



Pet Care

Not All Table Food is Good

We all love spoiling our pets. Oftentimes, this can lead to us sharing a table scrap or snack with our favorite feline or pooch. There's no harm in that, right?

Wrong, says the American Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Many "people" food options can actually inflict major damage on your pet's digestive system. It is important to know which foods are dangerous for your pet to consume and to educate your fellow pet owners on what you learn.

THE 3 C'S

The ASPCA's main warning is centered upon chocolate, coffee and caffeine, all of which contain substances called methylxanthines.

When ingested by pets, methylxanthines can cause vomiting and diarrhea, panting, excessive thirst and urination, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, tremors, seizures and even death, according to the ASPCA.

The next time you're considering sweetening your pet's day with a piece of chocolate, be warned that the baking variety contains the highest methylxanthines compared to other varieties.

Additionally, darker chocolate is more dangerous than milk chocolate.

YEAST DOUGH

Yeast dough is harmful to pets because it can rise and cause gas to build up within



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the digestive system. This can not only be painful for your pet but also can cause a stomach rupture.

The risk of damage diminishes after the dough is cooked, but the ASPCA recommends that these treats not constitute more than 5 to

10 percent of your pet's daily caloric intake.

RAW MEAT, EGGS AND BONES

Bacteria such as Salmonella and E. coli can be extremely harmful to pets, so avoiding

raw meat and raw eggs is recommended. Bones can be equally or even more dangerous, but not because of what they contain. Domestic pets may choke on bones or sustain a life-threatening injury should the bone splinter and become lodged in or puncture

the digestive tract.

TAKING ACTION

If you suspect your pet has eaten a dangerous food or household cleaner, immediately contact your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435.

Pets and Foreclosures

Dogs and cats may not be the first things that come to mind when you think about a foreclosed home. Many people who lose their homes are forced to move in with family members, into temporary housing or an apartment. Unfortunately, their pets may not always be welcome.

Additionally, many people forget that being a pet owner comes with important responsibilities to protect and care for their animals in any situation. While many pets have been found abandoned in empty homes, others have simply been set loose or dropped off at the veterinarian's office without any identification.

This obviously leads to an unfortunate situation for animals that may be forced to find sources of food or water if left in unfamiliar territories. You also may be endangering members of your community because of the potential of your pet becoming stressed and temperamental in dealing with its new environment.

If you or someone you know is weighing the decision of leaving behind a pet due to foreclosure, the more responsible option would be to consult a local shelter. Every year, 6 to 8 million animals enter a shelter, according to the National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy.

This means that some shelters in your area may actually be at full capacity, but their workers will likely be able to point you in the right direction.

TIPS

Here are some other tips from the American Veterinary Medical Association:

- You may be able to find someone who can provide a foster home for your pet until you get back on your feet.
- Contact local rescue organizations or your veterinarian to see if they can help you find a home
- Advertise your adoptable pet in a classified ad listing and screen potential adopters as carefully as possible
- Contact your local animal shelter or animal control facility to see whether it will accept your pet or assist in finding it a new home if you are unable to find a home for it yourself.



Become a Veterinarian

One of the most fulfilling careers for an animal lover is that of a veterinarian. And it is a competitive industry to enter.

There are 30 veterinary schools accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association in the United States. In 2013, there were nearly 6,800 applicants competing for 2,700 openings.

If you notice your child displaying an interest in animal science from a young age, it is important to encourage all of the mathematics, chemistry, biology and physics courses that are available in junior high and high school. The more your child is ahead of the competition, the better his or her chances of becoming a veterinarian.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

When it's time to start thinking about college, it will be important to select an undergraduate degree focused in the biological and physical sciences.

There are various options for undergraduate degrees prior to vet school, so a crucial step will be visiting universities to find one that offers the best environment. Make a list of degree programs at universities of choice, and find the one that best suits your needs.

