

A large, dark blue silhouette of a dog's head and neck is positioned on the left side of the cover, facing right. Below it, a smaller, dark blue silhouette of a cat's head and neck is also facing right. The background is a solid light blue.

RESOURCE GUIDE

FOR ANIMAL CAREGIVERS



HUMANE
RESCUE
ALLIANCE



RESOURCE GUIDE FOR ANIMAL CAREGIVERS

The purpose of this guide is to provide information in response to common questions or concerns that community members may have related to caring for their animals.

You are encouraged to contact the Humane Rescue Alliance directly if any of the following apply:

- you need to report a lost or found pet in Washington, D.C.
- you are interested in adoption.
- you need advice for behavior issues related to your animal.
- you feed or take care of community cats who live outdoors.
- you have questions about wildlife.
- you need help providing food or other resources for your pets.
- you, or someone you know, are a victim of domestic violence and would benefit from having temporary housing for your pet(s) so that you can leave a dangerous situation.

Please call 202 576 6664, and a member of our team can assist you.

Additional information is also available on our website:

HUMANERESCUEALLIANCE.ORG

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DOGS

Dogs benefit from not only physical activity but also mental enrichment, which is equally as important in helping to create a happy, healthy, and well-behaved dog who rests easier when you leave home for work or play. That's why it's important to set aside one-on-one time with your dog each day during which time you may exercise, play, or practice different training activities.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Walks with your dog:

Time spent walking on leash, especially if training is incorporated, is a valuable bonding opportunity for you and your dog and can be far more mentally enriching (which is just as important at keeping unwanted behaviors at bay as physical enrichment) than a visit to the dog park. Using treats to keep your dog's attention on you during a walk helps to reinforce good and desired behavior both on walks and in the home.

How to address difficult behaviors on leash:

Dogs may lunge, pull, whine, bark, or growl at other animals or people while on a leash, even if they would not do this off-leash, and this can make leash walking with your dog unenjoyable and difficult. However, in most cases, these behaviors can be addressed and improved if you practice these steps:

- Fill your pockets or treat bag with delicious treats before every walk. Yummy treats include cheese and hot dogs.
- To keep your dog's attention when you are coming up on something you know will cause him to react on a walk, teach your dog to look or the name game when you are not around other distractions.
 - To teach *look*, hold a treat next to your eye or on your nose, whichever you prefer. Ask your dog to "look" or say "this way." This may take a couple of attempts before your dog looks up at you, but when he does, say, "yes!" and immediately give the treat. Keep repeating this process until your dog looks at you right after you say, "look."

When you're out on a walk and you see something that you know will make your dog pull or do other unwanted behaviors, quickly say "look!" to get your dog's attention, then give a treat just as you did in practice.

- To teach "the name game," use the same steps above, but instead of saying "look," call your dog's name. Again, this may take some time before their attention turns to you, but as soon as it does, reward this desired behavior with a, "yes!" and a treat.
- Other tips:
 - Move behind a physical barrier, like a car, so that your dog can no longer see the distraction.
 - Turn around and walk the other direction, and lure your dog with treats to do so.
- Turn your leash into a *No-Pain, No-Pull Harness* to help with walks and training.
 - Attach the leash to the collar like you normally would.
 - Hold the leash over the back of your dog and position the clip so it rests between his shoulder blades.
 - Wrap the leash underneath his chest, behind his front legs where his "armpits" would be.
 - Pull the leash up on the other side, pulling it under the part of the leash where the clip attaches to the collar. Do not pull it through the collar. You now have additional touchpoints that will help prevent some pulling issues while on leash.

Off leash play:

Off leash play may include fetching a ball or Frisbee or even active play with other dogs. However, play with other dogs is not necessary, nor is it advised for all dogs. If you know your dog may get overwhelmed or prefer not to play with other dogs, don't push it! There are plenty of activities you can do with your dog that do not include other dogs and will still keep your dog happy and healthy.

