

Caring For Your Dog

It's Easy If You Do It Smart...



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Foreword

For some owners, having a dog as a pet is similar to having a child although physically there is really no comparison, but emotionally, this really is the case, as dogs are feeling creatures and thus deserve care and love too.

Thus, in the quest to be a good and caring owner, the owner should be able to perform some very basic actions that showcase this caring attitude, which will be well received and enjoyed by the pet.

The following are some of the basic care tips that every dog owner should put into practice.

Dog Care Basics

The following are some of the basic care tips that every dog owner should put into practice.

Basic Information

Perhaps the first act of caring as an owner would be to provide the dog with a proper collar, preferably with the dog name and address clearly depicted on the collar. The collar chosen should be one that is safe and functional to ensure the dog is not undue stress when using it.

Bathing the dog regularly is also important. The frequency of the baths should be according to the lifestyle the dog keeps, and if unsure, the owner should seek the advice of a good vet. Bathing too frequently or infrequently enough, could have adverse results, such as skin problems, lack lustre coat and hair fall or fur loss.

Designing a diet plan that is well rounded and complete is also another important point that should be looked into when trying to provide basic care for the dog. Improper diet plans can eventually end up costing the owner more, when there is a necessity to visit the vet often. A sick dog is often very upsetting and worrisome for the owner and certainly unpleasant for the dog too.

Providing the dog with the chance to exercise regularly is also another important basic requirement in caring for the pet. Without adequate exercise, the dog will not be able to have strong bones and a healthy body condition.



What Items Do You Need For Your Dog

In order to care for a dog well, there are several elements that need to be considered and provided for at all times. This will ensure that the dog is happy and well looked after and the owner is saddled with less dog related problems.

The Essentials

The following are some of the essential items that would be ideal to have for the comforts of the dog:

- Dog food - some people make it a habit to give the dog table scraps and leftover food, this is really not good for the dog. A dog's digestive system is different from that of a human, thus it requires a different diet plan. Ensuring the dog has proper food to eat that is specifically designed for animal consumption is better for the dog's health and the owner's wallet in the long run.
- Providing proper food containers, which the dog identifies as its own, is also important. This will help the animal to identify the food in it, as its own, and therefore be trained not to touch other food items, unless specifically allowed to do so.
- Grooming tools are also among the items that should be part of the caring kit for the dog. This is especially essential if the breed of the dog requires frequent grooming sessions. Having items such as brushes, nail clippers, wipes, fur clippers, shampoos and conditioners are all part of the normal regimen of grooming tools for a dog.
- Chew toys are also items to be included in the list, as these will keep the dog distracted and less likely to resort to destroying the owner's things in the quest to satisfy its natural instinct to chew on anything and everything. It also helps to keep their teeth clean and alleviate any discomfort from teething problems.



The Vet Is Your Friend

Finding a good and reputable vet whom the owner and dog can be comfortable with can sometimes be something of a challenge. However, if this scenario is found, then a good and beneficial relationship will prevail.

Don't Avoid The Vet!

The vet understands the deep bond that is usually formed between the owners and their pets, and therefore they are very delicate when coming to matters pertaining to the sick animal. The vet will be able to help the owner understand the problem and find a solution that is most suitable and acceptable to the owner, while all the while keeping the well being and comfort of the dog in mind. Most pet owner will stick to one vet as soon as a comfortable bond is formed.

As the animal cannot talk, the vet is trained to recognize and diagnose the problem accordingly, and then decide on the next course of action suitable for the given situation. Although this solution can sometimes be rather costly, the fact that there is a relationship formed over a period of time, the owner can be assured of getting the best rates possible. The owner can also be assured of the vet's commitment and problem solving skills over time.

Most people will ask for recommendations from friends when it comes to finding a suitable vet for their pet. Arranging to meet with the vet without the pet present will allow the owner to get the feel of the doctor and the services provided. If the owner is satisfied with the outcome of the first meeting, then perhaps the services of the particular vet can be used.

There are also several questions that the owner can pose to the vet, and these should include:

- Is the practice AAHA accredited?
- How are overnight patients monitored?
- What sort of equipment is used?
- Are there referral facilities for severe cases?



