

A code of conduct for pet owners / Pedigree Petfoods.

Contributors

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Talking Pets is a new information service for pet owners and animal lovers which has been produced in association with Pedigree Petfoods Education Centre.

Your best source of advice and information on the care and health of pets is your veterinary surgeon. Make a note of his name and number here

Name

Address

Phone

If you need further information about feeding your pet, please write to:
PEDIGREE PETFOODS
EDUCATION CENTRE,
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BURTON-ON-TRENT,
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Illustrated brochures giving details of school resource material and free loan film or video cassette service are also available from this address.



Pedigree Petfoods

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**Talking
PETS**

*A code of
conduct for
pet owners*



Pedigree Petfoods

One of the series of Talking Pets leaflets issued in the interests of responsible pet ownership.

Owning a pet involves responsibilities as well as pleasures. The pleasures are obvious but sometimes the responsibilities – not just to the pet but also to other people – are not so quickly appreciated by new pet owners.

Your dog and the law

On buying a puppy or obtaining an older dog, you are immediately subject to certain laws which govern dog ownership. Every dog, irrespective of his age, must wear a collar and tag which bears the name and address of the owner when the dog is in a public place.



As a dog owner, you are subject to various bye-laws concerning the fouling of footpaths. These laws may vary according to the local authority.

The owner of a dog which causes an accident or does serious damage may be liable to pay damages. For this reason it is wise to have your dog insured. This may amount to a simple extension of your household policy. At the same time, you may care to consider taking out medical insurance to cover the cost of any major veterinary bills in the case of illness or an accident.

Veterinary insurance is equally important for cats.

Protecting your dog against disease

When you buy a new puppy, check with the breeder that your puppy has started a course of vaccinations. If so, certificates should be supplied.

As soon as you acquire a puppy or dog, you should register him with a local veterinary surgeon. In an emergency contact your vet immediately.

It is also vitally important to make sure that puppies are vaccinated against Canine Distemper (which includes what is known as Hardpad), Viral Hepatitis, Canine Parvovirus and the two common forms of Leptospirosis.

Because your vet is familiar with the disease pattern in your area he is the person best qualified to advise on the timing and number of injections required. Either two or three are usually necessary.

Your puppy is not protected until 10 days after the second injection or as advised by your vet. Until then keep him confined to your house or garden to prevent exposure to infection. Booster doses are necessary annually to maintain protection.

A vaccine is now available to protect against Kennel Cough and its use may be advisable for individuals in special risk situations, for example in boarding kennels and at dog shows.

If you acquire an older dog you should always check up on his vaccination needs with your vet.



Protecting your cat against disease

All kittens and cats should be vaccinated against three serious viral diseases: Feline Infectious Enteritis (F.I.E.), Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (F.V.R.) and Feline Calicivirus (F.C.V.) The last two diseases combined are commonly called 'Cat Flu'. As with dogs annual booster doses are necessary.

Dealing with fleas and worms

Fleas and worms are conditions that can affect both cats and dogs. Occasionally they can be the cause of irritation or even illness in humans. It is therefore best to take positive steps immediately you suspect that your pet may be suffering from one or the other.

Both these conditions can easily be prevented. *Ask your vet for advice.*

Protecting your family

Although cases of disease transmitted from pets to people are rare, they can occur and a few simple precautions will protect your family.

You should never kiss your pet, nor let him lick you – cats and dogs are very inquisitive and use their noses to investigate lots of things. From the moment you get your pet, discourage kissing and licking and you must explain this very carefully to your children. Always wash your hands after grooming or handling your pet.

Provide your pet with his own food dishes and wash these up and store them separately from the family's. Your pet should have his own bed; don't let him sleep on yours. Never take a dog into a food shop.

When your new pet arrives



Naturally enough, a new puppy or kitten will miss his mother at first and will take a few days to settle into a new home, particularly when left alone at night. Be patient but firm. Lay newspaper around his bed and resist the temptation to take him into your own bedroom. You can comfort your pet in these circumstances by using a hot water bottle – but not too hot. Wrap it up in a blanket and tuck it into the bed or basket – the warmth will remind him of his mother.

