

WELLNESS CONNECTION

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GOOD DECISIONS - Wellness and Wellbeing for Pets

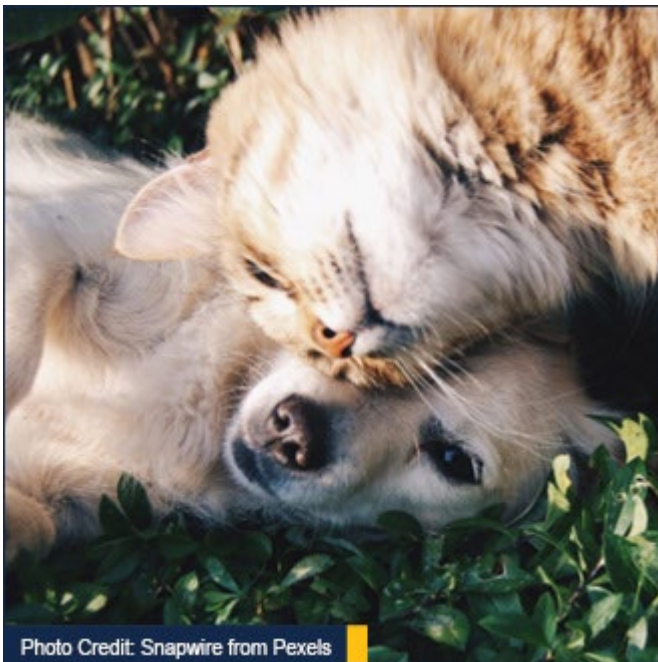


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Many of us share our homes, not only with our human family members, but also with furry (or not so furry!) family members. Having a companion animal supplies several health benefits to us. A reduction in stress, lessening of loneliness, and encouragement for exercise and activity are just a few. With a desire to reciprocate the love they give to us, it's important to think about how we can give our furry friends the best and happiest life!

Preventative Care. We should seek preventative care for our pets in the same way we do for ourselves and family. All too often, pet owners seek veterinary care for their

animals only at the time of illness or emergency. Care practices include spay or neutering, vaccinations, preventative medications (e.g., flea and tick treatment, wellness checkups, dental exams and cleanings). For a full list of preventative care practices, visit this [website](#).

Prepare. In many aspects of life, we must prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Caring for a pet is no exception. Even with the most diligent preventative healthcare, our companions can still face illness and injury. At the University of Illinois, full-time employees are fortunate enough to

be offered Pet Health Insurance as a part of the [voluntary benefits](#) package. This will greatly assist with the cost of unexpected vet visits and help you provide routine health care for your pet.

Evaluate Your Lifestyle. Not every pet is right for every person! There are many factors to consider when deciding what pet is the best fit for your current lifestyle. Dr. Yvette Johnson-Walker, University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine faculty member, offers this list of questions for people who are considering getting a pet, regardless of species:

- Do I have the time and resources to provide for the physical, psychological, and behavioral needs of this pet throughout its lifespan?
 - Have I researched the nutritional, housing, exercise, social, and healthcare needs of this pet?
 - Is there another species/breed/age/temperament of animal that will better meet the needs of my household?
- Are any members of my household (e.g., the very old, young, immune-compromised, or pregnant) at increased risk of injury or illness due to exposure to this pet? If so, have I taken the appropriate steps to minimize this risk?

As said in her [co-authored book](#), Dr. Johnson-Walker supplies the perfect take-home message: "Pets and pet owners have a great potential to enhance each other's lives. Each contributes to the physical, emotional, and social well-being of the other. As pet owners, we must act to minimize the risks so that we can enjoy the benefits that pet ownership brings to humans and animals alike."

Book citation: Herrmann, John A., and Yvette Johnson-Walker. *Beyond One Health from Recognition to Results*. Wiley Blackwell, 2018.

