

# Pets Are For Life-- Not Just for Christmas!

One of the main reasons animals are abandoned or taken to shelters is because they are unwanted.

Don't contribute to this situation by giving a pet to someone who may not want it or be able to care for it.

A pet can be a tremendous source of joy and companionship, but not if the pet is unwanted.

If you are thinking about giving a pet as a gift this holiday season, remember that caring for a pet requires a big commitment of time, energy, and money.



## Before you give a pet as a gift, consider whether the recipient(s):

- Want a pet? Will give the pet enough attention?
- Can afford a pet? See below for a list of ongoing costs.
- Has enough room for a pet? If you are thinking about giving a dog, does the recipient have a fenced yard?
- Are allowed to have a pet in their home? Will they have to pay a pet deposit?
- Are allergic to pets?
- Has the time to properly care for a pet? Average time required for minimum daily care can range from 30 - 60 minutes for a cat to 1 hour or more for a dog.
- Are ready to care for a new pet during the cold, wet winter months? During cold weather, puppies and kittens should not be left outside for extended periods and should not sleep outside. Pets who live primarily outside require proper care and shelter from the elements.

## Ongoing costs of pet ownership:

- Food
- Grooming or grooming supplies
- Bedding, leash, toys
- Regular veterinary care and vaccinations
- Litter
- Sick, trauma, or emergency veterinary care
- Licenses

If you still think a pet would make a good gift, consider allowing the recipient(s) to select the pet so that they can choose one that is right for them. Also, you may want to consider waiting until after the holidays so that the pet goes home to a calmer environment. Remember, the best home for a pet is a home for life.

*A message from the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association's public information committee.*



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