

Medical Notes

InTown Veterinary Group is dedicated to providing clients with an unparalleled range of veterinary care options.

The doctors at Bulger Animal Hospital & Essex County Veterinary Referral Hospital are always on hand no matter how seemingly small the question. We care about you and your pets. No question is too small. If you're worried, call us.

Bulger Animal Hospital:

247 Chickering Road,
N. Andover, MA 01845

Phone:
(978) 682-9905

24-Hr Emergency:
(978) 725-5544

www.InTownBulger.com

Pet Owner Resources

Mayer, Susan H. "A librarian's guide to providing resources for pet owners." JAVMA, vol 232: 10; 1464-1467.

With a wealth of books, television, and websites devoted to pet care, it can be difficult to determine which sources to use. A recent article in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) reviewed a number of excellent sources for information:

Books on General Pet Care:

- The Complete Home Veterinary Guide by Chris C. Pinney, DVM. Includes all aspects of pet care, and covers dogs, cats, small mammals, reptiles, birds, and exotic pets.
- The Merck/Merial Manual for Pet Health: the Complete Pet Health Resource for Your Dog, Cat, Horse, or Other Pets by Merck Publishing and Scott Line, Ed. This book is a layman's version of the veterinary textbook, with graphics and illustrations.
- The Pet Lover's Guide to First Aid & Emergencies by Thomas K. Day, DVM. Provides instructions for how to recognize and respond to a medical emergency. It covers first aid for dogs and cats, CPR instructions, and suggestions for a pet first aid kit.



Books for Cat Owners:

- ASPCA Complete Cat Care Manual by A.T.B. Edney, BVetMed.
- Complete Care for Your Aging Cat by Amy Shojai.
- Essential Cat: the Ultimate Guide to Caring for Your Cat by Caroline Davis.
- The Humane Society of the United States Complete Guide to Cat Care by Wendy Christensen.
- The Kitten Owner's Manual: Solutions to All Your Kitten Quandaries in an Easy to Follow Question and Answer Format by Arden Moore.

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For more information, feel free to use the medical index on our website. www.InTownBulger.com, then click "Medical Index".

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Books for Dog Owners:

- The Angell Memorial Animal Hospital Book of Wellness and Preventative Care for Dogs by Darlene Arden.
- ASPCA Complete Dog Care Manual by Bruce Fogle, DVM.
- Complete Care for Your Aging Dog by Amy Shojai.
- Essential Dog: the Ultimate Guide to Owning a Happy and Healthy Pet by Caroline Davis.
- Hound Health Handbook: the Definitive Guide to Keeping Your Dog Happy, Healthy & Active by Betsy Brevitz, DVM.

Pet Loss:

- Grieving the Death of a Pet by Betty Carmack.
- Loving and Losing a Pet: a Psychologist and a Veterinarian Share Their Wisdom by Michael Stern, PhD, and Susan Cropper DVM.
- Cornell University's Pet Loss Support Hotline: www.vet.cornell.edu/org/PetLoss

Web Sites:

- **www.InTownBulger.com:** Bulger Animal Hospital's website, complete with a medical index, archived newsletter issues, and information about our hospitals and veterinarians.

Some Eco-Friendly Online Pet Resources:

- **www.treehugger.com:** Features interesting articles and how-to tips for going green. Includes everything from greening up your pets to greening up your dishwasher cycle.
- **www.onlynaturalpet.com:** Sells natural products, holistic remedies & organic foods for your dog or cat.
- **www.skoperbox.com:** a biodegradable box, made from 100% recycled materials replaces plastic poop bags.
- **www.poopbags.com:** biodegradable poop bags, litter liners and even trash bags for the kitchen.
- **www.ecoanimal.com:** earth friendly products for animals.
- **www.HealthyPet.com:** a website produced by the American Animal Hospital Association, contains pet care articles and other interactive features
- **www.PetPlace.com:** contains over 6,000 veterinarian-approved articles, e-courses, and forums.
- **www.VeterinaryPartner.com:** is a website run by VIN (the Veterinary Information Network) with articles written by veterinarians on care and diseases of dogs, cats, reptiles, and small mammals.
- **www.cainandablecollection.com:** Natural aromatherapy bath & dental products, spa accessories and gifts.
- **www.planetdog.com:** Socially responsible, values based designed products for dogs. The Planet Dog Foundation is a philanthropic foundation. 2% of every purchase is donated to non-profit canine service programs nationwide.



