

Let's Talk: Becoming a pet parent

Presenter – Jude Tulli, Communications Writer & Pet Owner

Hi, I'm Jude. Let's talk about becoming a pet parent. Are you thinking of becoming a pet parent? It can be a wonderful and rewarding experience, and it also comes with a large amount of responsibility. And there are practical considerations as well.

Are pets allowed?

If you rent your home, you'll want to find out if your landlord even allows pets before you bring a pet home. And find out also if you need to pay a pet deposit.

Consider the weather

If you're planning to keep your pet outside for some or all of the time, make sure to consider whether the temperature is too hot or too cold at some times of the year. You might need to have space inside to keep them safe during that time of year when it's too hot or cold outside. And they'll also need shelter when they're outside to keep them protected from the wind and the rain or even snow.

Will your home life work with a pet?

And think about whether you have time for a pet. Are you and other people in your household home enough, and do you have the free time to spend? Does anybody in your home have allergies to pets? And are you counting on kids to help take care of the pet? And if you are, are they old enough, and are they ready for the responsibility?

What kind of pet would you like?

You also have to decide what kind of pet you should get. If you're thinking of adopting, you might already have an idea of what you want from past experience, or you might just have always wanted a certain kind of pet. Or you could start looking and fall in love with a different kind of pet than what you were expecting.

For instance, my wife and I once went looking for another cat that was like a cat we had had in the past, and then we fell in love with a similar cat's brother who actually had totally different markings.

He was white with flame point markings. And we just both looked at each other and said, "That's the one we're getting." So you never really know for sure, but it helps to have an idea before you start looking.

Get prepared for your new pet

Before you bring your new pet home, you want to have at least the basic supplies on hand. That can include food and water, maybe a leash if you need it, or a harness, outdoor shelter if it's needed, a cage for birds or a pen for other kinds of animals, an aquarium if you're bringing a fish home or reptiles. And other essential supplies could include water testing kits for fish. And you might want to also get some toys and treats and a special bed for them to sit and sleep.

Veterinary care for your pet

Be sure to be ready for veterinary care for your new pet. You'll want to find a vet in your area that treats the kind of pet you're going to get. For cats and dogs, that's usually pretty straightforward, but for horses or birds or other exotic animals, it may be more difficult to find a vet.

Veterinary costs

Keep in mind that the cost just for routine care can add up pretty quickly. And then if you have a pet who gets sick, it can cost thousands of dollars pretty easily. You might want to look into insurance plans for your pet, or there's also credit cards that charge 0% interest for a promotional period, usually something like six months, for vet bills. And remember even if you get a baby pet, that's still no guarantee that they won't get sick.

Think ahead

By thinking everything through ahead of time, you can be sure to adopt the right kind of pet for your family and feel confident in the care you can provide.

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