Caring For An Elderly Dog

As pets get older, they often require additional care and this can be a problem if the owner is not adequately informed on how to do this and thus unprepared.

Special Care For Older Dogs

There are quite a few tell tale signs of an ageing dog besides the obvious age factor. Some of these signs would include the overall slowing down in the general activity of the dog, the longer periods of rest the dog now is prone to taking, graying around the face and muzzle which is more notable in darker furred dogs, obvious hearing problems and perhaps cloudy eyes. Other signs to look out for may include arthritis pains, bad breath or bleeding gums, sudden blindness and changes of weight and appetite, changes in urine output and overall thirst and may be more symptoms.

The following are some methods that can be adopted by the owner when caring for an elderly dog:

- Making the dog as comfortable as possible is perhaps the first place to start. As the dog is less like to be active, placing its resting basket or designated resting items such as blankets and throw rugs, in a more accessible location would help the animal find comfort easily.
- Making sure the dog has access to clean water perhaps at different locations in the house, especially if there are stairs to attempt, will be convenient for the dog.
- Changing the diet plan to a low calorie and a low fat plan would be better, as at this point the dog would very unlikely be capable of coping with a vigorous exercise routine.
- General grooming for the dog should be done more frequently as it will also help the dog's circulation and will be comforting for the animal. Generally most dogs enjoy a gentle hair brushing session and it also helps to reassure the dog, that it is still very much loved.



Caring For A Disabled Dog

In order to still be able to provide adequate care and love for the dog, the owner must first be able to recognize the symptoms that cause the dog's discomfort and possibly even one that leads to disability issues. Once the owner is aware of the disability, steps can then be taken to help the dog live a better quality of life.

Taking Special Care Of Disabled Pets

Some of the warning signs to look out for are if the pet has been in an accident, if there is evidence of the inability to stand without assistance, difficulty in going up and down stairs, difficulty in getting in and out of cars, difficulty in walking and limping and whining is displayed, hesitancy to walk across slippery surfaces, uncontrolled or accidental urination episodes, unusual growths detected on the pets body, changes in weight, eating habits and temperament and general weakness.

Upon discovering any of the above symptoms, the dog owner would then have several options to consider, the most important of which would be to immediately seek the advice of a vet. The vet would be able to diagnose the animal and make the necessary recommendations for the animal's future comfort. Researching the situation is another option the owner can seek out. There are a lot of materials available today to help anyone seeking information on any particular subject. There is also the recourse of consulting with other pet owners who may be going through the same thing. There are also a lot of support groups that have been set up by others, either going through the same predicament or are experienced enough to help the owner in as many ways as needed.

There is also a lot of equipment that are specifically designed to help pets with various types of disabilities.



Caring For Small Dogs

Small dogs are usually a very popular and convenient choice when it comes to choosing pets. However, it should be noted that because of their small size, they may need a little more care and other breeds.

The Difference With Smaller Dogs

The following are some reasons for specific actions that should be taken when considering the caring processes for a small dog:

- There is usually a need to provide higher quality foods as smaller dogs have corresponding smaller stomachs and equally small appetites. The owner will need to ensure the dog gets the right amount of nutrition and several small meals a day.
- As small dogs are more prone to dental problems, frequent brushing exercises should become a routine. Also, feeding the dog treats that will further help to clean their teeth and freshen their breath is encouraged.
- Smaller dogs usually have higher levels of energy to dispel, thus the need to provide the dog with an adequate amount of toys to keep it occupied is essential. This is important as a dog which is bored will tend to develop bad behavioural patterns that will eventually cause problems for the owner.
- Creating a safe place for the pet to feel secure and protected is also another consideration that needs to be given some serious thought. Smaller dogs have the capacity to be easily excited, thus expounding a lot of energy at any given time, therefore it needs a comfortable place to wind down after such a display of energy.
- Keeping a small dog warm is important as often smaller breeds don't come with thick fur coats to insulate them from the cold.



Caring For Big Dogs

There are a lot of reasons why owners opt to choosing a large dog as a companion. These may include the comfort element the dog is able to provide for keeping the owner and family safe, or it may be because a big dog is more likely to be able to be robust, playful and cuddly. However, along with its size, there are usually a few considerations that should be focused upon in order to provide well for the big dog.

