

Paws For Pets

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Finding Pet Friendly Hotels

by Dr. Pete Keesling

The most important rule is to plan your accommodations in advance. Demand a fax or email confirming your room rate, that your pooch is welcome, and the additional fee, if any, for your dog.

Some places require a pet deposit. Find out in advance if it's refundable, assuming your pooch doesn't trash the place. Motels and hotels have the right to demand nonrefundable deposits, although I personally believe this demand is not reasonable.

While some chains have definitive pet policies, at many places it simply depends on whom you speak with. When I was researching this topic, many hotel and motel telephone representatives would ask, "Is your dog friendly?"

Having a Canine Good Citizen certificate in your pocket can make a world of difference. A dog becomes a Canine Good Citizen by passing an American Kennel Club basic obedience test, available from dog trainers throughout the country; it's one way to prove your dog is a well-behaved buddy.

To help sway management concerning its pooch-friendly policy, offer to fax or email your dog's resume. Include a list of accomplishments (such as obedience titles or certification as a therapy dog that visits nursing homes); references from a veterinarian and trainers; and a list of other



places where you've stayed overnight.

Researching for pet-friendly accommodations can be an exercise in exasperation. For example, one motel I phoned said, "We love pets -- just as long as owners are responsible." This conversation occurred at 10 a.m. Two hours later, at noon, I was told by the same motel, "Pets are annoying, we don't allow them." One can't help but wonder if I was subject to the personal opinions of those who answered the phone.

Always ask for a manager. The dog's size is often an issue -- but the restrictions are often ambiguous. One manager insisted that only small dogs are allowed. When I asked how small, he responded, "Only pets that are (under) knee-high are allowed." I asked, "Is that Michael Jordan's knee or Mickey Rooney's knee?"

For listings of accommodations, check out *On the Road Again With Man's Best Friend*, by Dawn and Robert Habgood (Dawbert Press, \$24.95), *Traveling With Your Pet: The AAA Book* (AAA Publishing, \$13.95); or *Mobil '99 Travel Guide: On the Road With Your Pet*, with Andrea Arden (Fodor's Travel Publications, \$15).

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Teaching An Aggressive Cat To Behave: 6 tips	2
Is Pet Health Insurance A Smart Buy?	2
Feeding Management	3
Special Nutrition Care For Cats	4

HOT WEATHER TIPS:

Never leave your pet alone in a vehicle. Even with the windows open, a parked car, truck or van can quickly become a furnace on a hot day -- and overheating (heat prostration) can kill an animal. Parking in the shade offers little protection, as the sun shifts during the day.

Always carry a gallon of cold water for your pet.

Don't force your animal to exercise after a meal in hot, humid weather. Exercise her in the early morning or in the evening, and keep walks to a minimum.

Never leave your dog standing on hot asphalt. His body can heat up quickly and his sensitive paw pads can burn.

Do not take an animal to the beach unless you can provide a shaded spot and plenty of fresh water for him to drink. Rinse him off after he has been in salt water.

It's smart to provide plenty of shade and a well-constructed doghouse for animals staying outside. Bring your dog inside during the hottest part of the day, and make sure she has plenty of cool water. Keep cats indoors.

Continued on last page



Teaching an aggressive cat to behave: 6 tips

Can you teach an aggressive cat new tricks, like how to be nice? Yes, says animal behavior consultant Miriam Yarden of Aurora Animal Behavior in Long Beach, California, but it requires determination.

Here's what to do if you own a cat who exhibits aggressive behavior:

Play with the cat to divert attention from your body. "If the cat goes for your arm, move it away very slowly and have a toy at the ready for the cat to chase," Yarden says.

Build discipline by teaching Whiskers to obey commands. "Make the cat come to you as you step backward, by offering it a treat or voicing approval," advises Nicole Hird, D.V.M., diplomate in feline care of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners.

Give the cat a time-out. "The same technique used to discipline children works with animals," says Yarden. "When the cat starts misbehaving, put it in a room by itself. Keep time-outs to no more than five minutes; otherwise it won't remember why it's being punished. Once

it's calmed down, bring it out as if nothing has happened. But never physically punish the animal. That simply escalates the situation."

Use a spray bottle with a fine mist. "When a cat has waged an attack, get his attention by spraying him with water. Don't overdo it with this technique, or Kitty will get used to it and the bottle will become ineffective. In addition, overuse of a spray bottle could actually escalate tension between the two of you.

"Persevere now in trying to curb your cat's aggressive tendencies so that your daily life with her won't be a torture. "

Exercise to exhaustion. "Exercise, and lots of it, is a great way to take some of the hellion out of your kitty-cat. For instance, you might consider getting a leash and taking your cat for walks-good exercise for the both of you.

Persevere now in trying to curb your cat's aggressive tendencies so that your daily life with

Is pet health insurance a smart buy?

Pet health insurance is becoming increasingly popular as more and more people become aware of its availability.

It can be a great program for many pet owners. But as with any other insurance program, you should study the policy carefully and understand which illnesses and medical conditions are covered and which are not. Some policies cover routine vaccinations and preventative care, while others provide coverage only for serious illness or surgery. Make sure you know what you are buying before you sign up

Under the right circumstances, pet health insurance is a good deal and a great way to ensure that your pet will receive the medical treatment he needs throughout his lifetime.