MENTAL ENRICHMENT

Shift calories outside of the bowl:

Instead of feeding your dog out of a bowl at mealtimes, use your dog's recommended daily food volume as rewards on walks or during short training sessions throughout the day. This keeps your dog focused and attentive to you, which provides greater mental enrichment than just feeding him out of a bowl.

Toys:

Toys are a great way to engage your dog's brain. Different dogs may have different preferences for toys. Do some detective work and find out what makes your dog excited. The best toys have a purpose. They deliver food, present a challenge, squeak, or make themselves interesting in some other way.

Some classic toys to consider: Rope toys, plush toys (with or without squeakers), Hide-A-Bee (Squirrel, Bird), tricky treat balls, soft rubber toys (vinyl), and hard rubber toys like Kongs and Nylabones. (for extra fun, search online for "Kong stuffing ideas")

Toy strategy:

Once you have a good selection of toys, develop a toy strategy so that your dog doesn't get bored.

- Choose your dog's favorite toy and use this for "alone time," like when you need to leave your dog in a confinement area by himself or you are going to leave the house. Give this toy before you leave and pick it up and put it away when you return.
- Identify a toy that you know your dog likes to engage with you with, like a tug-toy or ball, and set aside time each day for this play. When you are done, put the toy away so that it stays exciting and like-new each time you bring it out.

Homemade Dog Toys

If you don't have store-bought toys, you may have items around the house that you can use to make toys for your dog without needing to purchase any:

- **T-shirt chew toy:** (supplies: t-shirts, scissors)
 - Start by cutting little slits every 2-3 inches all around the bottom of your t-shirt.
 - After you've cut your slits, rip along each slit to pull off individual strips of fabric the length of your t-shirt.
 - Gather the t-shirt strips in one hand and tie them in a knot at one end so that the rest of the strips are dangling.
 - Divide the strips into three portions and braid them together.
 - Once you've braided down to the other end, tie up the bottom and cut any straggling t-shirt strips.
- **Crinkle sock toy:** (supplies: sock, water bottle)
 - Tie a knot at the toe end of the sock.
 - Insert an empty water bottle into the sock. *The bottle should be empty with cap and plastic ring around the neck removed.*
 - Tie a knot on the other end of the sock, securing the water bottle in place.
 - Toss to your pooch and play.

SHELTER FOR DOGS

Leaving dogs outdoors unsupervised is not recommended. However, if indoor or other appropriate confinement options do not exist, an appropriately-sized, clean, fenced yard, weather-appropriate shelter, and clean food and water are required if your dog must be kept outdoors.

- **Shelter:** Your dog must have access to shelter that is safe and protects him from injury, rain, sleet, snow, hail, negative effects of heat or cold, and physical suffering.

SHELTER FOR DOGS CONT.

- The shelter must be big enough to allow your dog to stand up and turn around.
- **Cold temperatures:** When the temperature is at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, your dog must have access to a shelter with an entrance that has a flexible, wind-proof material or self-closing door. The shelter must be on a platform that is at least 4 inches off the ground and must contain dry bedding, which can be made of insulating material that does not retain moisture, such as straw, and is of sufficient depth to allow your dog to burrow.
- **Hot temperatures:** sufficient shelter and shade are required.
- **Shade:** Your dog must have access to natural shade or shade provided by a tarp or other structure to protect him from sun in warmer months. This shade must be made available in addition to any shelter you provide, though the shelter may be located within the shaded area.
- **Extreme temperatures:** When the temperature is 90 degrees or higher or 32 degrees or lower, an animal must not be left unattended or without proper shelter for more than 15 minutes. Drinkable, clean water of a reasonable temperature must be provided at all times.
- **Tethering:** If your dog is tethered due to the absence of a secure fence, the tether must be of adequate length and fashioned in a manner that does not cause harm to your pet. The tether:
 1. Must not exceed 1/8 the body weight of the animal;
 2. Must not cause the animal to choke;
 3. Must be long enough to permit the animal to move around and for the animal to urinate or defecate in a separate area from the area where it must eat, drink, or lie down;
 4. Must not be situated where it can become entangled;
 5. Must permit the animal access to food, water, shade, dry ground, or shelter; and
 6. Must permit the animal to escape harm.

