



Animal Health Trust

media release

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LOVE YOUR PETS

Share the love with your pets this Valentine's Day!

Among the flowers, chocolates and romantic evenings that Valentine's Day brings, a local animal charity is reminding pet owners to share the love with their dogs and cats.

Pets need a lot of care and attention, specific to their type and breed and, to celebrate Valentine's Day, the Animal Health Trust (AHT) is sharing five top tips on keeping happy, healthy pets:

1. Diet

Always feed a good quality food and ensure clean, water is available at all times. Monitor portion sizes to ensure your pet is the right weight. Being under or overweight can put a significant strain on your animal's health.

Remember pets need different things from their diet to people - human food and titbits can play havoc with their digestive systems. Some human foods, like chocolate and raisins, are poisonous to dogs and cats.

2. Exercise

Every animal needs some level of exercise, how much will depend on its breed. Dogs need regular exercise, a daily walk or run and even cats who sleep for much of the time, need the opportunity to exercise when they're awake.

Exercise breaks are also opportunities for dogs and cats to take timely toilet breaks – having to wait a long time to go can cause problems!

3. Preventative Medicine

Make sure your dog or cat is protected against fleas, mites, lice, ticks and worms. By regularly treating your animal you can reduce the risk of needing veterinary assistance for parasite-related illness. However, if you have any concerns about the health of your pet, seek advice from your local vet.

If you notice significant changes in your pet's behaviour or your animal has been sick, or has diarrhoea, then ask an expert! Seek veterinary advice as soon as you can as these can be signs of more serious conditions.

4. Environment

Every pet needs a comfortable, dry and cosy place to live where they can feel safe to sleep and rest. This area should be safe, secure and free from hazards.

5. Socialisation

Spending time with other people and animals is really important, especially for dogs. Understanding the time commitment of owning a pet is vital – you will reap huge benefits from the relationship you develop with your dog or cat, but you do need to invest the time to ensure that your pet is comfortable around other people and animals.

Farrah Stevens, of the Animal Health Trust, said: "As any pet owner will know, there is nothing quite like the unconditional love our dogs and cats give us. At the AHT we're committed to making the world a better place for pets. Providing veterinary care for some very sick animals is a big part of what we do, however if pets owners follow our top tips we hope that less pets will need the care of our specialist vets.

"Valentine's Day is a great time for you to spend a little time thinking about the health of your pet, to make sure you're doing all you can to keep your beloved pooch or pampered moggy happy and healthy."

If you want to know more about the work of the AHT, find out how you can support its work, or would like to make a Valentine's Day donation, please visit www.aht.org.uk

Ends

For further information, please contact:

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Additional notes:

- The **Animal Health Trust** is an independent charity, employing over 200 scientists, vets and support workers. It aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit our website at www.aht.org.uk
- The **Animal Health Trust** relies on generous donations from the public in order to keep doing its vital work. To become a friend of the **Animal Health Trust** for just £2 a month, please visit our website.