Planning for Their Lifelong Healthiness

Pets can be a rewarding addition to your life, with companionship, love and so much more. But they can’t do it alone. To make the journey healthy for new pets – and their new humans – we created this Guide to Preparing for a New Pet. Use it to help set some guidelines, select the right pet, find the right veterinarian and prepare your home. Let’s get started!

SECTION A: Prepare Yourself
Match your home, lifestyle and personality to the right type or breed of pet.

SECTION B: Prepare Your Home
Find the right veterinarian and ensure your pet’s new home is safe and nurturing.

SECTION C: Prepare for Life
Start and maintain a healthy life together from day one.
SECTION A: MAKING ROOM FOR YOUR NEW PET

You’ll fall in love with that sweet face – we all do. So right now, BEFORE you select your new pet, there’s a lot to consider: time commitment, home environment and planning for veterinary care.

The good news: With some preparation you are going to be a great pet owner! Our goal is to help every pet find a loving home environment where he or she – and your family – will thrive together.

1. Look at Your Motivations
Ask yourself why you want a pet. If you have a family, check that everyone is on board – and committed for the long haul.

2. Look at Your Lifestyle
Assess your lifestyle variables. Consider what’s flexible and what is not. This will help you pick the best type of pet or breed of pet for your circumstances.

- Assess your level of physical activity to match the best pet to your lifestyle
- When researching breeds consider the ages of any children at home and if anyone has allergies
- Discuss the responsibilities of pet care and who will share them
- Review your budget to make sure there’s room for pet food, supplies and ongoing health care

Looking for the Truth About Cats and Dogs?
Go to Banfield.com for two great resources that will help you decide the type of pet that’s best for you.

- In search box, type “Differences Between Cats and Dogs”
- In search box, type “Breed Information”
3. Look at Your Environment
Evaluate your physical environment to see what type of pet or breed of pet will work best in it.

- Double-check that pets are allowed per lease or homeowners association
- Look at how much room you have: home vs. apartment vs. condo
- If you have a yard, picture a pet in it: size of yard, gardening, landscaping, etc.
- Check with neighbors: How pet friendly is your neighborhood?

4. Look at Your Personality
Your new pet will bring delight – along with a bit of confusion, some messes and lots of laughter. For a win-win, match your personality to the right pet.

- Be honest about your patience and flexibility; pets require consistency
- Assess how much time you have to groom your pet or sweep up pet hair
- Are you looking for an active running buddy, or a pet to chill and cuddle with?

5. Make the Commitment
We hope this section helped with insight into motivation, lifestyle, home environment and personality as it relates to a new pet. Armed with this knowledge, you can select the best type of pet or breed of pet for you! In the next section, we’ll look at how to prepare your home for your new pet.
SECTION B: SELECT YOUR VETERINARIAN AND PREPARE YOUR HOME

Your new furry bundle of joy will be coming home soon, so there’s plenty to do beforehand:

- Research and choose the right veterinarian
- Prep your home for the safety and comfort of pets and people

Find the Right Veterinarian

Before you bring your new pet home, it is important to find the right veterinarian. Your veterinarian will be your long-term partner, so you’ll want to put the time in now and make a good choice. Here’s how:

Visit Veterinary Practices

- How clean is the practice?
- Ask the staff questions; listen for answers that are clear, in language you understand
- Observe how veterinarian(s) and staff treat other pet owners and pets
- Ask the veterinarian to describe his or her treatment philosophy
- Get a clear understanding of capabilities: What surgical procedures do they perform? How is anesthesia administered?
- Ask how emergency care and referrals for specialized care are handled
- Ask about hours and payment options
- Ask about access to your pet’s medical records

When You Find the Right Veterinarian

- Make your new pet’s first appointment within a week of bringing him or her home
- Get a referral for an after-hours/emergency veterinary clinic

Banfield Wants to Be Your Partner in Pet Health

Since 1955, Banfield Pet Hospital has been providing high-quality preventive veterinary care in partnership with pet owners. We invite you to get to know us better and get a coupon for a free initial exam!

Go to Banfield.com/GetFreeExam for a FREE exam offer.
SECTION B: SELECT YOUR VETERINARIAN AND PREPARE YOUR HOME

Prepare the Kids
Teaching some basic rules will help protect the health and safety of your children and your new pet. Make sure kids understand that a new pet is not a toy and the new pet may be scared, anxious and timid at first.

Teach Your Kids Some Easy Pet Do’s and Don’ts
• Let the new pet come to you, when he or she feels comfortable
• Let the new pet sniff your hand before you reach out to pet him or her
• Don’t disturb new pets when they are sleeping, eating or chewing on a toy
• Do not restrain the new pet if he or she wriggles out of your arms or lap
• Never pull tails, twist ears or chase new pets

Safety Proofing
Your new pet won’t hesitate to sniff around and explore his or her new home, so it’s a good idea to do a safety sweep of your home.