CATS

HRA advocates for keeping cats indoors. The outdoors poses a wide range of risks to your cat's welfare: wild predators, automobiles, pesticides, other domestic animals, and more. A cat who lives indoors will have a prolonged, safe life – and can live to be 20 years old! With a little bit of help from you, your cat will live a fulfilling and happy life indoors.

Although your cat will be living indoors, it is important to prepare for the off-chance that your cat may end up outside by accidentally sneaking through a cracked door or some other opportunity. Make sure your cat wears proper identification at all times. A break away collar and tag of any kind are automatic signs that your cat has a home, should he or she become lost. In addition, the Humane Rescue Alliance offers microchips at low cost. A microchip will help reunite you with your cat should she go missing and end up at a veterinarian's office or shelter.

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL ENRICHMENT

To keep your cat mentally enriched and physically healthy, it's important to incorporate play and other activities into your cat's life every day.

Shift calories outside of the bowl:

Making food time fun, challenging, and interactive for domestic cats is a great way to satisfy their innate instincts and curiosities. Every meal is an opportunity for enrichment—put away the traditional food bowls and be creative! Here are some ideas for food-dispensing options for your cat:

- Cut small holes (but big enough to allow your cat's food to come out) into a water bottle, screw on the lid, and allow your cat to roll the water bottle around as it slowly lets food fall out of the holes.
- Cut bigger holes (big enough to fit your cat's paw) into the sides of paper towel holders. Use individually, or stack and glue together. Then, hide your cat's food inside the rolls and allow your cat to find her food.
- Mix your cat's dry food with tuna and put into a paper cup, then freeze! Once frozen, this will provide a long-lasting meal as your cat licks and eats the frozen treat out of the cup.

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL ENRICHMENT CONT.

Interactive play:

Using a piece of string, a laser pointer, or a wand with a feather on the end is a great way to play with your cat. Make sure that you allow your cat to ‘catch’ the toy (the end of the string or wand, the dot from the laser, etc.) so she can get the sensation of a successful “hunt,” then remove and play again.

Toys:

Even in your absence, your cat may want to play. Consider reactive toys that move or make noise at the slightest touch--ping pong balls, balls with bells, or even a ball of aluminum foil or scrap paper.

Environmental enrichment:

Environmental enrichment is all about creating a fun and safe place, free of boredom, for your cat to live in. Think about it as turning your home into a playground and jungle-gym with things that will keep your cat happy.

Create vertical space:

Did you know that cats can jump 5-7 times their height? They like to climb and sit up high, and you may often find your cat on top of the refrigerator, a bookshelf, or on a window sill. Look around your home and consider how you may be able to create vertical space for your cat, including just clearing off the surface of a bookshelf or chest so your cat is able to sit on it. Other options include cat trees, for purchase through common retailers, or shelves that can be installed on the wall.

Scratchers:

Scratching is a natural behavior in cats, which is why it’s important to provide a variety of options to your cat for where you *want* her to scratch. Some cats have preference for vertical or horizontal scratching surfaces and carpet, corrugated cardboard, or sisal/natural fiber materials. You can test out these various options to see which your cat prefers.

Litterbox:

The most important thing you can do to keep your cat happy is take extra care with her litter box. Here are some considerations you should have around your cat's litter box:

- Place the litterbox in a quiet space away from noise or activity where your cat can have some privacy when using the litterbox.
- Scoop the litterbox daily and clean with soap and water weekly.
- Make sure the litterbox is big enough for your cat. Some cats prefer a box with a lid, and others prefer without the lid, try both!
- If you live in a multi-cat household, provide at least one litterbox per cat, because they can tend to become territorial over a litterbox and this will help prevent them using the bathroom outside of the litterbox.
- Litter comes in all forms: clay, non-clumping, pine, recycled paper, and more. Some cats are averse to scent, others don't mind. Experimenting with different kinds of litter may also be an option when addressing litterbox issues.