Feeding Management

Adult cats and dogs require sufficient nutrients to meet energy needs and to maintain and repair body tissues. Feeding amounts for maintenance of adult cats and dogs should be based on the animal's size and energy output. Activity levels vary dramatically between pets and will play an important role in determining caloric intake. Demands for energy can vary as follows:

- **House Pets** can have a wide variety of activity levels. An animal with a "normal" activity level should receive what we will call "maintenance" energy. A pampered lap dog may require 10% below maintenance, while an active pet that regularly exercises outdoors may require maintenance plus 20-40%.
- **Show Dogs and Cats** must be fed a balanced diet and the correct amount of energy since deficiencies may be quickly reflected in coat quality. While on the show circuit, the pet's energy requirement may increase by 20+%. However, the pet should be fed maintenance amounts when not on the show circuit.
- **Working Dogs** include sheep/cattle dogs, police dogs, guide dogs, etc. The dietary needs of a working dog will depend on its occupation since the energy needs will increase with the work level and/or stress. A dog with a moderate work load may require an energy increase of 40% compared to maintenance whereas one with a high work load may require an extra 50-70%.
- **Environment influences energy needs.** Extreme hot or cold weather can increase the pet's energy needs in order for them to maintain body temperatures. Both keeping warm and keeping cool require extra energy expenditure.
- **Repair or disease** - An animal recovering from surgery or suffering from a disease may have an increased nutritional requirement for repair and healing and to fight infection.

Methods of Feeding: Cats and dogs may be fed successfully in a number of ways that meet both the owner's and the animal's needs and circumstances.

Portion control feeding: The food for a meal is measured and offered as a meal thereby controlling the amount of food that can be consumed.

This method is used for weight control programs and for animals that might overeat if fed free choice. Food can be provided in one or more meals daily. We generally recommend that all dogs be fed twice daily. This means that the package feeding guidelines are divided into two meals spaced eight to twelve hours apart. Puppies/kittens, lactating bitches/queens and animals recovering from certain medical conditions often require more than two meals per day.

Free choice feeding: This is also known as "ad lib" feeding or "free feeding." Food is available at all times, as much as the pet wants, whenever the pet wants. Most lactating pets are fed by the free choice method, and it is generally the method of choice for feeding most cats. This method is most appropriate when feeding dry food which will not spoil if left out. Some dogs and cats, however, will overeat with this method, so two associated diseases must be considered:

a) Obesity. If the pet begins to put on too much weight, the owner will need to switch to portion control feeding.

b) Developmental Bone Diseases. If the puppy to be fed is a large or giant breed or if the breed is susceptible to OCD, hypertrophic osteodystrophy, or hip dysplasia, do not free feed the puppies. They may over eat and this can lead to rapid growth and a greater incidence of bone diseases. Large or giant breed pups should be fed with the portion controlled or timed feeding methods.

Timed feeding method: This method involves making a portion of food available for the pet to eat for a specified period of time. For example, the food can be placed in the dog's bowl for 30 minutes. After that time, if the pet has not consumed the food, it is removed. This can be a good feeding method for puppies, particularly just after weaning. The food can be offered to the puppies for 30 minutes, two or three times per day.

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Hot Weather Tips *(continued from front page)*

Be extra sensitive to old and overweight animals in hot weather. Brachycephalic or snub-nosed dogs such as bulldogs, pugs, Boston terriers, Lhasa apsos and shih tzus, as well as those with heart or lung diseases, should be kept cool in airconditioned rooms as much as possible.

Avoid walking your dog in areas that you suspect have been sprayed with insecticides or other chemicals. Be alert for coolant or other automotive fluid leaking from your vehicle. Animals are attracted to the sweet taste, and ingesting just a small amount can be fatal. Call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 4ANI-HELP if you suspect that your animal has been poisoned.

Keep your animal well-groomed to stave off summer skin problems. Shaving a heavy-coated dog's hair to a one-inch length helps prevent overheating. Don't shave the hair down to the skin, though, or you will rob him of protection from the sun. Cats should be brushed often.

Bring your companion animal to the veterinarian for a spring or early summer check-up—including a test for heartworm, if your dog isn't on year-round preventive medication. Ask your doctor to recommend a safe pest-control program to combat fleas and ticks.

To prevent escape and/or accidental falls, make sure all windows in your home are properly screened.

Special Nutrition Care for Cats

Both dogs and cats evolved as carnivores, but the cat is somewhat unique in that it is an obligate carnivore. That is, it requires certain nutrients that are available only from animal sources. The feline intestine is adapted for a high fat, high protein diet.

Some people tend to treat the cat like a small dog, but the cat has very specific nutritional requirements. This is because, unlike dogs, the cat is unable to synthesize certain essential nutrients from other food components and, therefore, requires these nutrients to be pre-formed in their diet.

- **Protein:** Cats have the highest requirement for protein of all domesticated species. When cats were evolving, a high protein and fat diet was always available so cats never found it necessary to conserve proteins. Cats always "waste" some of the dietary protein by breaking it down for energy.

- **Taurine:** Cats require taurine because they cannot convert other amino acids into taurine. Taurine is important to prevent visual, cardiac and reproductive problems and is found only in meat and fish.
- **Fats:** Cats also require both linoleic and arachidonic acids to prevent skin and coat problems and poor reproduction. Arachidonic acid is found only in animal sources of fat.
- **Vitamins:** Pre-formed vitamin A must also be present in the cat's diet. Dogs can break beta-carotene into two molecules of vitamin A; cats cannot. Pre-formed vitamin A is also found only in animal tissues.

Cats are also somewhat peculiar in their eating behavior. Cats will tend to eat and drink limited quantities on numerous occasions, consuming up to 16 small meals during a 24-hour period when fed on an ad lib basis.