Making Them Feel Happy

The following are some of the areas in which caring for big dogs would require some consideration and implementation:

- A good diet plan is very important, as it can be instrumental in providing the necessary nutritional support for the well being of the dog. The correct nutritional balance in the diet plan will provide the dog with healthier bones, stronger joints and promote proper growth patterns. The owner should also provide larger kibbles to ensure the dog develops the ideal chewing motions required for the size.
- Having a yearly medical check-up scheduled, is also important, as it will allow the vet to detect any medical conditions before they grow into problems for the big dog. The vet will be able to monitor for conditions such as hip dysplasia, osteoarthritis, bone cancer, hypothyroidism, heart disease, bloat and many other possible negative conditions that are usually not evident until it is in an advanced stage.
- Bigger dogs also need the adequate amount of exercise incorporated into their daily routine. Without this daily allowance, there is a possibility of the dog developing other medical conditions. Obesity is usually the prime contributor that is evident in a big dog that lack exercise.
- Having all the relevant grooming tools for the big dog is also important. Almost all dogs enjoy a good brushing sessions as it usually displays the attention and love the owner has for the pet.



The Dangers of Not Caring For Your Best Friend

Having a dog and not caring for it will definitely bring forth a lot of negative repercussions. Some of which would be more damaging than others but all would be equally painful and traumatizing for the dog.

Never Neglect Your Pet!

Perhaps the most notable of all the problems that can arise from not caring well for a pet dog would be the eventual deterioration of its health. Most dogs that are not well cared for ultimately suffer from malnutrition and generally lack a proper diet. Even having any meals at all may not be the norm, as the neglect could be considerably high, thus creating the circumstances where even the most basic needs such as food are not met.

The lack of proper food and nutrition would then have other impacting results, such as health decline in the animal. The ill health of the animal can go unnoticed for long periods of time until the animal is so under nourished that the animal's internal organs become effected and start collapsing. When this happens the situation is usually dire and very little can be done to save the animal from certain death. In some cases, if the animal is rescued from such neglect in time, adequate measures can be taken to nurse it back to health, however in most scenarios the organs are so badly damaged that the only humane recourse would be to put the animal down.

Other consequences for not caring for the dog would lead to the dog becoming anti social and unable to respond well to any interactions from people. This could end up being a very dangerous situation though through no real fault of the animal. Simply not being used to any sort of attention would bring out its natural instinct to be on guard when attention is directed towards it.



Wrapping Up

Properly caring for your pet is very important and not something to be taken lightly. Your pet counts on you to provide it with the care it needs so don't let them down. Neglected dogs are very sad to see and it is painful to imagine what their lives must be like. Make sure your pet is happy as they would stop at nothing to do the same for you!



Recipes For Your Canine Friend

Ace's Favourite Cheesy Dog Biscuits

1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
1 1/4 cups grated cheddar cheese
1/4 pound margarine -- corn oil
1 clove garlic -- crushed
1 pinch salt
1/4 cup Milk -- or as needed

Grate the cheese into a bowl and let stand until it reaches room temperature. Cream the cheese with the softened margarine, garlic, salt and flour. Add enough milk to form into a ball.

Chill for 1/2 hour. Roll onto floured board. Cut into shapes and bake at 375 degrees for 15 minutes or until slightly brown, and firm.

Makes 2 to 3 dozen, depending on size.

Alfalfa Hearts

2 cups whole wheat flour
1/2 cup soy flour
1 teaspoon bone meal -- optional
2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
1 tablespoon lecithin -- optional
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
3 tablespoons alfalfa sprouts -- chopped
1 cup brown rice -- cooked
3 tablespoons canola oil
1/2 cup water

Combine flours, bone meal, yeast, lecithin, salt, garlic powder and alfalfa leaves. Add rice and oil. Combine well. Add 1/4 cup water and mix well. Dough should be very easy to handle, not crumbly. Add more water if needed to achieve proper consistency.

Lightly flour board or counter and roll out dough to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut with 2 1/2 inch cutter. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes.

Makes 3 dozen.

