



# Man's best friend

The phrase was coined by Frederick II, King of Prussia in 1789, in reference to one of his Italian greyhounds and, till date, there is not a better or more apt way to describe the relationship between humans and dogs. We, as humans, are hardwired to love. This love, when reciprocated by a dog, creates an infinitely rewarding relationship.

However, the foundation of this relationship also plants a set of responsibilities on our shoulders. Adopting a dog can be just as logistically difficult and emotionally turbulent as bringing a newborn, human child home. Hence, it is important to get a grasp on the prerequisites discussed below before making the leap.

The first concern is time. Dogs seek love and companionship. If you live alone and have a job that keeps you tied up for over ten to twelve hours a day, your lack of time and energy for your furry friend will frustrate both of you. You need to make time to walk, feed, bathe and train your dog.

Daily activities such as eating, excreting and sleeping should also follow a regular pattern so that both you and your pup get accustomed to maintaining a routine. Puppies often suffer from separation anxiety if left alone for too long in an unfamiliar area post-adoption, which may lead to behavioural problems as they grow up. Therefore, it is imperative that you spend sufficient time with them in their early days to make them feel welcome and comfortable in their new home.

The next issue on the checklist is house-training. House-training a pup often takes several weeks and requires a great deal of patience and perseverance on your part. Hence, the earlier you start the better. Even if you successfully train your puppy to poop in a designated location, it may take a while for him/her to stop peeing all over the house due to lack of bladder control. So, be prepared to master the skill of wiping floors twenty times a day without fail or frustration or, adopt a previously house-trained adult dog.

As you must have already expected, there is a

list of supplies you should acquire before bringing a four-legged member home. This includes food, treats, food and water bowls, toys, training crate, leash, harness, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, tick and flea control powder, nail trimming and grooming kit, etc. All these specialised dog items are available in pet stores around the city but your best bet would probably be to shop from Gulshan DCC market to avail a good variety and avoid purchasing knock-offs.

Puppy-proofing your house is of paramount importance before bringing a puppy home as the curious little tot may be likely to poke around and lick or chew substances s/he comes across. All your expensive items must be stowed away for safe-keeping.

Plants and foods, which are hazardous to animals should also not be within your dog's reach.

Furthermore, if you live in a studio apartment, it may not be the best idea to adopt a large dog as s/he may develop health issues due to lack of movement and exercise and, begin destroying things such as furniture or carpets out of boredom.

One other crucial factor associated with adopting a dog is the added regular expenditure. Apart from costs for regular supplies, you will also need to spend on vaccinations and routine visits to the vet. When your dog

comes of age, s/he should also be spayed/neutered. This procedure ensures a healthier and longer life span for your dog but will also create a dent on your wallet.

Having said all of the above, the bottom line is, dogs are the greatest companions humans can ever hope for. They are innately intelligent and loyal creatures. In fact, adopting a dog is clinically proven to bring many physical and mental health benefits to humans. All you need to do is just make sure that you can be a good human parent before adopting a dog because each and every one of them deserves a caring and loving forever home.

**By Aporajita Mustafa**  
**Photo: Collected**



# Vectors of DISEASES

Pets are the best companions we can find. Research shows that people who own pets are more physically fit, have great self esteem, and are less lonely compared to others. Researchers currently believe that pets are the best emotional and social support for an average person.

Pets require the best care and proper treatment, which includes expenses. A few very common pets we all have are dogs, cats, birds and aquatic animals. Sometimes, we tend to forget that they can get sick as well and spread diseases. So for the wellbeing of our pets, we need to know what common diseases pets can face and how to prevent them from harming us and our pets.

## DOGS

Worms are very common internal parasites that feast on dogs. Tapeworms, roundworms, hookworms are the most common ones. Worms can make dogs feel uncomfortable. Signs that your dog may have worms include weight loss, diarrhoea - which includes blood - and scooting on his bottom.

If these symptoms show, take your dog to a nearby vet where they will treat your dog because each worm requires different treatment. Cures usually include oral medication. Never try to treat worms by yourself.

Fleas are parasites that create a great hassle for our canine friends. Fleas are a very common problem dogs face but they are also easy to cure. Signs include excessive scratching, hair loss and hot spots. Fleas, if not properly treated can create allergic reactions and infections that lead to anaemia from blood loss. For treatment, take your pet to a vet where they will suggest the right flea medicines like shampoos or sprays.

## CATS

Fleas and worms are also common in cats and usually one leads to another. Fur attracts fleas, which lead to infection and anaemia. Worms occur by swallowing fleas that travel throughout their furry body. To cure this, tackle with the fleas first by shampoos or sprays and then go for medication to get rid of the worms.

## BIRDS

Salmonella is very common among feeder birds. This begins as an intestinal tract infection and symptoms include diarrhoea and ruffled feathers. If such symptoms are shown, they tend to die within three days. This spreads at feeding stations where healthy birds eat food that is contaminated by the droppings of sick birds. Salmonella can also be transmitted between people so wearing gloves is a must if the owner is handling infected birds.

Ways to avoid these diseases are to clean the feeder every week. If any dead or sick bird is present in the same cage, separate them to save the healthy birds. Avoid throwing food at the same place since the leftover food creates fungi.

## FISH

Ragged tail fins is a bacterial infection that cause tails and fins to rot. Fishes that are bullied by their mates that nip on their fins or tails usually get this. Signs include change in tails or fins and their vibrant colours that begin to fade. To treat this, you may change the water to see if there is a difference. But if this is caused by infections then adding aquarium salt and other chemicals that cleanse the water may help.

## TURTLES

Respiratory infection is a common and deadly disease among turtles. This usually occurs from lack of basking and water temperatures. Symptoms include breathing with its mouth open and coughing/sneezing. For treatment, providing a warm and secure environment is helpful. Also do not keep them out of water since they cannot be fed when dry.

Pets are already the best living beings. They are fun and lovable, so we want them to stay healthy and safe. It is our responsibility to cure any problems they face since they are dependent on us. After all, every life matters. Even of those that cannot speak.

**By Rimjhim Huda**