

## Pet Care Tips - By Jeff Coltenback

1. Avoid using plastic or cheap ceramic feeding and drinking bowls. Plastic bowls contain toxins that seep into your pet's food. Cheap ceramic bowls can harbor bad bacteria that could cause digestive or other issues. Stainless steel is the best. If that's not available, use high quality ceramic or glass bowls.
2. Offer your pet high quality drinking water. Try to avoid giving your pet tap water. Spring water is a better alternative. You can use water filters as well. If you must use tap water, let it sit out for a day or so before offering. This will allow the water's chlorine and other chemicals to dissipate a little bit through evaporation.
3. Feed a fresh or raw diet if possible. It doesn't matter what anyone tells you, feeding a diet of fresh or raw meats with appropriate additives, along with a well-rounded supplement regimen, is far better than any commercially processed food.
4. If fresh or raw food is not feasible for you, feed your pet a high quality kibble and/or canned diet. Such diets can be found at independent retailers nationwide. The best kibbles around contain high quality meat protein & low amounts of fiber (less than 3% ).
5. Use age or condition related supplements when needed. Like humans, our pets often need nutritional supplements to help them achieve peak conditioning. Digestive aids, joint supplements, immune supplements, etc are widely available.
6. Avoid over-vaccination. Your pet does **NOT** need annual vaccinations, with the exception of those required by law (rabies). Many vaccines are effective for years after being administered. Ask your vet to run a blood titer to determine what, if any, vaccines your pet needs. Did you know that the vaccine dose for a 3LB Chihuahua and 150LB Mastiff are the same? 1cc does for both dogs. Scary isn't it?
7. Love your dog. Dogs are social animals. For them to experience optimal health, quality time with their pack members satisfies innate psychological needs.
8. Reduce the stress in your pet's life. Our lives can be very hectic and stressful. Don't think your pets are immune to this. They are affected by the stresses we bring home. Promote a healthy, stress-free environment. You'll both benefit from it!
9. Exercise, exercise, exercise!! Pets require adequate exercise. I don't think any clarification is needed. If you think your pet could use more exercise, you're probably right. Keep your pets active with games and stimulating toys.
10. Walk your dog. Do not confuse this with exercise. A dog needs to explore and travel. Even though they are domesticated, they need to walk. It's a natural pack event that satisfies basic instincts.

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