While in college, students

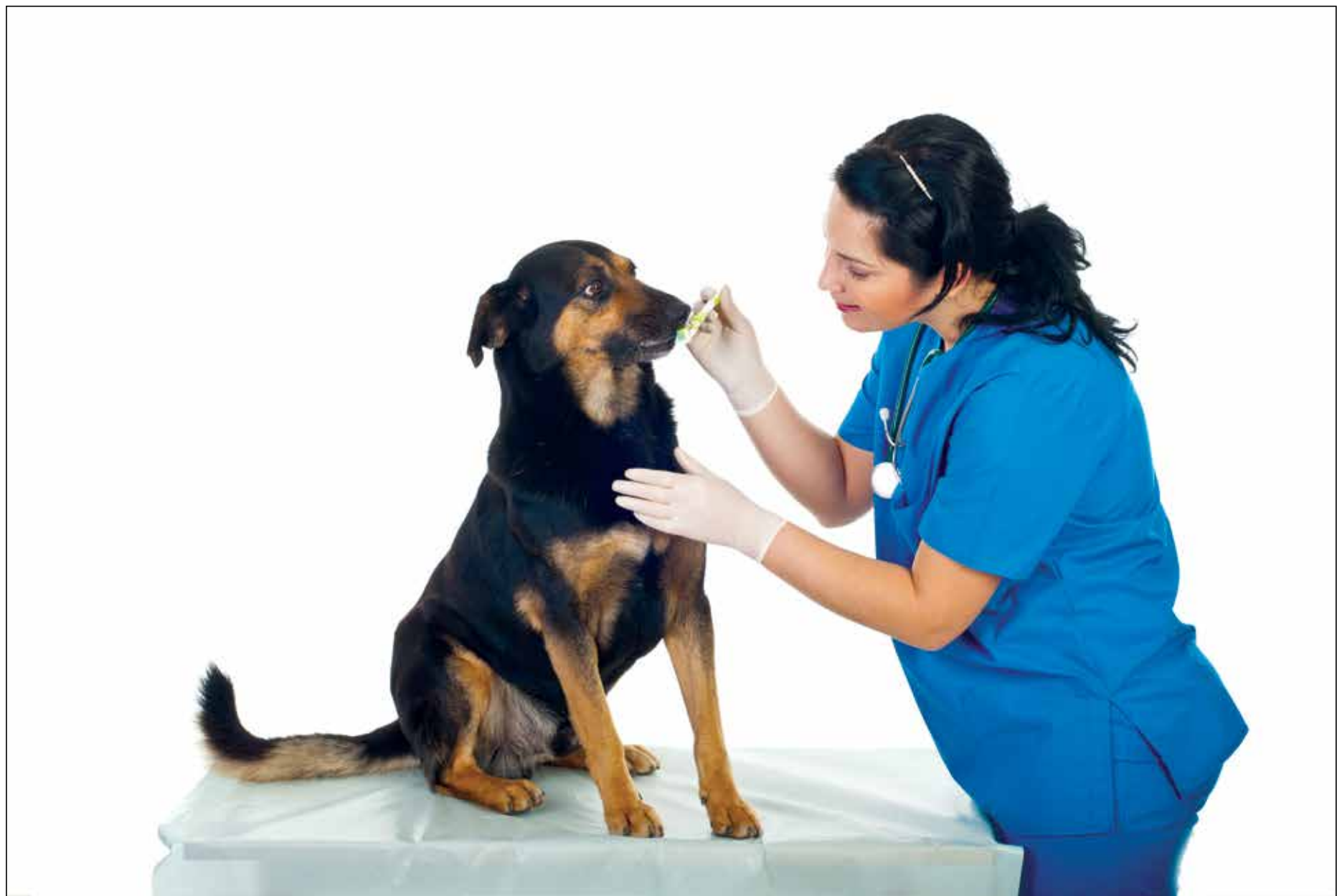
will be urged to volunteer or intern with a local veterinarian. Doing so will provide an insight into the animal and clinical experience, and will hopefully advance a student's passion for the field of veterinary science.

As a student accruing volunteer or internship experience, it is a great idea to collect letters of recommendation from veterinarians and office managers, as well as college advisors and professors.

VET SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Because of the varying requirements for vet schools, check in with your institutions of choice to fully understand application requirements.

Most United States schools follow the centralized application service operated by the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges. The service accepts and distributes your application to each school you choose.



Pets and Kids

The relationship between a child and pet can be a very special bond. From cuddling on the couch to running together in the backyard, children and animals are natural companions.

But parents must always remember that it takes only one act of aggression from an over-excited dog or cat to potentially injure your child.

More than 2 million children are bitten by dogs each year in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Among children, the rate of dog bite-related injuries is highest for those ages 5 to 9 years old, and children are more likely than adults to receive medical attention for dog bites.

HIGHEST RISK

Among children and adults, the CDC says that having a dog in the household is associated with a higher incidence of dog bites, and as the number of dogs in the home increases, so does the incidence of dog bites.

Also, adults with two or more dogs in the household are five times more likely to be bitten than those living without dogs at home. Before bringing a dog into your household, the CDC recommends you take the following actions:

- Work with a local animal shelter, rescue organization or reputable breeder to find a pet that will fit well in your household.
- If a child seems frightened by dogs, wait before bringing a dog into your household.
- Spend time with a dog before buying or adopting it.

TEACHING YOUR CHILD

Once you find that perfect new addition to your family, it is important to teach your children how to interact with it. Regardless of the dog's age or size, you should never leave it alone in a room with infants or young children.