Don't forget that young animals, like babies, need lots of sleep – don't exhaust your pet with games, toys and too much handling.

Toilet training your pet

It is important to train your dog properly from a very early age. A simple procedure for training a dog is set out in the Talking Pets leaflet *Toilet Training Your Dog*.

Cats are very fastidious creatures and can usually be relied on to take care of their own toilet needs. You should



give your kitten a litter tray containing a hygienic granular litter such as Thomas' Cat Litter. The soiled granules should be sifted out every day, disposed of and the litter level topped up. The litter should be replaced regularly and at the same time you should wash and dry the tray. Always wash your hands after handling the litter tray.

As your kitten grows up, he can start to use the garden if you have one. If you have to keep a litter tray indoors for him, keep it in one position, don't move it about.

Exercising puppies and dogs

All dogs need exercise. Just how much depends on the breed, the size and the dog's age. You should not choose a dog that needs more exercise than your family or circumstances can offer.

A dog which is fed properly and exercised regularly will not normally become overweight. For advice on how to feed your dog, ask for the Talking Pets leaflet *Feeding Your Dog*.

IMPORTANT: You should not take your dog off your premises for exercise until he has completed his course of vaccination and worming and has been introduced to his collar and lead.

A happy consequence of exercising your dog is that you too will get out and about in the fresh air. This should make you feel better and fitter. Conversely, it has been observed by both veterinary and medical experts that fat dogs very often have fat owners – so be fair to your dog, and do yourself some good at the same time.

Cats take their own exercise and generally do not appreciate the imposition of a collar and lead.

Training your dog

Most dogs are naturally friendly and enthusiastic animals but this can sometimes be off-putting to strangers and people unfamiliar with dogs. By training your dog, you can ensure that he becomes a well behaved member of society.



You should start training your dog with simple commands as soon as you get him. His responses will quickly become instinctive and you will have a happier and more obedient dog.

The first thing that you should teach him is his name, saying for example 'Spot, come!'. Congratulate him when he does so.

The next very important thing he should learn is the meaning of the word 'No.' You should say 'No' when you want your puppy to understand that he must stop doing whatever he is doing. A dog cannot relate a 'No' to something he has done previously. As with all training you must only correct at the time of the offence.

Do not punish a dog when you say 'No', just use a firm tone of voice. Conversely, always praise your dog when he does something right.

The collar and lead

Wearing a collar and lead does not come naturally to a young dog. Get your puppy used to his collar and lead from an early age and encourage him to walk quietly by your side. Keep the lessons short and above all be patient.

When your puppy reaches the age of about six months, you can enrol him at a dog training school – you should find it useful, fun and informative. Your vet will be able to advise you on the whereabouts of clubs in your area. You can train your dog yourself if you so wish and this can be a very satisfying experience.

For a more detailed working procedure you should ask for the Talking Pets leaflet *Basic Steps in Dog Training*.

Bad habits

Any bad habits your puppy displays should be nipped in the bud. It may be quite acceptable to have him on your lap when he's a youngster but he won't understand why the policy changes when he is rising four stone. Similarly, having a fully grown dog jump up at you is a lot less amusing than when he's a puppy.

Keep your dog away from the table at mealtimes and don't offer him food from your plates.

Grooming your pet

Keep your pet clean by regular grooming. Get him used to it right from the start so that it is a pleasure and not a battle for both of you.

Long-haired dogs need daily brushing but short-haired dogs can manage with a session once or twice a week. Stand the dog on newspaper to catch the hairs for easy and hygienic disposal.

Your nose will tell you when your dog needs a bath, and whether a dry shampoo or the full scale treatment is necessary. Make sure that the shampoo you use is marked as being suitable for pets. Never use detergents, disinfectants or carbolic in any form. Dry your dog with his towel, which should be kept apart from the family's and washed separately after use.

If your dog sleeps on a blanket, that should also be washed regularly. Make sure it is thoroughly dry before putting it back on his bed.

Cat grooming is a similar exercise. Use a comb to tease out the mats of hair, and then brush. Long-haired cats need daily grooming.



