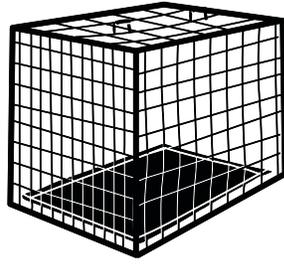


*A New*  
**Pet Owner's**  
**GUIDE TO**  
**Pet Care**



# NEW DOG CHECKLIST

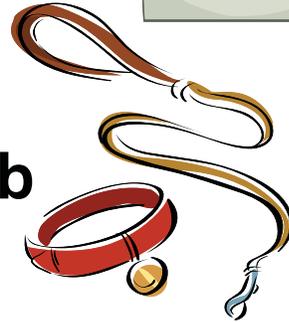
**Bedding, Crate or Carrier**



**Food, Water, Dishes**



**Leash, collar, ID tag, Rabies Tab**



**Baby Gates and Pee Pads for puppies**



**Dog Specific Grooming Supplies**



**Toys & Training Treats**

**Find Vet and Schedule First Visit.**

Your veterinarian will guide you on required vaccines and essential parasite prevention to keep your pet healthy and protected.



# NEW CAT CHECKLIST

**Bedding, Crate or Carrier**



**Food, Water, Dishes**



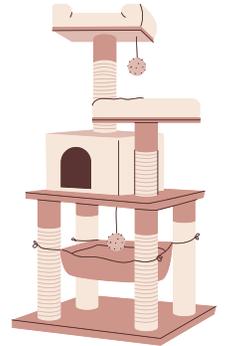
**Collar & ID Tag**



**Cat Litter, Litter Box & Scoop**



**Cat Tree or Scratching Post & Grooming Brush/Comb**



**Find Vet and schedule first visit.**

Your veterinarian will guide you on required vaccines and essential parasite prevention to keep your pet healthy and protected.





## Getting Started

**Here is an overview of some key topics to help you and your pet begin with confidence. The most rewarding journeys start with a strong foundation.**

### 1. Prepare Your Home

**Pet-proof your space:** Remove hazards, toxic plants, and anything harmful.

**Create a safe space:** Set up a quiet, comfortable area (crate, bed, or room) where your pet can feel secure while adjusting.

**Gather supplies:**

- **Dogs** – collar, leash, bowls, bed, toys
- **Cats** – litter box, food, scratching post, safe retreat space

### 2. Give Them Time to Adjust

**Introduce gradually:** Avoid overwhelming them with too many people or new experiences at once. Let them explore at their own pace.

**Be patient:** Nervous behavior is normal at first. Allow time without rushing the process.

**Keep things calm:** Maintain a consistent feeding schedule and a quiet environment to help them feel safe.

### 3. Visit the Vet

**Schedule a health check:** Ensure vaccinations and preventive care are up to date. If adopted, confirm what treatments they've already received.

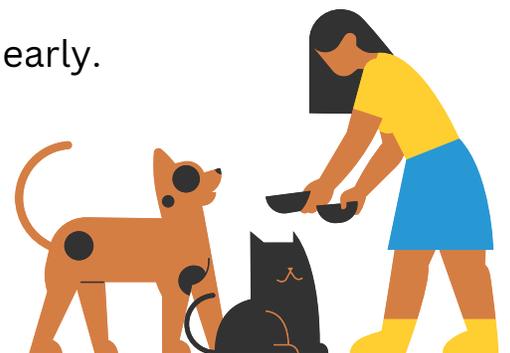
**Spay/Neuter:** Schedule the procedure if it hasn't been done.

### 4. Establish a Routine

**Feeding:** Set regular mealtimes.

**Exercise & play:** Dogs need walks and activity; cats need interactive play and enrichment.

**Training:** Begin basic training and set clear boundaries early.



## 5. Socialization

**Gradual introductions:** If you have other pets, introduce them slowly and under supervision to ensure everyone gets along.

