

# The Health Benefits of Owning a Pet

Spending time with a pet can reduce the impact of stress and decrease blood pressure. Additional benefits of having a pet to your health and wellbeing include:



- ▶ **Cardiac health.** Studies show that having a dog raises survival rates in patients who have had a cardiac arrest.
- ▶ **Emotional health.** Pets provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment and lessen feelings of loneliness and isolation. The emotional benefits of pet ownership may be especially helpful to elderly people who live alone because of a death or due to distance from family.
- ▶ **Wellbeing.** Being responsible for another life may add meaning and purpose to daily activities.
- ▶ **Exercise.** Providing a loving home to a companion animal is a good way to increase physical activity. Walking, grooming, and playing with a pet can benefit the heart and circulation and improve bone strength.
- ▶ **Stress management.** Pet owners often find that they feel less stressed or anxious after spending time with a beloved pet.

If you are considering adopting a pet, it's important to consider the challenges and responsibilities associated with caring for another living creature. Before you bring a pet home:

- ▶ Spend time with the type of animal you want to adopt. Pet-sitting for a friend is a good way to get a feel for what day-to-day pet care is like.
- ▶ Make certain the pet you choose is a good fit for your lifestyle. For instance, if you travel often, you may find that a cat is easier to manage than a dog would be.
- ▶ Be certain that you're ready for the responsibility of a pet. Having to rehome a pet is hard on both animal and human. Commit to having that pet with you for the length of its life, barring unforeseen circumstances.

LifeMatters can help you determine if now is the right time for you to adopt a pet. Call 24/7/365.

Source: The Staywell Company, LLC

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