

ADOPTION FAQS

WHERE CAN I ADOPT MY NEW PET?

Finding your new best friend has never been easier! In just seconds, you can search online for dogs or cats of any age and breed who are available for adoption in shelters and rescue groups near you. [Find-a-pet](#)

HOW CAN I BE SURE MY NEW PET IS HEALTHY?

Most private rescue organizations will guarantee the health of your new pet, or will alert you ahead of time to any special needs, and will see to it that the animal has been tested for any contagious diseases, received the necessary shots, and been spayed or neutered before you take him or her home.

If you adopt from a shelter where veterinary care is minimal or less is known about the animals, and you already have a dog or cat at home, you'll want to take the animal to your own vet to make sure that your new pet has a clean bill of health before exposing your other animals to any risk.

WHAT IF MY NEW PET ISN'T SPAYED OR NEUTERED?

If your new pet is not already fixed, you'll want to get it done as soon as possible. Information about low-cost spay/neuter services in your area is available by visiting our [spay/neuter resource page](#). Learn more about the benefits of spay/neuter in the "[Why Spay/Neuter?](#)" section.

HOW DO I HELP MY NEW PET AND CHILDREN GET ALONG?

A new pet in the house is an exciting event for youngsters, but don't let their enthusiasm turn into a nightmare for you or the new animal. Being pulled from under the bed by eager little hands or being pounced on by a child is very distressing to most animals, and especially for those in unfamiliar surroundings. Their only recourse is to scratch, snap or run. Two out of three of these natural responses are likely to land them back in the shelter, which is hardly fair. Give a new pet time to settle in. Teach your children to respect animals as they would any other playmate. If their new pet doesn't want to play for now, teach your children to leave him or her alone. And always supervise young children and pets when they are together.

WILL MY NEW PET GET ALONG WITH THE PET I ALREADY HAVE?

Most rescue groups and the Best Friends Pet Adoption Center do encourage introducing your new pet to the pet or pets who are already part of your family. They can also offer advice on the best ways to help your pets get along. Other helpful resources are listed below.

WHAT IF MY NEW PET HAS BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS?

While your new pet may turn out to be the perfect lady or gentleman from day one, sometimes he or she will take a little while to adjust to new surroundings and routines. Be patient. Be positive. Yelling or hitting an animal in order to correct unacceptable behavior will only make matters worse. If your new kitty wants to hide under the bed for a few days until she feels safe, that's OK. Just make sure she has food, water and a litter tray. Behaviors like chewing, digging and separation anxiety are just as common in dogs who come from a pet store or breeder as they are in dogs who have been adopted. Most behavior problems can be straightened out with patient and consistent application of a few simple training techniques. Training classes are a great way to bond with your new puppy or dog! And if you need additional help, most shelters and rescue groups can refer you to an animal behaviorist. Other helpful resources are listed below.

CAN I HELP SAVE HOMELESS PETS WITHOUT MAKING A LIFETIME COMMITMENT?

You sure can! If you're not ready or able to adopt a pet right now, fostering is a great way to help save lives and enjoy the companionship of a dog or cat. For more information, read the [About Fostering](#) section of the website.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CARING FOR MY ADOPTED PET?

For more information on basic pet care, training and behavior, visit the "You and Your Pets" section of the Best Friends website at bestfriends.org. The following books can also be helpful to you:

- *Second-Hand Dog: How to Turn Yours into a First-Rate Pet* by Carol Lea Benjamin
- *The Chosen Puppy: How to Select and Raise a Great Puppy from an Animal Shelter* by Carol Lea Benjamin
- *Child-Proofing Your Dog: A Complete Guide to Preparing Your Dog for the Children in Your Life* by Brian Kilcommons and Sarah Wilson
- *How to Get Your Cat to Do What You Want* by Warren and Fay Eckstein
- *Cat Love: Understanding the Needs and Nature of Your Cat* by Pam Johnson
- *Twisted Whiskers: Solving Your Cat's Behavior Problems* by Pam Johnson

If you need additional advice, you can try a behavior helpline, a professional trainer or a behaviorist. Check out the resource called "Behavior Helplines" in the "You and Your Pets" section of the [Best Friends website](#).