• If you have other pets, it’s a good idea to double-check that their vaccinations are up-to-date; pets can pass illnesses to each other easily
• Tape down electrical cords and put away high-value, fragile objects
• Remove or elevate plants and household chemicals
• Fix broken gates and fence gaps
• Put away kids’ toys, especially small pieces
• Place all trash baskets in cabinets
• Install pet gates as needed

Already Have Pets?
Make sure vaccinations are up-to-date so all pets are protected.

Ready for the Big Day
With the tips in this section, your home – and your new veterinarian – will be ready for the arrival of your new pet! In the next section, we’ll help you through the first few days at home with your new pet.
SECTION C: TOGETHER FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR PET

Your new furry family member is finally here! You’ve done your homework, and you’re going to be great! This final portion of the guide takes you through the first days after your new pet arrives and the important steps needed to ensure his or her long-term health.

The First Ten Days

At Pickup Time
Obtain a copy of your pet’s medical information from the shelter or breeder, and bring it to your pet’s first veterinary exam.

Transportation
- Don’t allow pets to ride unrestrained in the car
- Use a size-appropriate crate, carrier or harness restraint
- Make sure your pet rides in the BACK seat; front-seat airbags can seriously injure pets sitting in front, even if restrained

Welcoming Home
- Bring your new pet to his or her potty spot/litter box as soon as possible
- Avoid overwhelming your new pet for the first few days; give him or her time and space to adjust
- Slowly introduce your new pet to your current pets
- Supervise children when they play with the new pet and step in as needed; review do’s and don’ts often
SECTION C: TOGETHER FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR PET

First Veterinary Exam
It’s important for your pet to have a baseline exam within seven days of coming home. At your first appointment, bring the medical information you got from the shelter or breeder. At the visit, ask your veterinarian about:

- Microchipping
- Vaccinations
- Parasite Control: fleas, ticks, heartworms, intestinal parasites
- Dental Care
- Behavior, training and socialization
- Nutrition
- Senior care, if new pet is more than seven years of age

Long Term

Consider a Wellness Plan
Soon, your new pet will be an amazing part of your life. To ensure that for years to come, partner with your veterinarian to provide regular preventive care. Banfield’s Optimum Wellness Plans® deliver ongoing, comprehensive and affordable preventive pet health care. Every plan includes:

- Unlimited office visits
- Routinely recommended vaccines
- Comprehensive physical exams
- Early screening for serious illnesses
- Discounts on most Banfield products and services
- Predictable, reasonable monthly payments
- Convenient drop-offs, evening and weekend hours
- Online access to your pet’s health records
- Customizable options for your pet’s unique needs

To Learn More About An Optimum Wellness Plan for your new pet, go to Banfield.com and click on Optimum Wellness Plans.
SECTION C: TOGETHER FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR PET

Get Into the Clean Habit
Keeping your pet’s environment clean is an effective way to help prevent parasites like fleas and ticks from transmitting dangerous diseases.

- For smart indoor and outdoor cleaning tips, go to Banfield.com and in the search box type “Interactive Home Grooming Guide”
- Learn more about the three most well-known parasites at Banfield.com/parasites

Research Caregiver Options
Your new pet might be family, but he or she can’t go everywhere with you. Even a full house will need backup from time to time. It’s a good idea to investigate your pet care options sooner rather than later (finding help right before Labor Day is the opposite of fun).

Doggy Day Care
It’s a good idea to visit several doggy day care facilities and tour them with your dog. Watch your dog to see how he or she reacts to the environment and staff. Ask questions and take notes:

- Is the staff kind, knowledgeable and helpful? Trust your instincts.
- What is the human-to-dog ratio? How many dogs does one staff member oversee at any given time?
- What are the hours and rates? Do they align with your schedule and budget?
SECTION C: TOGETHER FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR PET

Dog Walker
A dog walker is a great option if your dog can stay home alone without discomfort. You should also:

- Acquaint your pet with his or her new dog walker well in advance; he or she should spend enough time with the new companion to start obeying simple commands
- Closely observe your pet’s behavior to ensure he or she is comfortable with the dog walker
- Ask for references from other current or previous clients

Pet Sitter
A pet sitter can come to your home two or three times a day, check on your pet, put food out, change water, have some playtime and call or text you with updates. You should also:

- Introduce your pet to this new human before you go away
- Watch your pet to make sure he or she is comfortable
- Ask for references from other current or previous clients

Congratulations!
Your time and effort have paid off. With the right start at home – and in partnership with your veterinarian – you and your new pet can look forward to a long, healthy relationship. Every new pet deserves high-quality health care, but they can't do it alone.

Banfield is here to help every step of the way.