The CDC urges you to teach children not to approach or run from an unfamiliar dog. If approached by one, your child should remain motionless and avoid direct eye contact. Also teach them never to disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating or caring for puppies.



Boarding Your Pet

Everyone needs a vacation. But as a pet owner taking a trip, you know that a voyage of any kind is accompanied with the stressful of decision of what to do with your pet.

Should you take him along for the ride? Leave him behind at your veterinarian or other local kennel? Have a friend or family member housesit or check in periodically?

The Humane Society of the United States recommends boarding your pet for a vacation, as the pros will likely outweigh the cons, and you will be able to enjoy your vacation without worrying about your pet's anxiety level.

PROS AND CONS

If you choose to leave your pet at a facility specializing in care and overnight boarding, you will be providing your pet with more one-on-one care and attention than what he or she would be experiencing if left home alone for most of the day.

Your pet also will be able to avoid the stress of a long car or airplane ride to your destination, which as you know can be a nerve-wracking experience for an owner as well.

There are potential drawbacks to using a boarding kennel, including the unfamiliarity of a new place for your pet and the cost to the owner of paying for boarding services. The cost of boarding your pet can range from \$25 to \$100 per day, depending on the facility and services you select, so be sure to budget appropriately if you choose this avenue.

SELECTION TIPS

Ask a friend, veterinarian or local animal shelter for their boarding recommendations. You also can check online listings or the phone book for options. Once you have a list of potential boarding locations, it is important to conduct a background check of sorts to make sure you're 100 percent confident in leaving your pet.

Schedule a meeting with local boarding organizations to get a feel for various places. Survey both the inside and outside of the kennel during your visit, checking for things like sufficient ventilation, comfortable inside temperatures and knowledge of the staff.



Water and Heat Safety

Summertime and swimming go hand in hand, and your pet may be the biggest fan of the fun-filled combination. Follow some specific and simple tips to guarantee safe summer activities.

Be sure to teach all of your water rules to your children, family friends, dog-sitters and any other parties who may care for your dog around the water. A consistent, comprehensive approach will help your dog understand and comprehend the rules.

FIRST-TIME SWIMMER

Some dogs are scared of the water. Others are not skilled swimmers. It is important to be conscious of your dog's preferences and comfort level.

The American Kennel Club offers a collection of tips for helping your dog enjoy an easy water transition.

- Never throw your dog into the water.
- If your dog begins to paddle with its front legs, lift its hind legs and help it float.
- Don't let your dog overdo it.
- If swimming in the ocean, be mindful of strong tides.
- If you have your own pool, make sure your dog knows where the stairs or ladder are located.

- Be sure pool covers are firmly in place
- Never leave your dog unattended in water.

HEAT SAFETY

Any dog can become



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afflicted with sunburn if not properly cared for on a hot summer day. Dogs with short hair, white fur and pink skin are at the greatest risk of sunburn. Apply sunscreen to the ears and nose

of dogs that fall into these categories, especially if you will be outside for large blocks of time.

If your dog begins to exhibit signs of heatstroke, you should immediately try

to cool the dog down and help him or her with the following actions, according to the American Kennel Club:

- Apply rubbing alcohol to the dog's paw pads.
- Apply ice packs to the

groin area.

- Hose down with water.
- Allow the dog to lick ice chips or drink a small amount of water.
- Offer Pedialyte to restore electrolytes.

Ownership Trends

From food to veterinarian visits, pets can become rather expensive to care for and maintain. But that's not slowing down the American public from incorporating a pet into their families.

The number of households owning a pet has increased across all recordable categories, according to the latest survey by The American Pet Products Association.

And many families aren't complete with just one pet. The APPA survey revealed that multiple pet ownership is at an all-time high, with 44 percent of pet owning households in the U.S. owning more than one pet. The most popular combination of pets owned is a dog and cat, as noted by 29 percent of survey participants.

Dogs and cats are owned by 46.7 percent and 37.3 percent of the U.S. population, respectively, according to the APPA survey. Other findings included 12 percent of pet-owning homes with freshwater fish and 5.7 percent with birds.

So whether the reason is the safety that a large dog provides or the entertainment a colorful school of fish can bring, pets are essential staples in the households of many American families.

CARE COSTS

Increases in dollar amounts spent indicate that pet owners are focused on ensuring optimal health for their dogs, cats and other pets.

Food is one of the highest

annual expenses for owners with an average of \$239 spent on dog food and \$203 for cats, according to the APPA.

Veterinarian visits also were

named as top expenses, particularly among dog, cat and bird owners.

Also uncovered by the APPA survey is that for many com-

mon expenses, dog owners spend more on average than cat owners. For example, amounts spent on beds, treats, grooming, heartworm

medication, leashes, surgical vet visits and toys for dogs are close to double amounts spent on those same items for cats.