FLEA PREVENTION AND TREATMENT: CATS AND DOGS

Fleas are a common external parasite that can cause severe itching, hair loss, and secondary skin infections. However, they are easily prevented and treated!

FLEA DETECTION

Fleas are the size of a pinhead and are found at the base of the tail, the back, and on the abdomen of their host. Another common sign of fleas is “flea dirt,” which resembles small, black grains of sand that turn red when wet. Other signs that your animal may have fleas include hair loss, scabs and hot spots, excessive scratching, licking or biting at the skin, and tapeworms in the stool.

It can be challenging to find fleas since they jump so quickly! To look for fleas, part your animal’s hair to look carefully at the skin in several places, especially along the back and the base of the tail. Look carefully for any signs of fleas or flea dirt. If you catch live fleas, quickly put them in the toilet or a bowl of soapy water. If you are having a hard time figuring out if black specks are regular dirt or flea dirt, sprinkle the black specks on a wet paper towel. Flea dirt will turn reddish-brown.

FLEA PREVENTION

For fleas, the best defense is a good offense! It is much easier to prevent fleas than it is to get rid of them. There are several products available to prevent fleas. Many stores and websites carry these products, including most pet stores, Walmart, Target, Amazon.com and Chewy.com. *Note: only use cat products on cats and dog products on dogs. Some over-the-counter products that do not require prescription are:*

- **PetArmor Plus:** monthly topical application.
- **Advantage and Advantix:** monthly topical application. (Advantix should never be used on cats!)

- **Frontline Plus:** monthly topical application.
- **Seresto collar:** a wearable collar that provides up to 8 months of protection.

DO NOT USE *Hartz or Sergeant's products, as these products tend to be much less safe than other available options.*

Other tips for the prevention of fleas:

- Wash your pet's bedding regularly.
- Fleas like to hide in dark, moist, shady areas. So, keep the outside of your house free of organic material like grass clippings and leaves.

FLEA TREATMENT

Preferred:

If you suspect your animal has fleas, please consult a veterinarian for guidance. Treatments that may be recommended are:

- Flea preventative for your animal.
- Capstar (nitenpyram) - over-the-counter pill administered to animals that begins killing fleas in 30 minutes, but should be used along with a preventative treatment option.
- Additional treatments for symptoms like itchy or irritated skin.
- Thorough cleaning every other day of carpets, rugs, hardwood floors, upholstery.
- Weekly washing of all bedding, like sheets, comforters, and dog beds.
- If your home is infested, a spray or fogger, which will require temporary evacuation.
- Lawn treatments to prevent re-infection when your pet goes outside.

FLEA TREATMENT CONT.

Alternative:

Be careful with alternative flea treatments that may show up in an internet search, these can often be unsafe for your animal and cause irreversible damage, and in some cases, serious injury, illness, or death.

The good news is that, as a onetime option, you can use dish soap! Dish soaps without strong scents are preferred, we recommend Dawn or Joy brand soap for this purpose.

1. Prepare a regular bath for your pet using dish soap instead of shampoo. The water temperature should be slightly warm, but not hot; temperatures used for people are too warm.
2. Start by getting the neck fully wet, down to the skin. Leave the rest of the body dry at this point. Apply the dish soap, and lather around the neck. This prevents fleas from gathering at the ears, eyes, and face, where it is difficult to shampoo safely. Get the rest of the body wet, lather, and let the soap sit for a few minutes.
3. Rinse out the soap thoroughly, starting with the head and moving down the body, taking care to not get any of the soap in your animal's eyes.

The soap drowns and kills the fleas within minutes. It may take a while to get them all, but a flea comb should help you find and dispose of any leftover bodies.

