

# HEALTH & WELLNESS TIPS

Volume 2, Issue 6

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NOV/DEC 2008

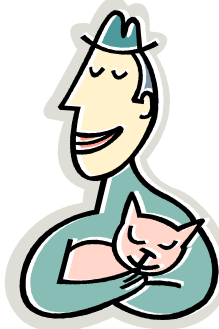
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## Pets & Health

Pet ownership is beneficial to one's health. It is a familiar claim. But what exactly can pets do to improve our well-being? According to the Federal Center for Disease Control (CDC), having a pet leads to lower blood pressure, triglyceride and cholesterol levels. One reason may be that caring for animals increases the likelihood of exercise and outdoor activity, de facto good health practices.

Furthermore, pets decrease feelings of loneliness by improving opportunities for socialization. Pets in and of themselves can also reduce stress even better than our human companions. Animals are perceived as non-judgmental and accepting of a

comfortable silence in a way that most people are not. One study found that nursing home patients were less lonely after being visited by a dog than by another person (<http://stress.about.com/od/lowstresslifestyle/a/petsandstress.htm>).



Are there any drawbacks to owning a pet? The CDC recommends that families with children under the age of 5 should not keep reptiles due to the risk of Salmonella poisoning. Pregnant women should avoid rodents so as not to be exposed to the LCMV virus which can cause birth defects. Likewise, women who are expecting should not clean a cat's litter box to avoid the Toxoplasma parasite which can also harm the fetus.

Bearing in mind these precautions, pet ownership can be a pleasant and enjoyable means to improve fitness and well being.

For further information see the CDC's website [http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/health\\_benefits.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/health_benefits.htm)

### Thanksgiving: Can Rover eat the leftovers?

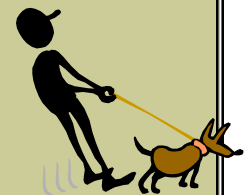
It seems like dogs will eat just about anything. But is "anything" good for them? Surprisingly, it is perfectly fine for dogs to eat such fruits and vegetables as broccoli, carrots, zucchini, cauliflower, peas, beans, bananas, apples and melon. Chocolate, on the other hand, can be toxic to dogs. No turkey or chicken bones for Fido and Rover either. They can easily splinter, causing dogs to choke or tearing their digestive tracts. So stick to healthy snacks for your four-legged friends.

[www.akc.org/public\\_education/nutrition\\_feeding.cfm](http://www.akc.org/public_education/nutrition_feeding.cfm)

### America's Favorite Dogs

Based on American Kennel Club registrations in 2007, Americans love which dogs the most?

- ◆ Poodle \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ Beagle \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ Labrador Retriever \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ Shih Tzu \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ German Shepherd \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ Golden Retriever \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ Yorkshire Terrier \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ Bulldog \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ Dachshund \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ Boxer \_\_\_\_\_



ANSWERS: 1. Labrador 2. Yorkshire 3. German Shepherd 4. Golden Retriever 5. Beagle 6. Boxer 7. Daschund 8. Poodle 9. Shih Tzu 10. Bulldog

This brochure is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice or to replace the advice of insurance professionals.