When grooming dogs and cats, make a careful inspection. Be sure that claws are not too long or broken and in need of clipping. Look under the tail to be certain that all is clean behind.

See that eyes are clean, and clear of discharge. Inspect teeth, and if there are tartar deposits or an offensive smell, consult your vet.

Neutering your pet

For females, neutering is called spaying and for males it is called castration. Both are surgical operations requiring general anaesthesia. Unless you are actively planning to breed from your pet, neutering is probably the best course of action. A bitch or a queen's fertility can also be controlled with injections and tablets. Your veterinary surgeon is the best person to discuss the pros and cons of the options available.

During family holidays

If you plan to put your dog or cat in kennels or a cattery whilst you are on holiday, book early, and visit the establishment in advance. Most boarding kennels will only take dogs or cats if vaccination certificates are up to date, so check this in good time.

If friends or neighbours are willing to look after your pet, make sure they are familiar with his needs, have an adequate supply of his regular food, and can give enough time to the job.

Nowadays, quite a large number of holiday establishments in the UK accept families on holiday with their dogs.

Cats, on the whole, don't like to travel and can easily get lost if taken far from their home territory.

It is an offence under the Abandonment of Animals Act for an owner to abandon an animal, whether permanently or not, in circumstances likely to cause suffering.

If you plan to take an animal abroad, discuss it with your vet at an early stage. Under the Rabies Importation Order 1974, it is a serious offence to bring any animal into the United Kingdom without making the necessary quarantine arrangements in advance.

Quiet please

A good house dog is not one that starts barking at everyone and everything. If properly trained, he will be able to tell who should be around and who should not.

Encouraging your dog to keep quiet should form a part of his early training and if he also gets plenty of love and companionship, he is unlikely to develop bad habits. Some breeds are, however, harder to quieten and you should bear this in mind when choosing a dog.

Don't let your dog get lonely



Dogs are instinctively pack animals and need companionship – yours or that of other dogs. For this reason it is unfair to leave a dog alone for long periods. If you regularly have to leave your dog alone for short periods, you should consider getting another dog for company.

You and your vet

Your vet is an invaluable source of information and advice – particularly in the field of preventing things from going wrong. Vets usually prefer to see the patient at the practice which will be better equipped for dispensing treatment and dealing with emergencies.

In an emergency outside surgery hours, you should try to telephone ahead to warn of your arrival. However, if you suspect that your dog or cat has an infectious complaint you should, when visiting your vet, leave the animal outside or in the car until you are called. This is only fair to other pet owners.

Your dog as a part of the family

The key to keeping, training and owning a pet is respect for the individual. You should work to establish a bond between you and your pet which is based

on responsibility and love.

You should explain this to your children too, so that they can understand that a pet has his dignity and doesn't appreciate being teased.

Food for thought

Cats and dogs have different nutritional needs and it is important that owners should understand them. The Talking Pets leaflets *Feeding Your Dog* and *Health and Dietary Care for Cats and Kittens* are full of expert advice.

12 steps to good pet care

By observing these 12 basic rules, you will help to make life easier for you, for your pet and for everybody concerned.

1. Train your dog in elementary obedience so that he is under control at all times.
2. Feed your dog or cat at regular times, and do not give tidbits between meals.
3. Feed your dog or cat from their own dishes, which must be kept apart from those of the human family, and washed up separately.
4. Keep your dog on a lead anywhere near a road, or where there are farm animals.
5. Do not allow your dog to foul buildings, pavements, lawns and gardens or open spaces, especially where children play.
6. Do not allow your dog to be noisy and disturb your neighbours.
7. Provide your dog or cat with their own bed. Don't let them sleep on yours.
8. Never take your dog into a food shop.
9. Keep your dog clean and regularly groomed. Your cat will also need grooming, particularly if he is a long-haired variety.
10. If you do not wish your dog to have puppies or your cat to have kittens, you should obtain advice from your veterinary surgeon.
11. Make proper arrangements for the care of your pet when you are going on holiday.
12. Register your pet as a patient and yourself as a client with a veterinary surgeon of your choice. Do not wait for an emergency.