Please note: dish soap won't prevent fleas and therefore will only provide temporary relief. Since only a small percentage of adult fleas are on an animal at any given time, fleas from the environment will simply hop right back on and restart the infestation cycle. In addition, we do not recommend using dish soap to wash your animals on a regular basis, as it has the potential to irritate their skin.

ADDRESSING BEHAVIOR ISSUES

DOGS

Jumping and Mouthy Behavior

Dogs who jump up and put their mouths on you (without putting pressure with their teeth) are trying to play, say hello, or get attention. They don't know how humans prefer to be greeted, and it never occurs to them that they might knock us over or ruin our clothes. Thankfully, consistent anti-jump training can quickly resolve this problem.

For all training, use your dog's favorite treats or yummy food like hot dogs or cheese. Never use physical abuse, as this will break down the trust between you and your dog.

ENCOURAGE your dog to greet politely by rewarding all the behavior you want to see:

- Teach your dog that you will not greet him unless he sits. When he sits, even if you did not ask for it, give him a treat. He will begin to know he must sit to get what he wants (the treat).
- Whenever you do things that bring on jumping or mouthing (petting, leashing), offer your dog a favorite toy so that he has something else to play with and stops mouthing you so you can leash him.
- Make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise, including long walks. This will lower energy and make training easier.

DISCOURAGE behavior you do not want to see and make it clear you are not interested in playing by:

- Turning your back to your dog and becoming a “statue” (stand still, cross arms, and close eyes).
- If your dog does not get the idea, give him a 3-5 minute time out. Either walk out of the room, crate him, or put him in a quiet room alone.

Avoid wrestling games with your dog. Although both of you may like this kind of game, it encourages your dog to play roughly with people.

ADDRESSING BEHAVIOR ISSUES: DOGS CONT.

Chewing

It's normal for puppies and dogs to chew on objects as they explore the world. Chewing can help them relieve stress, be a form of play, be a sign that they are bored, or even be a sign they are hungry. However, your dog may direct his chewing to something that you don't want him to chew, which is why it's important to help him learn what is okay to chew and what is not. Here are some tips on how to do this in a humane way:

- Put away valuable objects (shoes, etc) until you're confident that your dog's chewing behavior is restricted to appropriate items.
- Provide your dog with plenty of his own toys.
- Identify times of the day when your dog is most likely to chew and give him a puzzle toy stuffed with something delicious to keep his attention.
- If you see him licking or chewing an item he shouldn't, say "Uh-oh," remove the item from your dog's mouth, and insert something that he can chew.
- Provide your dog with plenty of physical exercise and mental stimulation.

CATS

Scratching:

Scratching is a normal, natural behavior for cats. It helps them stretch, relieves stress, and allows them to express excitement. Instead of trying to punish or stop them from doing it, there are several humane options for preventing them from scratching surfaces you don't want them to touch:

- Keep your cat's nails trimmed.
- Define appropriate areas for scratching. Place these items in various locations, including next to your cat's sleeping area and items of furniture your cat likes to scratch. To attract your cat to these appropriate and alternative scratching locations use catnip, other toys, or even treats.

- Place aluminum foil, double-sided tape, or plastic on the furniture that you do not want your cat to scratch. These all create uncomfortable sensations that will discourage your cat from scratching.
- Spray scents such as bitter orange to deter your cat from scratching areas where it is sprayed. Check out your local pet store for options.
- Place nail covers on your cat's nails to prevent her ability to scratch. Consult your veterinarian, pet store, or groomer for more information. These are a low-cost, non-invasive way to deter scratching.

Biting:

Cats may bite and scratch due to a lack of play-time or because of frustration over too much handling (overstimulation). Here are a few ways to discourage biting:

- Encourage appropriate playful behavior by rotating toys and making playtime a regular, routine event that you and your cat can look forward to.
- Never encourage your cat to play with human body parts. When petting your cat, watch for signs of irritation such as a tail swish, head turn, dilated pupils or cranky meow. When this happens, stop handling your cat and give her a break.
- Use only humane correction for biting. You can say, “no,” or, “ouch,” loudly if necessary. You can clap your hands or blow air on the cat's face as she bites.

