



Top 10 Tips For Adopting Your New Pet

1) Most of the animals in our Centers come to us with little to no history about their overall health or behavior. **If you have other pets at home, please isolate your new pet from them for a few days and then introduce them slowly** (for more information on introducing a new pet, please go to our website, laanimalservices.com). **Please act with caution until you and your pet get to know each other better. NEVER LEAVE A CHILD ALONE WITH ANY ANIMAL !**

2) LA Animal Services **CANNOT** guarantee the health of **ANY** animal that we adopt out. In the event of illness, **YOU** will be responsible for the cost of any treatments that your veterinarian recommends. **We urge you to bring your newly adopted pet to a veterinarian for an exam as soon as possible after adoption** (many vets offer a free exam within 3 days of adopting a pet from a shelter).

3) Most of our adopted animals will need to be sterilized at a private, independently run, veterinary hospital prior to being taken home. **When you pick up your pet from the hospital, please follow the post-op instructions that the veterinarian provides you. If your pet experiences any complications after his/her surgery, please contact the hospital that performed the surgery.**

4) Our adoption fee includes the cost of sterilizing your pet. **It does not include any additional procedures that may be necessary.** The veterinary hospital your pet is taken to may require that you pay an additional fee if your pet has an umbilical hernia, an undescended testicle, is in heat or is found to be pregnant. The hospital may also offer you **OPTIONAL** services such as blood testing, antibiotics, an Elizabethan ("E") collar, and prescription painkillers (the last of which we highly recommend!) to take home with you after the surgery. **Please contact the hospital directly to discuss these issues. Never give your pet any over-the-counter pain medication !**

5) In some cases, your pet may be too ill to be sterilized when you adopt him/her. If you adopt a sick animal, we will provide you with a "deferral of surgery" form (D-300). On the form will be a date by which you must either have the surgery performed or contact us to get a further deferral (if your veterinarian feels that your pet needs more time). **Unless your veterinarian provides us with written documentation that your pet cannot undergo surgery, you must have your pet sterilized—It's the law !**

6) Upper Respiratory Infections (URIs, "Kitty Colds" or "Kennel Cough") are a fact of life at shelters. Our animals may be exposed to several different viruses that can cause a URI. **In some cases, your pet may seem to be healthy at the time you adopt him/her, only to come down with an illness once you get him/her home.** Luckily, most pets will usually recover from an infection within a week or two. However, certain infections may turn out to be more dangerous. A Dog's URI may progress into a more serious pneumonia. Cats may end up with serious, lifelong eye problems.

Dog Distemper, in particular, will often begin by looking like a simple URI, only to then proceed into causing seizures and death. **Distemper most commonly infects young dogs (<1 year) but dogs of any age can succumb to this tragic disease.** All dogs entering any of our Centers are vaccinated against Distemper. Unfortunately, some dogs may become infected prior to entering a Center. Others may get vaccinated but not be fully protected by the one vaccine.

Sadly, we are usually unable to determine which animals with URIs will worsen and which will get better. If you adopt a pet with a URI, or your pet becomes ill within days of being adopted, please bring him/her to your veterinarian as soon as possible.

7) Parvovirus in dogs, and the related Panleukopenia virus in cats, are viruses commonly found in the environment. All dogs and cats are vaccinated against these respective viruses upon entering our Centers. As with Dog Distemper though, some animals may be infected prior to entering the Center while others may not be fully protected by the one vaccine. **Puppies and kittens less than a year old, in particular, are much more at risk.** If you adopt a young pet, please make arrangements with your veterinarian to have booster vaccines given at the appropriate times. Do not allow your pet to be in contact with other unvaccinated animals (ie. at a dog park) until your veterinarian permits it. **Please bring your pet to your veterinarian immediately if he/she becomes lethargic, doesn't want to eat, and/or begins to vomit or have bloody diarrhea,**

8) Due to budgetary constraints, we are unable to test cats for Feline Leukemia (FeLV) or Feline Immunodeficiency (FIV) viruses. Neither of these viruses can infect people, they are strictly cat diseases. They are spread from cat to cat through direct contact, usually either by grooming (FeLV) or fighting (FIV). **If you have cats at home, they may be at risk if your newly adopted cat is positive. A simple blood test can check for these viruses and we highly recommend that you have your veterinarian perform it, prior to introducing your cats.**

9) Some people are more likely than others to get diseases from an animal (zoonotic diseases). This includes children, the elderly, pregnant women and people who are immunocompromised due to a disease (eg. AIDs, cancer) or due to taking certain medications (eg. on steroids, chemotherapy). **For these more susceptible individuals, certain precautions are recommended to decrease the risk of disease transmission.** For additional information, contact the Center for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov/healthypets/extra_risk.htm) or the Los Angeles County Public Health Department. **Common zoonotic diseases include intestinal parasites such as Hook/Round/Tapeworms and skin parasites such as Scabies and Ringworm.**

10) Your new pet has been through a lot of stress. Being brought to the shelter, living in the shelter, being spayed or neutered (if they weren't already sterilized) and then going to a new home with complete strangers is a lot to have to deal with. Amazingly, most pets seem to adapt perfectly to their new environment and instantly bond with their new family. Some though, do require more time and work to help begin their new life with you. If your pet is experiencing behavioral problems such as separation anxiety, destructive behaviors (eg. chewing or clawing up the couch or your shoes) or elimination behaviors (eg. pooping or peeing inside the house), you can find helpful information on our website, (http://www.laanimalservices.com/pet_trouble.htm) as well as many other websites. **Best yet, speak to your veterinarian about how to make your pet's transition as easy as possible.**