**Meeting new people:** Let your pet meet new people in a calm and controlled way to avoid overwhelming them.

## 6. Monitor & Adjust

**Watch body language:** Look for signs of stress or fear and adjust as needed.

**Provide stimulation:** Engage your pet daily to keep them mentally and physically active.

## 7. Bond & Build Trust

**Spend quality time:** Cuddle, play, and connect each day.

**Create positive associations:** Use treats, praise, and affection to reinforce good behavior and build security.

Every pet adjusts at their own pace, but the 3-3-3 Rule offers a helpful guide to the first 3 days, 3 weeks, and 3 months in a new home. Patience and understanding during this time help build trust and reduce stress.

## THE 3-3-3 RULE

### 3 DAYS

**FEELING OVERWHELMED  
NO APPETITE  
HIDING IN QUIET PLACES  
NOT COMFORTABLE  
TESTING BOUNDARIES**

### 3 WEEKS

**STARTING TO FEEL SAFE  
LEARNING YOUR ROUTINE  
LET'S GUARD DOWN  
MORE COMFORTABLE  
SEE TRUE PERSONALITY**

### 3 MONTHS +

**HAS FINALLY SETTLED IN  
FORMING BONDS  
BUILDING TRUST  
KNOWS ROUTINE**

**REMEMBER EVERY PET IS UNIQUE. GIVE THEM TIME TO ADJUST AT THEIR OWN PACE.**

# WELCOME HOME

## Creating a Safe Life Indoors for Your New Pet

**A yard is for exercise. It is not a home.**



**Outdoor time should be limited, supervised, and safe. It is not a lifestyle.** Dogs should never be chained, tethered, or tied up outside.

### Why Indoor Living Matters

- Dogs and cats are family members who need daily interaction, stability, and structure.
- Outdoor pets face loneliness, neglect, and preventable harm.
- They are at risk of injury, heartworms, parasites, disease, and exposure to extreme weather.

#### Heat Can Kill

- Heatstroke happens quickly. Dogs cannot cool themselves like humans.
- Some dog houses can trap heat without proper ventilation.
- Shade and water are sometimes not enough in extreme heat.
- **High humidity** makes it harder for pets to cool themselves.

#### Remember:

Hot pavement and concrete  
**burn paw pads.**



#### Freezing Temperatures Hurt

- Frostbite and hypothermia develop quickly.
- Short-haired, small, and senior pets are especially vulnerable.
- Dog houses must be elevated off the ground.
- Protect openings from wind and cold drafts.
- Use straw for bedding, not hay. Straw repels moisture and insulates. Hay absorbs moisture and can freeze.



### The Bottom Line

**Indoor pets are healthier, safer, and live longer, more secure lives with their families.**

# Potty Training a New Dog

## Establish a Routine

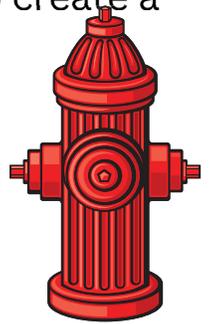
Take your dog outside frequently after eating, drinking, waking up, playing, and before bed. Puppies need more frequent breaks.

Use the same potty spot outside and keep meal times consistent to create a predictable schedule.

## Use Positive Reinforcement

Praise and reward immediately when your dog goes potty outside.

Never punish for accidents. Clean up calmly and move on.



## Crate Training

Use a properly sized crate when you cannot supervise. Dogs avoid soiling their sleeping area.

The crate should be large enough for your dog to stand and turn around, but not so large they can use one corner as a bathroom.

Do not leave your dog crated too long without a potty break.

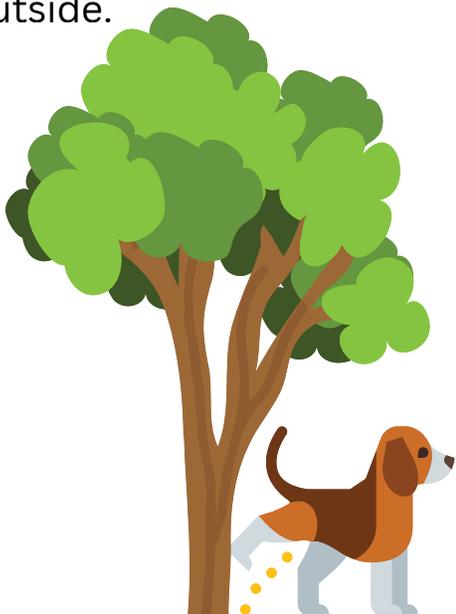
## Manage Accidents

Clean accidents thoroughly with an enzymatic cleaner to remove odor.

