



GoPetFriendly.com Recognizes February as Responsible Pet Owner Month

Caitlin Dunican • Reader Submitted • February 18, 2010

"Domestic pets are an important part of the families who own them. They are completely dependent on us for their welfare," said Amy Burkert, co-founder of pet-travel website GoPetFriendly.com (GPF). "It's necessary that we provide for their needs and help them reach their highest potential. We achieve this when we are responsible owners."

GPF, the only source of up-to-date pet policies for more than 4,000 pet-friendly campgrounds and RV parks and more than 20,000 hotels and B&Bs throughout the US and Canada, offers tips on becoming a more responsible pet owner, and in returning providing a happier life for you and your furry friends.

Recognize the commitment Owing a pet is long-term commitment, both emotionally and financially. If you can't make the commitment, don't get the pet.

Choose a pet that fits your lifestyle Don't get a high energetic dog, if you don't have the time to exercise him. If you can't afford grooming or can't do the grooming yourself, pick a low maintenance dog.

Spay or neuter your pets There are too many homeless animals without adding to the problem.

Exercise your dog Dogs need regular exercise to ensure good health. Dogs thrive on companionship and should not be left alone in the backyard.

Pet-proof your home Pesticides, medications, household cleaners and some houseplants (dieffenbachia, philodendron, hyacinth, and mistletoe) can be deadly to pets. Keep them out of reach. Make sure electrical cords are inaccessible to curious paws and noses.

Provide regular veterinary care for your pet Keeping a strict schedule of vaccinations will help prevent disease. Annual check ups and preventing fleas and

ticks are additional ways to ensure your pet's health.

I.D. your pets Identification will be your pet's ticket home should it run away or get lost. Be sure that the I.D. tag includes your name, address and phone number. It's also a good idea to write your pet's name and your phone number (with permanent marker) on the dog collar itself as tags may fall off during travels. Consider a pet microchip as well.

Train your dog Challenging your dog by training new behaviors can increase his self esteem, tire him out mentally, and provide the opportunity he needs to live up to his full potential.

Provide your pet the proper diet Obesity can be as deadly as malnutrition. Be aware that some foods can be deadly, such as chocolate, and fatty foods can cause pancreatitis.

Travel with your pet Pets are a part of our families 365 days of the year. This means when we travel and go on vacation, they deserve to come too, but it is important to be prepared and pack for your pet's needs from properly securing your pet while driving, to packing necessary medications and toys, to having a planned itinerary with pet-friendly accommodations, as well as emergency vet and poison control numbers. GoPetFriendly.com helps make travel easier for those interested in traveling with pets by offering a searchable database of service providers and pet-friendly accommodations, as well as the unique Road Trip Planner.

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Your daughter insists on wearing her princess costume to the grocery store. Allow it or not?

YES, at least she's dressed!

NO, I have some rules!

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Show your pet love and affection Dogs, specifically, are extremely loyal and devoted creatures; such is the name "man's best friend." It is important to be kind and show your pet affection and even take special care during its senior years.

For more information on being a responsible owner when traveling with your furry friends, visit GoPetFriendly.com or connect GPF on their blog, Twitter and Facebook.

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