

7 promises you should make to your new puppy or kitten



7 promises you should make to your new puppy or kitten



Welcoming a new puppy or kitten in to the family is always an exciting time.

You've picked your ideal pet, you have all the stuff, you've got them insured, so now it's settling in and enjoying all those cuddles and games as you get to know each other. Much like bringing a human baby home, these are times you'll never forget.

As wonderful as this time is, we know that alongside the cuddles, the responsibility of a new family member can sometimes feel overwhelming. This new fluffy bundle of joy is going to depend on the care you give them for the rest of their lives. Children are very vocal about their needs and let you know when things are wrong, but cats and dogs are not always so good at that!

It's always a good idea to start the way you mean to go on, so we've noted down the 7 most important promises to make to your puppy or kitten as soon as you bring them home. Make these standard practice from the start and you will be able to ensure your pet, and therefore the family they are now part of, stay in the best of health and that you all have the happiest, longest of lives together.

The promises you should make to your new family member will form the right habits, right from the start. These good habits will result in the healthiest, most well-behaved pet possible:

1. Teach your pet good behaviour rules right from the start

We've all seen or heard stories of dogs pulling at leads, stealing food from people's picnics, still jumping up at people even when they're six foot high on their backlegs, and running off and needing to be hunted down for hours on end whilst the owner has their heart in their mouths thinking of all the roads they could have run across.

These things aren't just inconvenient for the owner, but also dangerous and/or limiting for the dog. They don't want to be shut in a room every time visitors arrive, or put on a lead for an entire walk. It's not best for them, and just isn't a fun and relaxing life for the humans with them.

There is an old saying 'As the twig is bent, so grows the tree' that recognises and describes how early influences have a permanent affect. Enrolling for puppy classes not only makes them a wonderfully sociable animal and reduces aggression, it also teaches obedience that keeps your pet safe, and you and your family happy and proud for the whole of their lifetime.



At home, make sure you start doing things in a family-friendly way right from the start too. If you aren't going to want a fully grown dog on your bed every night, start them off sleeping where you want them to right from day one. There are lots of articles online about different methods such as crate training that can help you, or chat to us about it. Don't offer them titbits while you're eating dinner if you don't want a lifetime of begging whilst you're eating. What's cute and almost irresistible behavior as a puppy often isn't as cute once they're a huge, hot-breathed slobbering adult.

Whilst there aren't classes for cats, they too need to be told what the rules are right from the start. Reward good behavior with cat treats, and use techniques such as a small water pistol or an air puffer to discourage them from climbing on kitchen worktops or scratching furniture.

2. Vaccinate, and keep up with boosters

Vaccination is essential for your pet's ongoing health, and for the health of every other animal they come in to contact with. Being unvaccinated or letting vaccination boosters lapse leaves them at risk of some very nasty diseases, and causes localised re-emergence and spread of potentially fatal diseases that science has found a way to stop.

A large number of animals are initially vaccinated, then fail to go for boosters. It's not that people don't care, but it's sometimes hard to remember the window boosters need to happen and the cost NEVER comes at an ideal time! To make it easier to remember to do and to budget for, we offer a monthly healthcare plan that means by paying a small amount each month, the cost of your vaccinations (and year-round parasite control) has already been covered by the time they're due. We'll remind you to come in at the right time, and even give your pet a free health check at the same time.

You'll probably find that your pet insurance is cheaper if your pet is vaccinated and this is maintained too. If you decide not to vaccinate, check your policy covers treated diseases that are commonly vaccinated against.

3. Exercise your pet as much as they need to keep them strong, healthy and happy

Cats are fairly straightforward, and even an indoor cat can be given a good workout by being encouraged to chase balls of paper around, or by waving a laser pointer at a wall.

A dog's exercise needs are based on their age, breed, size and general health. An adult dog should spend between 30 minutes and 2 hours being active every day and puppies should get less than this, increasing as they mature. Working, hunting and herding dogs such as labradors, hounds, some terriers, pointers and collies will need the most off-lead exercise. Behaviour training is very important for these groups or you could find they disappear on a scent and don't pay attention to where they are until they're very lost!