Alfie And Archie's Dog Biscuits

2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
1/2 cup dry milk -- powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon brown sugar
6 tablespoons beef fat
1 egg -- beaten
1/2 cup ice water

1. Preheat oven to 350. Lightly oil a cookie sheet. Combine flour, dry milk, salt, garlic powder and sugar. Cut in meat drippings until mixture resembles corn meal. Mix in egg. Add enough water so that mixture forms a ball. Using your fingers, pat out dough onto cookie sheet to half inch thick. Cut with cookie cutter or knife and remove scraps. Scraps can be formed again and baked.

2. Bake 25-30 minutes. Remove from tray and cool on rack.

An Apple a Day Dog Treat

2 cups whole wheat flour
1/2 cup unbleached flour
1/2 cup cornmeal
1 apple -- chopped or grated
1 egg -- beaten
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1 tablespoon brown sugar, packed
3/8 cup water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray cookie sheet with vegetable oil spray. Lightly dust work surface with flour. Blend flours and cornmeal in large mixing bowl. Add apple, egg, oil, brown sugar and water; mix until well blended.

On floured surface, roll dough out to 7/8-inch thickness. Cut with cookie cutters of desired shape and size. Place treats on prepared sheet.

Bake in preheated oven 35 to 40 minutes. Turn off oven. Leave door closed 1 hour to crisp treats. Remove treats from oven.

Store baked treats in airtight container or plastic bag and place in refrigerator or freezer.

MAKES 2 to 2 1/2 dozen

Apple Cinnamon Doggie Biscuits

1 package apple, dried
1 teaspoon Cinnamon -- (I usually just shake some in)
1 Tablespoon parsley, freeze-dried
1 Tablespoon Garlic Powder
1 cup ice water
1/2 cup Corn Oil
5 cups flour
1/2 cup powdered milk
2 large eggs
1 tablespoon corn oil

Put the apples in a food processor so that pieces are small. Combine in a bowl all of the ingredients -- can add oil or water if dough is too dry. Using a rolling pin roll out dough to about 3/16" thick (can make thinner or thicker). Using a cookie cutter -- cut into shapes -- place on cookie sheets. Bake at 350 degrees for approx 20 -25 minutes (until golden).

NOTE: if you substitute corn meal just subtract about 3/4 cup from flour and add Corn meal

Apple Crunch Pupcakes

2 3/4 cups water
1/4 cup unsweetened apple sauce
2 tablespoons honey
1 medium egg
1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 cups whole wheat flour
1 cup apple, dried
1 tablespoon baking powder

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a small bowl, mix together water, apple sauce, honey, egg, and vanilla. In a large bowl, combine flour, apple chips, and baking powder. Add liquid ingredients to dry ingredients and mix until very well blended. Pour into greased muffin pans, Bake 1 1/4 hours, or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out dry. Store in a sealed container.

Makes 12 to 14 pupcakes

Aunt Bianca's Dog Biscuits

2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
1/2 cup non fat dry milk powder
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 egg -- beaten

Flavouring: Meat drippings, broth or water from canned tuna (enough to make a stiff dough).

Combine flour, powdered milk and garlic powder in a medium sized bowl. Add beaten egg, flavouring and mix well with hands. Dough should be very stiff. If necessary add more flavouring.

On a well floured surface, roll out dough to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut with shaped cookie cutters of your choice.

Place biscuits on cookie sheets and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Baby Food Doggie Cookies

3 jars baby food, meat, beef, strained -- *see Note
1/4 cup cream of wheat -- *see Note
1/4 cup dry milk

Combine ingredients in bowl and mix well. Roll into small balls and place on well-greased cookie sheet. Flatten slightly with a fork. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 15 min. until brown.

Cool on wire racks and STORE IN REFRIGERATOR. Also freezes well.

NOTE: Carrot, Chicken or Beef baby food. substituting wheat germ for cream of wheat.

Bacon Bites

3 cups whole wheat flour
1/2 cup milk
1 egg
1/4 cup bacon grease -- or vegetable oil
1 teaspoon garlic powder
4 slices bacon -- crumbled
1/2 cup cold water

Mix ingredients together thoroughly. Roll out on a floured surface to 1/2 - 1/4" thickness. Bake for 35-40 minutes in a 325 degree oven.

**THANK
YOU**

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