

Our Animal Friends



Mini Fact:
Experts say it's best to leave wild animals in the wild. Don't bring them home.

Are animals special to you? Maybe you have pets. Whether you are loving your own pets or love to watch creatures in the wild, animals bring joy to our world. It is important that people treat animals well.

Be Kind to Animals Week is May 2-9 this year, and Adopt a Shelter Pet Day is April 30. Let's learn more about taking good care of our animal friends.

Pets need us

You can probably get yourself something to eat and pick out your own clothes. But can you take care of everything you need? Can you pay for your food and housing? You need a grown-up to do that for you.

You are the grown-up in your pets' lives. They depend on you for everything. For example, if you forget to fill your dog's water bowl, it is a big deal for the dog. He can't fill the bowl himself. He needs you to do it for him.

Have you ever missed supper? How did it feel to be hungry? Do you believe animals have some of the same feelings that humans do? Your pet can feel hunger, fear, affection, thirst, pain and pleasure, just like you do.

Giving animals a home

Where did your pets come from? Experts say there has been a big change in how people think about animals. Kids are much more

concerned about animals' feelings and health. Today, about 1.5 million cats and dogs are euthanized, or killed, in shelters each year. While that is a lot, the number is way down from years past.

People are being more responsible about their pets. But there are still too many homeless animals. Every day, about a million animals in shelters wait for someone to give them a home.

Opt to adopt

Rescuing an animal from a shelter is a great thing to do. You might also help raise money for your local shelter.

Some kids have shelter birthday parties. They ask their friends to bring donations for a shelter instead of birthday presents.

Spay and neuter

If you have a new pet, ask your family to get it spayed or neutered. This means the vet will do a simple operation so your pet can't have puppies or kittens. This helps make sure there are enough loving homes for all the animals.

Help your family keep your pet safe with regular visits to the veterinarian and up-to-date tags or microchip identification.



photo by Ali Crehan



photo by Caruba



Does your cat look at you like this when it's time for dinner?

photo by Sharyn Morrow

Time for a pet?

Responsibility for a pet begins before you even choose it. You and your family need to think carefully about whether you will be able to care for a pet.

Ask yourselves, "Are we being fair to the animal?" Will you be leaving your pet alone for long periods of time? It is especially unfair to leave a young dog alone for a long time.

Ask yourselves other questions: Does your landlord allow pets? Can your family afford to care for a pet? Is there enough space for the animal to exercise?

Looking ahead

Remember that if you adopt a pet when you are 8 years old, that pet might still be alive when you go away to college. Be sure your parents will be happy to keep caring for it.

Think about how you'll feel when your animal is older. It might have mats in its fur or not have the energy to play.

An older pet is the same animal it was when it was a puppy or kitten. It still needs to be loved.



Mini Page photo



Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPkindtoanimals

At the library:

- "Pet That Dog! A Handbook for Making Four-Legged Friends" by Gideon Kidd and Rachel Braunigan

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of pets are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

ADOPT, ANIMALS, CARE, EUTHANIZE, FOOD, FRIENDS, HOME, KIND, NEEDS, NEUTER, PETS, RESPONSIBILITY, SHELTER, SPAY, TAGS, VETERINARIAN, WATER, WILD.

V E T E R I N A R I A N L S M
T S D N E I R F Y S P A Y Q T
L F W K S L A M I N A E M O H
J R E S P O N S I B I L I T Y
E Z I N A H T U E Y S D N I K
Y L A X D T A G S N E U T E R
G I N Q O J T R E T L E H S H
E R T P O D A M R E T A W T C
W I L D F G P E S T E P F C A
X V P F S D E E N A E R A C U



Cook's Corner

Pimento Cheese Spread

You'll need:

- 2 cups (regular or reduced-fat) shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup low-fat mayonnaise
- 1 (2-ounce) jar pimentos with juice
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

What to do:

1. Pour cheese into medium-size bowl.
2. In a smaller bowl, combine all other ingredients.
3. Pour mixture into bowl with shredded cheese and blend.
4. Chill to combine flavors.
5. Spread on bread, crackers or celery. Serves 4-6.

- 1/8 teaspoon onion powder
- dash of garlic powder



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

1. what you walk on (5) _____
2. planet with rings (6) _____
3. green citrus fruit (4) _____
4. Superman or Wonder Woman (9) _____
5. very angry (7) _____
6. roll over and over (6) _____
7. where you may keep a guppy (8) _____

ERO	BLE	SAT	ME
OOR	HBO	ERH	FUR
LI	FIS	TUM	FL
SUP	IOUS	URN	WL



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Answers: floor, Saturn, lime, superhero, furious, tumble, fishbowl.

Mini Jokes



Cassie: What do you call a hot dog that suddenly feels cold?

Caleb: A chili dog!

Eco Note



A remote Alaskan island once known as Rat Island has recovered from the damage done by the invasive rodents. University of California San Diego researcher Carolyn Kurle says native species on what is now known as Hawadax Island have thrived and are restoring the landscape's natural balance. Rats were introduced there by a Japanese shipwreck sometime before 1780, and they quickly ravaged native birds and other wildlife.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles or ads about pet adoption events.

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