Do not scold or rub their nose in it. Calmly guide them outside next time.

## Watch for Signs

Look for circling, whining, or sniffing. These usually mean it is time to go outside.



**Puppy pads are a clean, convenient option during the early stages of house training.**

# Potty Training a New Cat



**Choose the right box:** Make sure it's large enough and easy for your cat to enter.

**Pick the right litter:** Cats can be picky—try different types (clumping or non-clumping) to find what they prefer.

**Location matters:** Place the box in a quiet, accessible area, away from food and water.

**Introduce the box:** Gently place your cat in the litter box after meals, naps, or when they show signs of needing to go (like scratching or sniffing).

**Keep it clean:** Scoop daily, change litter regularly, and wash the box weekly with mild soap and warm water.

**Handle accidents properly:** Clean accidents with an enzymatic cleaner to remove lingering scents.

**Avoid punishment:** Punishment can cause fear and confusion and won't help your cat learn.

**Troubleshoot issues:** A dirty box, poor location, stress, or too few boxes can cause problems. Use one box per cat, plus one extra.

**When in doubt:** If litter box issues continue, consult your veterinarian to rule out medical concerns.

## **General Tips:**

- **Avoid punishment or negative reinforcement:** Harsh responses can cause fear and confusion, which may slow learning.
- **Consistency is key:** Whether it's a dog or a cat, keeping a regular routine helps them learn faster.
- **Be patient:** Puppies and kittens need time. Accidents will happen, but steady guidance makes a difference.
- **Use positive reinforcement:** Reward good behavior immediately to reinforce the desired action and build confidence.

# CRATE TRAINING

Crate training helps your dog feel safe, secure, and confident in their new home. Here are some key steps to crate train your dog.



- 1 Pick the right crate:** Choose one that allows your dog to stand, turn around, and lie down comfortably.
- 2 Introduce crate gradually:** Place the crate where your dog spends time and leave the door open so they can explore at their own pace.
- 3 Keep it positive:** Offer meals, treats, or toys in the crate. The crate should never be used for punishment.
- 4 Start with short time frames:** Encourage brief stays with the door open and slowly extend the time as your dog adjusts.
- 5 Increase Time Slowly:** Once your dog is comfortable, begin closing the door for a few seconds while staying nearby. Gradually step away and extend crate time as your dog relaxes. Always balance crate time with play, walks, and attention.
- 6 Maintain a routine:** Provide potty breaks before and after crate time. Avoid leaving your pet in the crate for long periods, especially puppies who need frequent potty breaks and socialization.
- 7 Take your time:** Calm, consistent routines and positive experiences help your dog feel safe and comfortable in the crate.

# A Parent's Guide to Pet Respect:

## Helping Kids Welcome a New Pet

**Always supervise all child and pet interactions.**



### MOVE CALMLY

*Slow movements. Quiet voices.  
Sudden actions and loud voices  
can scare pets.*



### GIVE PETS SPACE

*Let pets come to you first.  
Never force hugs or  
attention.*



### USE GENTLE HANDS

*Soft pets only.  
No pulling,  
no poking, or hitting.*



### RESPECT REST & FOOD

*Do not bother pets while  
eating, sleeping, or  
in their bed or crate.*



### WATCH BODY LANGUAGE

*Growling, hissing, stiff bodies,  
or backing away  
means **STOP**.*



### AVOID ROUGH PLAY

*No chasing or wrestling.  
It can lead to bites  
or scratches.*



### STAY SUPERVISED

*Always have an adult  
nearby —  
especially with new pets.*



### REINFORCE KINDNESS

*Praise calm, respectful behavior.  
Kind actions create safe habits.*



# Introducing a New Pet

## Slow. Structured. Supervised.

### 1. Start Separate

Keep the new pet in their own space with food, water, and bedding.

Swap bedding or toys to introduce scent first.

No unsupervised access during this stage.



