

## **Picking the Perfect Pet**

Spring is in the air. Along with spring come new puppies and kittens. If your family is considering adding a new pet to your household, here are a few things to consider.

### **Family Fit**

Choosing the correct breed for your family is important. Making sure your new pet fits into your family's life style will ensure a long happy future together. Decide before you go pet searching what your goal for your new dog or cat will be. Will they be used for hunting? Are you looking for a lap dog that can go with you everywhere? Do you like to exercise and need a running companion? Are you looking for a laid back family dog that will do well with kids? Do you want a lap cat or a cat that hunts?

Every pet has a different personality, exercise and medical needs. Spending time with the new pet in person, and learning about the breed and history of the pet will help you make a better choice.

### **Quality time with your pet**

The amount of time you can spend with your pet is very important. If you travel a lot or work long hours, a cat may be the best choice. An adult cat is often content with smaller amounts of daily attention, which may include grooming, petting and playing with the pet. Kittens tend to be more playful, and will require more time to keep the bundle of fur happy and out of trouble.

If you work longer hours, but have evening or weekend time to spend with your pet, a cat or an adult dog may be a good choice. Adopting an adult dog can be a very rewarding experience. Adult pets have a defined personality, and you can get a better idea of energy and time requirements. Older pets can often stay at home extended hours during the day without worry.

For families or individuals that are home during the day or have more time to spend with a pet any pet would be a good choice. Puppies typically take the most time, attention and exercise. During bathroom training a puppy 8-12 weeks old needs to go out to the bathroom every 3-4 hours. Young pets need at minimum of 30 minutes of exercise twice per day. Additional time is needed for basic training and socialization.

### **Medical History**

Investigate your pets breed before purchase. Some pets have a higher incidence of certain diseases and illnesses. Some of these conditions may require costly surgeries to correct, or long term medications and therapies. Ideally, breeders should not breed any pets with known congenital (present at birth) or heritable (genetically transferred) problems. For example, small breeds, such as miniature poodles and Chihuahuas, can have knee caps that slide out of place (patella luxation). This condition may require surgery. Breeds that have a shorter nose, such as pugs, can have breathing, eye and dental problems. Golden Retrievers have a higher rate of cancer. Genetic tests are available for some common disorders.

Disclaimer: This written content is meant to be educational and is not medical advice. Always consult a veterinarian about medical advice for your pet.