Environmentally Friendly Pet Ownership

With energy costs high and concern over global warming mounting, being more conscious of the environment has become important. You know what a carbon footprint is, and already recycle your paper, plastic and aluminum cans, but what can you do to make sure your pets' carbon paw-prints are smaller too? Here are some suggestions for keeping your dog green:

Keep Dogs Confined to a Yard

Responsible dog ownership includes keeping a dog in a yard or on a leash at all times. Allowing dogs to roam free can be problematic to the dogs themselves and local wildlife. Left to their own devices, the natural hunting instinct kicks in causing dogs to try to catch & kill wildlife. This can lead to injury when dogs chase squirrels across roads and get hit by cars, or if the wild animal fights back. In addition, wild animals carry and transmit diseases and parasites to domestic animals and humans.

Keep Cats Indoors

Scientific studies show that each year, cats kill hundreds of millions of migratory songbirds, as well as other small mammals such as rabbits and chipmunks. Research shows that de-clawing cats and bell collars do not prevent cats from killing birds or other small animals. According to the US Fish & Wildlife Service, for healthy cats and wild birds, cats should not be allowed to roam free.

Spay or Neuter your Dog

There are many reasons owners cite for keeping their dogs intact. However, neutered males and spayed females do not produce unexpected puppies. This keeps the population of dogs under control and prevents unwanted puppies from ending up homeless or in shelters. Intact males and females also spend a lot of energy trying to escape to find a mate which can lead to some of the problems mentioned above.

Spay or Neuter your Cat

Intact cats breed and produce an endless supply of kittens. These kittens require placement in homes, are euthanized in shelters, or roam free. These cats produce more and more feral cats which kill wild birds and small animals for food. Spaying or neutering your cat is the only responsible choice.

Looking for a New Pet?

When considering getting a new pet, think about going to a rescue organization (every AKC breed has one), the humane society or a shelter & get a pet that is already on the planet & needs a loving home. It may take a little longer & it may even require more time spent in the car driving around to find the perfect dog or cat, but it can be worth it. It's all part of learning to "recycle" whether it's paper, plastic or giving a pet another chance at a better life.

Toys, Blankets & Beds

Buy dog and cat toys, beds, leashes, collars, bowls and blankets made out of recycled, organic or natural materials. Everything you throw out goes into a landfill. Keep that in mind when shopping for toys and blankets for your pet, just as you would for your office, your children and your home.

Use Paper, not Plastic

When disposing of dog waste or kitty litter and waste, use paper bags, not plastic. Although paper is not without its environmental impact, plastic bags remain in landfills long after the waste contained in them would have decomposed.



Things to Consider:



Over 5,500 puppies & kittens (as compared to 415 human babies) are born every HOUR in the US.



Studies have shown that children who grow up with two or more pets are 75% less likely to develop allergies later in life.



60% of pet owners in the US have a dog.

Thanks to www.treehugger.com for these tips

Dogs & Cats

Environmentally Friendly Pet Ownership, continued from page 3

Biodegradable Kitty Litter

Consider using one of the many biodegradable litter choices. These litters are wheat, corn, or paper-based and will degrade much quicker than standard clay-based litters. In addition, conventional clay and silica-based kitty litters come from strip-mining, a very non-eco-friendly practice.

Compost Dog and Cat Waste

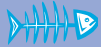
Dog and cat waste cannot be composted in a regular garden compost heap due to the potential for pathogenic bacteria and parasites. However, while pet waste can't be used for garden beds it can slowly decompose and enter the subsoil. Many products are available to help you compost pet waste – search online under “pet waste composter”.



optional. As a general rule, natural (non-synthetic) substances are allowed in organic crop, livestock, and handling operations. There are also guidelines regarding crop rotation, appropriate housing and outdoor access for livestock, and structural pest management. Product labeling gives you more information:

- 100% Organic products contain ONLY organically produced ingredients and processing aids (excluding water and salt).
- Organic products consist of at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients (excluding water and salt). Any remaining product ingredients may consist of nonagricultural substances approved on the National List including specific non-organically produced agricultural products not commercially available in organic form.