### 2. Controlled Meetings

#### ● Dogs:

Leash both dogs. Meet on neutral ground.

Allow brief sniffing, then separate.

Watch for loose, relaxed body language.

#### ● Cats:

Start with a gate or cracked door for visual access.

Increase supervised face-to-face time gradually.

Move forward only when both remain calm and are eating normally.

#### ● Dog & Cat:

Keep the dog leashed and responsive to commands.

Do not walk the dog directly up to the cat. Start at a distance where the dog can see the cat but remain calm.

Allow the cat a clear escape route and never hold the cat in place.

Reward the dog for staying relaxed and redirect any staring immediately.

If the dog fixates, stiffens, or pulls toward the cat, increase distance right away.

Keep sessions short. End on a calm note.

### 3. Stop Immediately If You See:

- Stiff body posture
- Intense staring or fixation
- Growling, hissing, snapping
- Lunging or chasing
- Ignoring commands

Dog-to-cat introductions require extra caution.

Fixation may signal prey drive – not curiosity.

Reward calm behavior.

This process may take days or even weeks.

#### FINAL NOTE



- **Never leave new pets alone with other pets, children, or anyone unsupervised, even if they seem fine.**
- **If you see repeated growling, stiff posture, intense staring, lunging, chasing, or your pet ignores commands around another pet, stop introductions immediately.**
- **Do your research, seek guidance from a qualified trainer or behavior professional, and never force a relationship.**

# Exercise for Cats and Dogs: Keeping Your Pets Active, Healthy and Happy

## Dogs

- Walks, runs, and fetch burn energy
- Playtime keeps them physically fit
- Training and puzzle toys exercise their brain
- Social time and exploring add healthy movement



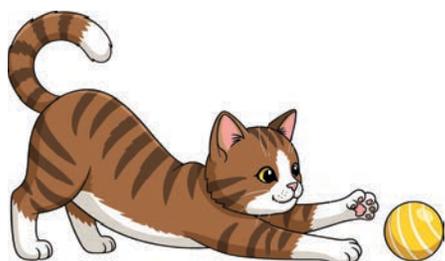
## Cats

- Feather wands and laser toys spark chasing
- Interactive toys encourage movement
- Cat trees promote climbing and scratching
- Hide treats to encourage natural hunting
- Supervised outdoor time with harness and leash



## Why It Matters

- Burns off excess energy
- Helps curb destructive behaviors
- Prevents obesity
- Reduces boredom and anxiety
- Strengthens muscles and joints
- Builds a stronger bond with you





## Schedule a Veterinary Visit Right Away

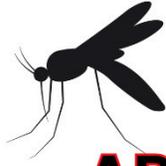
*One of the most important first steps after bringing home a new dog or cat is scheduling a visit with a local veterinarian. This initial appointment sets the foundation for a lifetime of good health.*

- ✓ **Comprehensive Health Exam**  
Your veterinarian will perform a full physical exam to check for underlying conditions, infections, or concerns that may not be immediately visible.
- ✓ **Vaccinations**  
Your veterinarian will determine which vaccinations are needed based on your pet's age, medical history, and lifestyle. Core vaccines such as rabies (required by law), distemper, and parvovirus for dogs, and rabies and FVRCP for cats, help protect against serious disease.
- ✓ **Parasite Screening and Prevention**  
Your veterinarian may check for heartworms (so important) and intestinal parasites and recommend prevention based on your pet's needs. They can also prescribe medications for fleas/ticks, which are important to prevent disease, discomfort, and serious health problems.

- ✓ **Spay or Neuter**  
If not already completed, your veterinarian can discuss timing, health benefits, and schedule the procedure.
- ✓ **Microchip and Identification**  
Microchipping is not required in most areas but is highly recommended. It greatly increases the chance of being reunited with your pet if they are lost.
- ✓ **Nutrition Guidance**  
Get guidance on the best diet for your pet's age, size, and health needs.
- ✓ **Preventive Care Planning**  
Create a long-term care plan that includes dental care, grooming, and routine wellness visits.
- ✓ **Build a Trusted Relationship**  
Creating a relationship with your veterinarian early ensures they understand your pet's health history and can respond quickly if concerns arise.

