

Healthy Reasons to Have a Pet

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* Animal-assisted therapy can effectively reduce the loneliness of residents in long-term care facilities. (Banks, 2002).

* People with borderline hypertension had lower blood pressure on days they took their dogs to work. (Allen, K. 2001).

* Seniors who own dogs go to the doctor less than those who do not. In a study of 100 Medicare patients, even the most highly stressed dog owners in the study has 21 percent fewer physician's contacts than non-dog owners. (Siegel, 1990).

* Activities of daily living (ADL) level of seniors who did not currently own pets deteriorated more on average than that of respondents who currently owned pets. (Raina, 1999).

* Seniors who own pets coped better with stress life events without entering the healthcare system. (Raina, 1998).

* Pet owners have lower blood pressure. (Friedmann, 1983, Anderson 1992).

* Pet owners have lower triglyceride and cholesterol levels than non-owners (Anderson, 1992).

* ACE inhibitors lower resting blood pressure but they do not diminish reactivity to mental stress. Pet ownership can lessen cardiovascular reactivity to psychological stress among hypertensive patients treated with a daily dose of Lisinopril. (Allen, 1999).

* Companionship of pets (particularly dogs) helps children in families adjust better to the serious illness and death of a parent (Raveis, 1993).

* Pet owners feel less afraid of being a victim of crime when walking with a dog or sharing a residence with a dog. (Serpel, 1990).

* Pet owners have fewer minor health problems (Friedmann, 1990, Serpel, 1990).

* Pet owners have better psychological well-being (Serpel, 1990).

* Contact with pets develops nurturing behavior in children who may grow to be more nurturing adults (Melson, 1990).

* Pet owners have higher on-year survival rates following coronary heart disease (Friedman, 1980, 1995).

* Medication costs dropped from an average of \$3.80 per patient per day to just \$1.18 per patient per day in new nursing home facilities in New York, Missouri and Texas that have animals and plants as an integral part of the environment. (Montague, 1995).

* Pets in nursing homes increase social and verbal interactions adjunct to other therapy. (Fick, 1992).

* Pet owners have better physical health due to exercise with their pets. (Serpel, 1990).

* Having a pet may decrease heart attack mortality by 3%. This translates into 30,000 lives saved annually (Friedman, 1980).

* Dogs are preventive and therapeutic measures against everyday stress (Allen, 1991).

* Pets decrease feeling of loneliness and isolation (Kidd, 1994).

* Children exposed to humane education programs display enhanced empathy for humans compared with children not exposed to such programs. (Ascione, 1992).

* Positive self-esteem of children is enhanced by owning a pet. (Bergensen, 1989).

* Children's cognitive development can be enhanced by owning a pet. (Poresky, 1988).

* 70% of families surveyed reported an increase in family happiness and fun subsequent to pet acquisition. (Cain, 1985).

* The presence of a dog during a child's physical examination decreases their stress. (Nadgengast, 1997, Baun, 1998).

* Children owning pets are more involved in activities such as sports, hobbies, clubs or chores. (Melson, 1990).

* Children exposed to pets during the first year of life have a lower frequency of allergic rhinitis and asthma. (Hesselmar, 1999).

* Children with autism who have contact with pets have more prosocial behaviors and less autistic behaviors such as self-absorption. (Redefer, 1989).

* Children who own pets score significantly higher on empathy and prosocial orientation scales than non-owners. (Vidovic, 1999).

* Pets fulfill many of the same support functions as humans for adults and children. (Melson, 1998).

* People who have AIDS that have pets have less depression and reduced stress. Pets are a major source of support and increase perception the ability to cope. (Siegel, 1999, Carmack, 1991).