Vomiting

It is understandable to be concerned if your cat vomits, but there are a handful of potential causes for this, some less severe than others. It's important to remember that an occasional bout of vomiting in your cat is probably not serious.

ADDRESSING BEHAVIOR ISSUES: CATS CONT.

If she is still eating, drinking, and having normal bowel movements, the vomiting was probably an isolated incident. However, frequent vomiting in cats can indicate other, more serious conditions, so be sure to let your veterinarian know if the vomiting happens more than just a few times or over a period of multiple days.

Some common reasons for vomiting include:

- Eating too quickly.
- A change in food that can cause an upset stomach.
- Hairballs.

If vomiting is accompanied by any of the symptoms below, call your veterinarian immediately:

- Diarrhea
- Weight loss
- Blood in the vomit
- Dehydration
- Changes in appetite and water intake

Hairballs

Hairballs are a by-product of our cats' cleanliness. When your cat grooms herself (or other cats in the household), the velcro-like barbs on her tongue pull out hair, which she swallows. Since hair is indigestible, it usually passes through and is eliminated in the litter box. Sometimes it causes the cat to vomit. To reduce episodes of vomiting due to hairballs:

- Brush your cat's hair weekly. Longer-haired cats need to be brushed more than once a week. Fortunately, it can also be a good bonding activity between you and your pet. Use a fine tooth metal comb for brushing. While brushing your cat's hair regularly can help with shedding, it won't do any good if you use the wrong brush. An inappropriate comb can lead to tugging on the fur and may even be the cause of your cat's excess shedding.
- Feed your cat a high-fiber diet.

FOOD FOR DOGS AND CATS

Frequency:

As a general recommendation, dogs should be fed twice per day with puppies less than 6 months being offered food three times per day. Cats, though often free-fed throughout the day, can also benefit from specific meal times to ensure they are only eating the daily amount of food necessary to keep them at a healthy weight.

Daily Caloric Intake:

It's important to feed your animal an appropriate portion of food at each meal in order to keep them healthy and prevent obesity. Obesity is common in animals and has been associated with joint disease (arthritis), diabetes, liver disease, and a shortened life span. Please contact your veterinarian if you suspect that your animal may suffer from obesity or have other health-related issues that may require a special diet. As a starting point for daily caloric intake, please refer to the tables below to determine your animal's needs:

DOG WEIGHT	CALORIES PER DAY	DOG WEIGHT	CALORIES PER DAY
5 lbs.	130	55 lbs.	780
10 lbs.	220	60 lbs.	840
15 lbs.	300	65 lbs.	890
20 lbs.	370	70 lbs.	940
25 lbs.	430	75 lbs.	990
30 lbs.	500	80 lbs.	1040
35 lbs.	560	85 lbs.	1080
40 lbs.	620	90 lbs.	1130
45 lbs.	680	95 lbs.	1180
50 lbs.	730	100 lbs.	1230

CAT WEIGHT	CALORIES PER DAY
3 lbs.	80
5 lbs.	130
8 lbs.	185
10 lbs.	220
12 lbs.	250
14 lbs.	270
16 lbs.	300
> 16 lbs.	Consult your primary care veterinarian

FOOD FOR DOGS AND CATS CONT.

Most dogs and cats do just fine on either wet food, dry food, or both as long as the diet is balanced and offered in the appropriate portion.

Food Alternatives for dogs and cats:

Can cats and dogs eat human food? Ideally, your cat or dog is on a complete and balanced diet, designed for their specific needs. However, if you find yourself out of their food, these suggestions are safe to prepare and feed your animal for a day or two, until you can obtain more cat food.

General tips:

Offer a good balance of a lean protein and complex carbohydrates. There is no hard and fast rule for home cooking, as different foods contain different nutrients. Generally, per meal, a cup of food per 10 pounds of your pet's weight is standard, with at least 50% of the meal being protein.

