or cloudy eyes
- rashes, sores or bald spots, excessive scratching or licking
- lumps on or under skin
- strong ear odor, or itchy ears
- bad breath, pale or bleeding gums, loss of teeth
- frequent urination or excessive thirst
- ingrown, cracked or excessively long nails
- peculiar behaviors, crying in pain or unusually bad temper
- loss of balance, limping or reluctance to move
- any change in overall appearance, behavior or grooming habits

Have Fun!

Enjoy your pet. Your pet is a member of our family who gives you unconditional love and asks very little in return. Spend at least 20 minutes a day on interaction including daily exercise.

If you find that your circumstances change and you are unable to give your pet the attention they require and deserve, there is nothing wrong with giving your pet up for adoption. You may all be happier if your pet has a new home.

Call your veterinarian to inform them of changes in ownership, to get a copy of their medical history for the new owners/shelter, as well as for recommendations on shelters who can help with new placement.