Things to Consider:

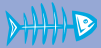


There are over 66 million pet cats in the US.

Approximately 33% are kept indoors.



A study by the US Dept. of Health found that 28% of pet owners who had serious heart attacks survived. Compared with 6% who were not pet owners.



The average life-span of an outdoors cat is 3 years. Compared with 18 years for an indoor cat.

Organic Foods

Many pet foods are on the market as organic alternatives to conventional foods. The term “organic” is often over-used, but there are guidelines defined by the USDA, especially for its use in human foods. Organic certification of pet foods is

- Made with Organic Ingredients means that products contain at least 70 percent organic ingredients.

Pocket Pet Pen

Reptiles & the Environment:

Amphibians and reptiles are important parts of the ecosystem. They eat a large number of mosquitoes, other insects, and rodent pests, and can be a valuable food source for other wildlife. Factors such as urban development and pollution are causing their habitats to be lost or degraded. But you can help. Your backyard can provide an important habitat for wildlife. By following a few simple suggestions, you can improve the quality of your yard for amphibians and reptiles. In the process you'll help yourself too, as amphibians and reptiles actually make great neighbors.

What are They?

Like birds and mammals, amphibians and reptiles are vertebrates, meaning they have a backbone. Unlike birds and mammals, their body temperatures can vary greatly based on their surroundings.


Amphibians

Amphibians include frogs, toads, newts, and salamanders. Many amphibians have a complex life cycle that involves living both on land and in water. While most adult amphibians have lungs, they also breathe through their skin, which must stay moist to allow oxygen to pass through.


Reptiles

Reptiles include turtles, snakes, and lizards. Most reptiles that you'll encounter in your backyard are terrestrial, spending most of their life on land. Reptiles breathe only through their lungs and have dry scaly skin.

How You Can Help:



Enjoy wildlife where you find it: Keeping wildlife as pets prevents them from reproducing, which is important for survival of wildlife populations in your area. It also may be against local wildlife laws and regulations.



Don't move wildlife: Wildlife encountered in your backyard is at home; this is where they live. Moving an animal to somewhere "better" (like a pond, park, or forest) can leave it vulnerable to predators and make searching for food more difficult. Amphibians and reptiles that are moved also may be killed crossing roads as they try to return to familiar surroundings.



Don't turn domestic things loose: Don't release plants and animals from your home to the outdoors. This includes aquarium plants and animals. These living, non-native plants and animals can introduce diseases or become problems as they compete with and prey upon native wildlife and plants.



Keep cats inside: Outdoor cats kill millions of songbirds per year and are thought to kill a great many amphibians and reptiles too. Keeping your cat indoors not only helps wildlife life, but keeps your pet safe from cars and other dangers.



Minimize pesticide use: Amphibians are particularly vulnerable to pesticides. Their skin absorbs water, oxygen and foreign chemicals from pesticides directly into their bloodstreams.



Minimize fertilizer use: Excess fertilizer can run off into nearby water bodies (ponds, streams, rivers) where it may cause harm and even death to aquatic animals.



Plant native species: Plants adapted to live in your local area need less maintenance than those originally from other areas. Native plants require less water, fertilizer and pesticide use for healthy growth.



Enhance habitat: Including different habitat types in your yard will give wildlife more spaces to use. Landscape using a variety of native shrubs and trees. Let leaves stay where they fall on all or part of your property and provide logs, rocks, and brush piles of branches and twigs as shelter.



Maintain backyard ponds in natural state: Ponds can be important breeding habitat for frogs and salamanders, but only if large predatory fish that feed on eggs and young are not present. Keep or plant native vegetation around a pond's border as it is important shelter for tadpoles and small frogs to avoid predators.

For more information on reptiles and amphibians, go to www.parcplace.org. Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) is an inclusive partnership dedicated to the conservation of the herpetofauna--reptiles and amphibians--and their habitats.