Consider if your pet has a food allergy or chronic health condition for which your veterinarian has prescribed a special diet. In these cases, consult your veterinarian before offering any human food.

Ingredient guidelines:

Keeping the meal bland is best. Do not use spices, salt or seasonings, and never offer any food with bones (cooked or raw), and always cook raw meat completely before serving to your animal.

Protein sources:

- Poultry or Beef – cooked, skinless and boneless (if using canned, rinse completely before using)
- Scrambled eggs – cooked thoroughly, with no salt, spices or seasonings
- Tofu – cooked thoroughly, with no salt, spices or seasonings
- Canned fish (such as tuna) – for cats only. drain and rinse completely before feeding

Additional foods to add to the protein source for both bulk and nutrition:

- Oatmeal – plain, unflavored and cooked
- Canned veggies – corn, beans, peas, spinach and carrots for example. Rinse and drain well before feeding.
- Plain pasta or rice – fully cook before feeding
- Low sodium broth (veggie, beef or chicken)
- *For dogs only:*
 - Cooked or raw chopped veggies (carrots, green beans, broccoli and peas are good options)
 - Plain potatoes – peeled first, and boiled, with no added spices or seasoning.

Prohibited foods:

These foods should never be fed to your cat or dog as they can cause irreversible health damage.

Cats:

- Breaded or fried foods.
- Milk, cheese and other dairy
- Grapes, raisins, or anything that may contain these
- Onions, garlic or anything that may contain these
- Bacon, cold cuts or deli meats (high in sodium)

Dogs:

- Pre-prepared, breaded or fried foods.
- Grapes, raisins, or anything that may contain these
- Onions, garlic or anything that may contain these
- Bacon, cold cuts or deli meats (high in sodium)

FOOD FOR DOGS AND CATS CONT.

Transitioning Your Dog or Cat to a New Food

Need to switch dog food or cat food? It is recommended that you consult with a veterinarian before transitioning your animal to a new diet.

Transitioning too quickly can lead to upset stomach, diarrhea, vomiting, or even loss of appetite. The transition to a new food should occur slowly over a period of 7 – 10 days, mixing increasing amounts of new food with your animal's old food each day.

1. Start with 75% old food mixed with 25% new food for approximately three days.
2. Then mix 50% old with 50% new for approximately three days.
3. Then 75% new, 25% old for approximately three days.
4. Then 100% new.

If you notice your pet refusing to eat the new food, or if your pet starts vomiting or has diarrhea or constipation, you should slow down the rate you are switching the food. If problems continue, consult with your veterinarian.

Food resources:

HRA's Pet Pantry provides free supplemental pet food for any DC resident who expresses need. Events are held weekly at locations around the District and in coordination with partner organizations. For an up to date listing of Pet Pantry locations, please visit humanerescuealliance.org/petpantry.

VETERINARY CARE: CATS AND DOGS

Sometimes an obvious injury or illness can indicate that a cat or dog needs veterinary care, but other times there are subtle clues that your animal is not feeling well and needs to be seen by a veterinarian. That's why it's important to observe your animal daily for obvious signs of illness and other shifts in behavior or activity so that you can catch illness early and treat it before conditions worsen. Allowing conditions to worsen can be detrimental to your animal's health, and financially expensive, as well.

Signs of a healthy animal:

- Active and responsive
- Eats and drinks regularly
- Clean fur
- Walks normally
- Clear eyes and nose

Signs of illness:

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your veterinarian.

1. Less energy.
2. Greatly decreased appetite or not eating for more than 48 hours, especially cats.
3. Diarrhea for more than 48 hours.
4. Vomiting for more than 24 hours.
5. Refusal to drink for 24 hours or more.
6. Any trauma—dropped, stepped on.
7. Dehydration.
8. Continuous weight loss.
9. Severe bleeding or bleeding that doesn't stop within five minutes.
10. Choking, difficulty breathing (especially with mouth open) or nonstop coughing and gagging.