***A timely veterinary visit helps your new pet start off healthy, protected, and on the right path for a long, happy life.***

# **Pet Talk with Dr. Chase**



## **APPROXIMATELY 7 OUT OF 10 MOSQUITOES IN THE MID-SOUTH AREA CARRY HEARTWORM LARVAE.**

Dog and cats (even indoor only) can get heartworms from a single mosquito bite.

There is no approved treatment once a cat is infected with heartworms so prevention is key.

Year-round prevention is necessary and recommended for all dogs and cats, especially in the Southeastern US.

The cost of heartworm treatment for dogs far exceeds the costs of monthly heartworm prevention.

Dogs take 6 months after being bitten by a heartworm positive mosquito before testing positive on a heartworm test, so testing again after 6 months is important.



1 in 4 cats diagnosed with heartworm disease are “indoor only”.

In 2024, in Desoto County, 1 out of 20 dogs tested in a veterinary clinic tested positive for heartworm disease.



**If you suspect your pet of having heartworms or if your pet is not currently on heartworm prevention, please see a veterinarian as soon as possible.**

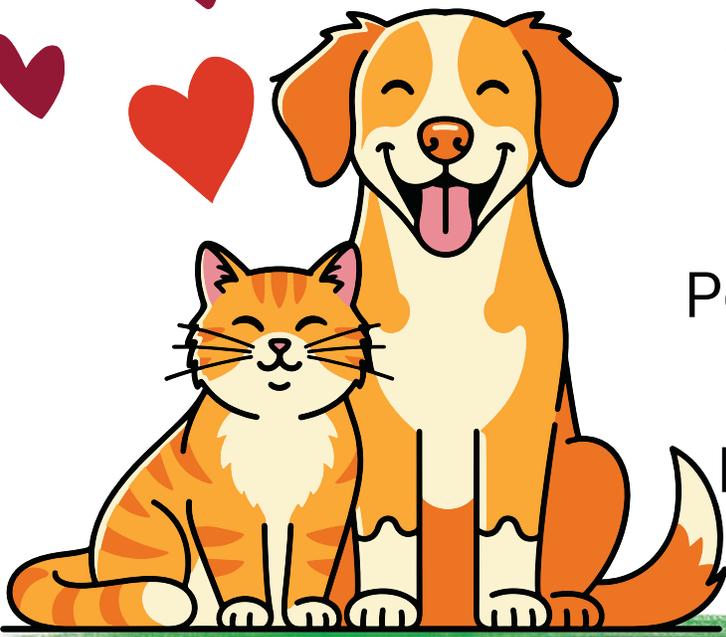
### **Why Heartworm Prevention Matters in the South**

*In the South, warm weather keeps mosquitoes active most of the year. They spread heartworms, which can cause serious heart and lung damage or even death in dogs.*

# Why Showing Your Pet Love Matters

Pets depend on us for more than food and shelter.

Love helps them feel safe, secure, and confident.



## **Builds Trust**

Affection creates security and strengthens your bond.



## **Supports Mental Health**

Attention and routine reduce stress and anxiety.



## **Improves Behavior**

Pets who feel secure are more balanced and responsive.

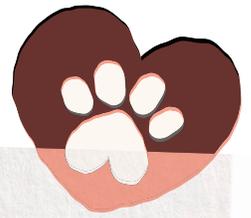


## **Promotes Health**

Play and positive interaction keep them active and engaged.

***When pets feel loved, they thrive.***





## ***The Heart of It All***

*Think back to your first day at a new job or in a new place.*

*You did not know the rules yet. You were still figuring things out.*

*That is what a new home feels like for your pet. Your pet will not be perfect on day one.*

*They cannot be.*

*Everything is new – the smells, the people, the expectations.*

*Give them time.*

*Give them patience.*

*Give them grace.*



*They are learning your world.*

*They are trying to understand what you expect.*

*They are trusting you to guide them.*

*If you lead with compassion, consistency, and love, you will not just train a pet. You will build a relationship that lasts a lifetime.*

*They are family, and the way you show up in these first days matters more than you know.*

*Welcome to your new beginning together.*

