

National Pet Week®, 6-12 May ‘18, celebrates the special bonds between pets and people, and encourages pet owners to ensure that they provide all of their animal companions – furry, feathered, scaly or otherwise – a complete lifetime of love.

Pets are a huge part of our lives. They provide companionship and unconditional love no matter what the circumstances. They listen to us, cuddle with us, give us a ride on a trail, protect us, and some offer therapy assistance and medical services. After all they do for us, this is the week to revisit how we can give back to them.

National Pet Week focuses on responsible pet ownership including veterinary care, disease prevention and a healthy lifestyle. Be a Responsible Pet Owner:

**1. Commit**

- Avoid impulsive decisions when selecting a pet.
- Select a pet that’s suited to your home and lifestyle.
- Keep only the type and number of pets for which you can provide appropriate food, water, shelter, health care and companionship.
- Commit to the relationship for the life of your pet(s).
- Provide appropriate exercise and mental stimulation.
- Properly socialize and train your pet.

**2. Invest**

- Recognize that pet ownership requires an investment of time and money.
- Make sure your pet receives preventive health care (vaccinations, parasite control, etc.), as well as care for any illnesses or injuries.
- Budget for potential emergencies.

**3. Obey**

- Clean up after your pet.
- Obey all local ordinances, including licensing, leash requirements and noise control.
- Don’t allow your pet to stray or become feral.

**4. Identify**

- Make sure your pet is properly identified (i.e., tags, microchips, or tattoos) and keep its registration up-to-date.

**5. Limit**

- Don’t contribute to our nation’s pet overpopulation problem: limit your pet’s reproduction through spay/neuter, containment or managed breeding.

**6. Prepare**

- Prepare for an emergency or disaster, including assembling an evacuation kit.
- Make alternate arrangements if you can no longer provide care for your pet.
- Recognize any decline in your pet’s quality of life and make timely decisions in consultation with a veterinarian.

Keeping pets healthy requires teamwork. As a pet owner, you can partner with your veterinarian to help your pet live the happiest, healthiest life possible. Educate yourself on proper pet care and pet health problems by asking questions and finding the answers from reliable, trusted sources of information - such as your veterinarian and their staff.

Visit <http://petweek.org/pet-owners.html> for additional information on pet health care from the American Veterinary Medical Association.