VETERINARY CARE: CATS AND DOGS CONT.

11. Attempting to vomit without actually bringing anything up, especially dogs.
12. Greatly distended/ bloated abdomen.
13. Sudden inability to use front or hind legs.
14. Inability to urinate or pass feces (stool), obvious pain associated with urinating or passing stool.
15. Injuries to the animal's eye(s).
16. Suspicion/knowledge that your animal has eaten something poisonous (antifreeze, xylitol, chocolate, rodent poison, etc.).
17. Seizures and/or staggering.
18. Fractured bones, severe lameness or inability to move leg(s).
19. Obvious signs of pain—whimpering, crying, panicking.
20. Heat stress or heatstroke – sudden collapse or unconscious.

Emergency Veterinary Hospitals:

- **St. Charles Animal Hospital**
11685 Doolittle Dr, Waldorf, MD 20602
(301) 645-2550
- **District Veterinary Hospital**
3748 10th St NE, Washington, DC 20017
(202) 827-1230
- **Rocky Gorge Animal Hospital**
7515 Brooklyn Bridge Rd, Laurel, MD 20707
(301) 776-7744
- **Friendship Animal Hospital**
4105 Brandywine St NW, Washington, DC 20019
(202) 363-7300

EMERGENCY PLANS: YOU AND YOUR ANIMALS

While it's not fun to imagine running into an emergency, it's important to create a plan for your animal(s) in case you get sick or another emergency situation arises. We strongly encourage you gather any members of your household and walk through the following steps to ensure your animals will be well cared for in the event of an emergency.

The best place for your animal is inside the home they know and love. If you aren't feeling well but are still able to provide care for your animal, please keep them at home with you where they're most comfortable.

What happens if I get sick?

If you do become too ill to physically care for your animal or you need to be hospitalized, who can take over for you? Is there anyone else in your home who could help? Maybe a neighbor, friend, coworker, or family member who could take them in? Even a groomer, daycare, or boarding facility may be able to help in your time of need with advance notice. But the most important thing you can do today is come up with two potential pet plans and talk directly with those people so they're prepared in case they're called to action.

Prepare an Animal Supply Kit

It may not seem necessary today, but it will be hugely helpful if you find yourself in an emergency situation without the ability to track down the proper supplies. If possible, your kit should include:

- Name and contact information for the person who can care for your pets.
- Name and contact information for your back-up in case your go-to is no longer able to help.
- Food, treats, a leash, a couple of toys, and any other supplies necessary to care for your animal for at least two weeks.
- A crate or carrier to transport your animal.
- Vaccination records.

EMERGENCY PLANS CONT.

- Collar with ID tags (don't forget to make sure their microchip info is up to date).
- Medications and prescriptions, along with instructions.
- Daily care instructions.
- Your vet's contact information.

With your whole family on board and a plan in place, you'll feel a bit better about your animal's safety knowing they're in good hands no matter what challenges may arise. If you have concerns about your plan or are not sure you will be able to provide for your pet please call 202-576-6664 for assistance.

SAMPLE EMERGENCY KIT

- ☐ A week's supply of food and treats in an airtight, waterproof container
 - What is the manufacturer of your animal's food? _____
 - What are your pet's favorite treats? _____
- ☐ A week's supply of drinking water
 - How many jugs of water do you think you will need for a week? _____
- ☐ A **manual** can opener
- ☐ Food and water bowls
- ☐ Plastic bags, paper towels, and cleaning supplies
- ☐ A collar and leash with ID and rabies tags
- ☐ A recent photo of you with your animal
- ☐ Vaccination records
- ☐ Medication (if necessary)
- ☐ Toys (always a good idea)
 - What is your animal's favorite toy? _____
- ☐ A blanket
- ☐ Towels
- ☐ Pet first aid book and kit
- ☐ A copy of emergency phone numbers including the veterinarian's information
 - Write those numbers down here, too.



71 Oglethorpe Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011
(202) 726-2556

1201 New York Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 576-6664

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