Exercise is as important for their mental health as it is physical. Bored dogs are unhappy dogs, so the chance to run, sniff and explore every day is essential to their well-being.

4. Make sure they have enough good nutrition to grow a strong body and to keep it that way.

Your pet needs a well-balanced diet to grow to their full potential and keep them healthy. Their diet needs to be suitable for their age, lifestyle and health status so please talk to us about the best choices for them.

How much to feed them will depend on their weight, breed and activity levels but there should be guides on the packaging. If you aren't sure about their weight, pop in any time and we'll happily weigh them for you (we might need to bribe your cat with a treat!) and discuss nutritional needs then too if you'd like.

Cheap pet food is generally bulked up with fibre with no nutritional content and is equivalent to feeding them junk food, so if you can avoid it, do. Feeding them your own human food isn't a good idea either as it doesn't provide them with the nutrition they need, and often contains high levels of salt and sugar.

Water should always be available to them, and the occasional healthy treat does no harm either! We sell a range of these including dental chews, or you can look online for 'homemade healthy dog treat' recipes.



5. Protect them and your family from parasites all year round

Fleas, worms and ticks are a nuisance that affect many pets, not just cats and dogs. They are often passed to offspring from the mother, and can be picked up in the environment very quickly.

The first time we see your new pet we will talk to you about the options for getting rid of any existing parasites, then correctly dosing as they grow to make sure they have continuous protection against them.

It was historically thought that fleas were a seasonal issue, but now central heating exists they are a year-round problem, and care should always be taken to make sure there isn't a gap in your pet's protection.

Eggs can live for several months in the right conditions, and if these fall on carpets in the house they can leave you and your pet infested within days.



Parasites are an itchy nuisance, but can also cause serious health issues and be carriers of serious disease, some of which can even be passed to humans, so make sure you're protected from the start.

6. Get them checked at least once a year at the vet

Pets can't tell us if something is hurting such as their teeth or joints. Lots of changes can also occur during the first tender years, problems are generally better treated if identified earlier. It also doesn't do any harm to get them used to being thoroughly checked over.

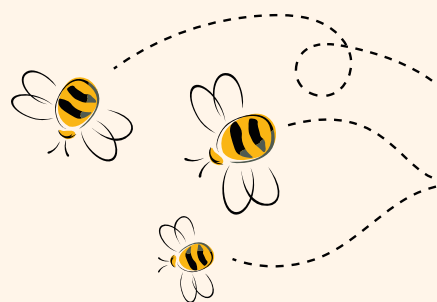
We will usually do this at the same time as annual vaccination boosters, but if there's anything you'd like to discuss about your pet's health then of course we're available throughout the rest of the year.

7. Good grooming and getting them used to being touched

Giving your pet a good brush is a lovely thing to do for them and for you, but it's so much more important than just keeping their coat in tip top condition. Getting up close and personal allows you to notice things like any ticks that have attached, any changes to skin, and find any sensitive areas that may need attention. Make sure you use a suitable brush, and use your fingers to investigate behind ears, around the mouth and between the toes.

Looking in their mouth from an early age is a great way to stay aware of their dental health. We can show you how to brush their teeth and how to keep them healthy, and makes them a lot less fearful of touch when we come to check them over.

This is generally easier said than done with cats, but start them young and they can be quite happy to be brushed and groomed, and will sometimes let you look in their mouths, especially if they're rewarded with a spoonful of tuna for being so tolerant.



If you're welcoming a new pet into your life, our Healthy Hive Club is the best and most comprehensive plan that includes everything you need to keep your pet happy and healthy all year!

Membership includes:

- ✓ Unlimited Consultations ✓ Vaccinations
- ✓ Flea, Worm and Tick Treatment
- ✓ Discounted dental treatment ✓ Discounted neutering

See full list of benefits and savings on our website:

www.beehivevets.co.uk/healthy-hive-club

