



## ***A FRIEND FOR LIFE***

This brochure gives 9 steps for the responsible care of the animal you live with; to help both of you lead a happier life together.

If, despite your best intentions, you find yourself in a situation in which you feel you cannot keep your pet. **PLEASE DO NOT ABANDON IT.** If it's a behavioral problem, there's a solution; if you're moving, animals can move too; there are options to abandonment, which is the cruelest thing you can do to a friend.

*Contact SPAZ for advice.*

Living with an animal is not about owning a pet. It's about a partnership between you and your companion animal.

### **1 Respect is an important part of the relationship between you and your pet.**

**The animal you choose may live with you for 20 years!**

**So stop and consider:**

**A.** Is your home suitable for a pet? Cats and small dogs can live in small apartments, large dogs need more space and more walking. **CATS AND DOGS SHOULD NOT LIVE ON BALCONIES**

**B.** Is someone at home during the day? Dogs need human companionship and get lonely more than cats do.

**C.** Can you afford a pet? Besides food, a pet needs regular medical care, a traveling cage, its own bed, and an animal sitter when you're away.

**D.** What kind of pet is best for you? A pure-bred animal or mixed (each has its own character); small or large; long or short hair; male or female; puppy/kitten or mature animal?

SPAZ does not recommend you buy a breed; Greece has millions of strays, some of them abandoned breeds so why not give a stray a home!

*Contact your local animal welfare group or animal shelter or GIVE THAT NEIGHBORHOOD STRAY A CHANCE FOR A DECENT LIFE.*

## **2 Proper training is good for the animal and for you too.**

Kittens are easy to toilet-train; put them in the kitty litter box and they get the message; puppies require more patience. Put the puppy on newspapers or puppy diapers (available at pet shops, they have an aroma that attracts puppies). Move the paper or diaper closer to the door each day and finally, outside, and the dog's trained!

Praise the animal after it uses the kitty litter or paper. When accidents occur, never rub the animal's nose in it; this does not teach them anything! As far as behavior is concerned, begin training early. Spray water on a cat's nose to discourage it from clawing furniture; and get a scratching post.

A trained dog is happier than an untrained one because dogs are 'pack' animals that need human leaders. The first word to teach them is 'no'; then follow with the 6 basic exercises - heel, sit, stay, wait, come and down. Use the same tone of voice each time you use the word; be patience; praise success; and remember, training should be fun. And if you send a dog to boarding school, check out the school; observe training methods; better still, go to school with your dog.

## **3 Good food and clean water, a bed of one's own- the basics of life – you owe this to your animal.**

Puppies need 2 1/2 times the calories of an adult dog and small meals 3 or 4 times a day. In the adolescent stage, puppies' muscles and bones are still developing and they need 2 meals a day of high quality food. Mature dogs can be fed once a day. FRESH WATER SHOULD ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE. Kittens need many small meals and fresh water. As they grow, wean them to two meals a day. Whether you feed them food you cook or commercial food, give them the best quality you can afford and serve it in clean plates. And be aware that cheap dry biscuits can sometimes block the urinary tract of neutered male cats.

Provide comfortable clean bedding for your pet; cats love small cuddly containers, dogs like lined baskets. Get the animal used to sleeping in the same spot; discourage them from sleeping on your bed; and walk the dog just before retiring so the both of you can sleep in peace.

## **4 Keep on top of potential health problems.**

Your pet should have a yearly check up by your vet; the vet will observe the way your animal stands and moves, check heart and respiration and the body from ears to tail, and the abdomen for lumps or enlarged organs.

Mention any change in behavior or eating habits.

Vaccinate your pet against a range of life-threatening infectious diseases: Hexadog (distemper, parvovirus, hepatitis, leptospirosis and rabies); Felovax IV for cats (feline rhinotracheitis, calici-panleukopenia, and chlamydia psittaci). And always check for ear mites!

## **5 Hate barking dogs?...so do your neighbors.**

Some dogs bark excessively when lonely or depressed and may chew anything at hand. If you have a dog that is alone for many hours, give it a special welcome when you get home; leave toys to play with, take it for long walks on the weekend. And remember a balcony is not a proper home for a dog!! If you get a dog just to stick it on balcony to live out its life, then you should not get a dog!!

## **6 Neutering helps keep your pet healthy.**

Spayed females are 50% less likely to get cancer; castrated males less likely to have prostate problems including cancer.

Neutered pets are less likely to spray, to roam, to fight, and less likely to contract diseases such as feline leukemia; the cost of a neutering operation is small compared to the cost of medical care for a pet who develops a disease; overpopulation of cats and dogs is a very serious problem in Greece; if you let your animal breed, you are adding to the problem.

And consider this - *in 6 years, one female dog and her offspring can produce 67,000 puppies, one female cat and her offspring 420,000 kittens.*

**7 A pet that exhibits a breakdown in behavioral or toilet habits is sending you a message;** it feels that its boundaries have been invaded, often by a new animal in the house. Be patient; give each animal a separate place, spend time with each one; start acquainting them by exchanging toys; bring the two together outside on neutral ground; don't push the animals, don't scold when they're unfriendly. Before you know it, they may become bosom pals.

**8 Oh those worms, ticks, sandflies and fleas!!!** Parasites can be a nightmare for your pet so it's important to keep ahead of them.

Puppies and kittens need to be de-wormed with Panacur; older dogs need Drontal Plus; cats Drontal (check with your vet on how often to de-worm). There are a number of licensed products that control fleas, but Frontline is the only licensed product that controls both fleas and ticks. Flea/tick collars are not much help and may irritate the skin; garlic in the diet helps control parasites; tea tree oil spray for animals discourages parasites and is good for sensitive skins; if your dog sleeps outside, use insect repellent like Autan, Antiphle-botome or Citronella on the dog's skin, house and bedding.

## **9 Love, love, love - there's nothing like it.**

Dogs and cats are sentient beings that feel pain, fear and love and they develop strong bonds with humans. Discipline is an important part of your relationship with your pet but you should never resort to cruelty, never beat your pet because you're angry, never shut up a pet for days, never lock it out on the balcony, never, never abandon it in the streets.

*If you have an animal that loves you, consider yourself lucky and treat your animal with the love and respect it deserves in return.*

**This brochure was written by Elizabeth Koubena and translated into Greek by Chryssa Athanasiadou for SPAZ, Society for the Protection of Stray Animals, Glyfada, Athens, Greece. This brochure may be freely quoted as long as SPAZ is mentioned as the source.**