

PET ADVICE 5

Finding the right **pet for you**



The charity dedicated to helping sick, injured and homeless pets since 1897.



Finding the right pet for you

Owning a pet is a fabulous and rewarding experience. But every animal and their needs are different, so how can you make sure you're ready for a new addition to your family and that you choose the right one for you? Our tips are here to help.

Say goodbye to preconceived ideas

You may like the look of a particular pet but that doesn't mean they're right for you. Every pet has its own personality and certain breeds of dogs often have strong traits – for example Jack Russell terriers can need a lot of exercise and play to stop boredom setting in and shih tzus require lots of grooming. If you have children look for a friendly, confident dog rather than focussing on a particular breed.

Most people think that all small pets are great for children but it isn't always the case. Some pets, including hamsters and chinchillas, are nocturnal which means that when the kids want to play, their pets are snoozing happily and won't appreciate being disturbed. Pets like gerbils and mice are quick and agile so it's difficult for children to handle them without squeezing too hard. And rabbits are prey animals and don't always enjoy being picked up and cuddled. On the other hand less popular pets like rats can actually make great pets and love social interaction with people. So think about what you want from your small pet and do some research before you take one on.

Think about your lifestyle

You may have an idea of what kind of pet you want, whether that's a dog or degu, but think about what would be best suited to your home and lifestyle.

For example, if you work full time and you want a dog, who would take care of them during the day? Are there any local dog day care or dog walking services you can use and have you looked into the cost of this? If you want a cat, will they have access to outside space while you're out and about during the day and how will you feel if you come home to a clawed sofa?

Do some research on the size, temperament, exercise requirements, lifespan and health predispositions of different pets and breeds to make sure they're the right choice for you.

Don't impulse buy

It might be tempting if you see a gorgeous pet looking longingly at you but think about whether you're really ready for the long term commitment. Your new pet could live for anything from two years to 20 or more and that impulse purchase might not seem like a good idea further down the line. Plus if you haven't done





your research, you won't know anything about the pet's history and any health or behavioural problems that they come with.

Do your sums

From every day things like insurance, food and toys to unexpected vet bills, having a pet is a financial commitment. Some pets may cost a few hundred pounds a year while others can cost thousands so make sure you factor in how much your new pet will cost before you choose them.

Think about a rescue pet

Thousands of stray, abandoned and unwanted pets are desperate for a good home. Charities like Blue Cross can offer support and advice about individual pets and help you find the right one for

you and your family. They'll discuss your lifestyle and what you want from a pet and suggest suitable animals from the many in their care. An adult rescue pet is a great choice because their personalities are already established so you can be more confident about whether they'll fit in well to your lifestyle. They will be neutered, microchipped and vaccinated so they offer great value compared to the outlay involved in buying from a breeder.

If you want a particular breed of dog but still want to help a rescue pet, you can contact specific breed rescue organisations via The Kennel Club.



Use a reputable breeder

If you do want to buy a pedigree dog or cat, ask your vet or breed club to recommend a responsible breeder. Ask the breeder for all the relevant paperwork, like pedigree registration papers, health screening certificates and a written medical history, including vaccinations and worming. Ask to meet the pet's parents, relatives and siblings to observe their temperament and general health and welfare and find out if the parents or any of their other litters have developed inherited diseases or problems. Ask about how the youngsters have been socialised and avoid those that have been reared in kennels, as they may have missed out on important aspects of growing up.

You can also ask to contact the breeder's vet and other people who have bought youngsters from them to verify this – if they refuse, go elsewhere.

Don't purchase online or from dealers who offer multiple breeds or types of pets – these may well turn out to be puppy farmers or commercial dealers who have little interest in the welfare of the pets they sell.

Find your perfect match

Blue Cross has a tailor-made rehoming scheme, which means that we'll look at each case individually and help you find the right pet. We don't have any fixed rules about what makes the perfect home because we know every pet and their needs are different. If you're looking for a pet, we'll do everything we can to find one that's the right match for you and your lifestyle. So please do get in touch with us to find out how we can help you find your new pet.



Happy, healthy pets

Blue Cross advice leaflets are packed full of top tips to help owners with their pet questions. They cover a wide range of topics, from training a puppy to caring for an older cat. So if you need some support to help you with a pet problem, whether it's about a dog or a degu, we're here for you.

You can read and download our leaflets online at www.bluecross.org.uk

Visit our website to take advantage of all its features, including:

- blog posts from Blue Cross experts
- latest news
- events near you
- pets needing new homes

Or you can join in the chat on our online communities. Find us on Twitter and Facebook – just search for Blue Cross.



Blue Cross

Blue Cross has been dedicated to the health and happiness of pets since 1897. Abandoned or unwanted, ill or injured – we do what's needed to give every pet a healthy life in a happy home. We're a charity, so the more help you give us, the more help we can give pets.

How you can help

Blue Cross doesn't receive any government funding, so we rely on the generosity of pet lovers like you. There are lots of ways you can help the sick, injured and abandoned pets in our care, like making a donation, fundraising for us or leaving us a legacy.

Please call us on 0300 777 1897 or visit www.bluecross.org.uk



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