

# Blue Cross of Hyderabad

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## Useful tips for adopting a pet

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Adopting a pet can be a very exciting time for the whole family. However, it is crucial for you to keep in mind a number of factors before you make a decision. Whatever you choose it is always better to make a wise and informed choice. Here are a few useful tips:

### PET DOGS

**The Indian Dog:** Our personal favorite and a pet owners delight! The Indian street dog, a result of many mixes of breeds, naturally evolved, is hardy, disease resistant, easy to care for, easy to please and has a coat of least maintenance. Due to the unknown strains, they have unpredictable traits both physically and mentally and can be full of surprises. These can be detected through interaction with the puppy. A fantastic pet if you have the heart. Imagine if one in fifty Indians adopted a dog off the street there would be no stray dogs!

**The Pedigree dog** has the advantage of predictably good looks when it grows up, but it has an unpredictable temperament depending on the parents, strains, etc. To ensure you get a pet with a balanced temperament it is always better to meet the parents or at least one parent. Buy only from a registered and reputed breeder. Be prepared to pay a steep price for a good pedigree and a lifelong financial burden for it's upkeep, Veterinary care , etc..

### Most Important general considerations:

- ✓ A pet is for life. Pedigree or mongrel, a pet will grows old and frail. It is the responsibility of the pet owner to care for it until death. If you cannot do this, please do not adopt a pet.
- ✓ To ensure a pet keeps good physical and emotional health, balanced nutrition and plenty of space to play and exercise is recommended. Can you afford this?
- ✓ Always take your Vet. or a trusted friend who understands dogs with you when you go to choose the puppy.
- ✓ Visit the kennel and check the conditions and health of the parents. Since pure breeds are known to have certain disadvantages and are prone to diseases, they need careful consideration.
- ✓ It is also highly recommended both for the pet's emotional and physical wellbeing that you neuter (sterilize) it, even if it is of pedigree. Breeding is only recommended for registered and professionally informed breeders. When left un-neutered, the temperament of your pet can get very irritable and as a result biting and fighting can set in. Please do not equate your pet's sexual needs with human needs. It is only an appetite for animals; a propagation of the species.

- ✓ An untrained, badly behaved pet is as disliked as a badly behaved human. Bad behavior, if detected early can be corrected. Do not misunderstand your pet's inability to understand you- bad behavior.
- ✓ A lonely pet is an unhappy pet. If you have time and space for one, you could benefit more from two. If the first is a pedigree then you could consider adopting a companion for you pet from you local animal shelter and give a grateful homeless stray a home... We are not joking!

**The German Shepherd (GSD):** One of the most popular breeds, he is loyal but obsessive. A shepherd by nature he needs to be in charge, is very intelligent and fiercely protective. They are not family pets but great family guardians. Very quick-tempered they need plenty of exercise, grooming and will shed a lot of hair on a daily basis. The GSD is prone to ear infections and hip dysphasia.

**The Doberman Pinscher:** Bred to be guard dogs they are also known to be very friendly and playful. Intelligent, sensitive and high strung they are known to suffer from depression. Easy to train and groom, they could have a mind of their own. A very misunderstood breed, they make good adult companions. They are prone to liver disorders.

**The Golden retriever:** An extremely loveable pet who loves to play and retrieve things, hence the name. They need grooming twice a day due to the long coat. Prone to skin problems and ear infections.

**The Labrador:** One of the most popular family pets and understandably so! Very loving, affectionate and stable temperament. They need plenty of exercise as they are prone to obesity and all the complications that come with it.

**The Dalmatian:** another suitable pet known for its affectionate nature. Intuitively intelligent, friendly but sometimes males can be unpredictable. They don't need too much exercise, they love water and swimming. They are prone to skin, kidney and urinary tract problems and sometimes deafness.

**The Pomeranian** is not a child's pet! They are more suited to adults. Resistant to disease, they can be spoilt easily. They tend to bite when cornered, particularly by children; which happens because of their small size. They need plenty of grooming and good oral hygiene. Poms have a tendency to express emotional problems by manifesting skin disorders.

**The Pug** shot to fame after the Hutch advertisement on television. It is safe family pet, friendly and easy temperament. However it is prone to injuries and infections of the eye because of the prominent protruding eyes. Also prone to skin problems.

**Exotic Hounds & other mountain breeds like the St. Bernard:** Most exotic hounds and mountain breeds are unsuitable as pets as they have traits that you may not be prepared to deal with: aggression, stalking, hunting, etc. Dogs like the St. Bernard are best for mountains and cold climate. Keeping a dog with thick fur like the St. Bernard is cruel and inconsiderate in Hyderabad climate. Most of the St. Bernards we know of in Hyderabad have died at a young age or turned aggressive. Imagine keeping a child captive in a thick fur blanket in our heat? Yes, for a dog person it is comparatively that cruel! Not advisable at all.

## **CATS**

Cats are distinctly different from dogs and hence people who are used to dogs find it difficult to relate to cats and vice versa. Cats are independent, dignified, a little aloof in nature when compared to dogs. They can be very affectionate. Unlike dogs, cats do not need exercise, but need a place where they can access ground, scratch and climb. Cats benefit from daily grooming which helps keep a healthy coat as well as helps avoid hair around the house. Very clean by nature, the cat will not need cleaning up after, can adjust with a kitty litter box or sand tray as a toilet and comfortably live in a small flat.

Some people are allergic to cat's hair, so please spend some time with a cat before you actually get one to ensure you are not allergic!

We recommend all cats be neutered (sterilized) at adulthood for the same reasons as dogs: better health, emotional stability and temperament.

A cat collar which has a special small bell attached on an elastic band is recommended : this does not allow them to hunt local wildlife like small birds, and it snaps loose if the collar gets caught on an object, preventing the cat from strangulating.

**The Pedigree Cat** makes a beautiful pet, but is delicate like all the pedigree dogs, and needs plenty of grooming. Special Veterinary care needed for a number of prone diseases.

**The Indian Cat, my personal favourite,** is disease resistant and very affectionate. They can have unpredictable nature if abused and hence be careful when choosing a kitten. Very easy to please and very easy to look after.

**Hamsters, Rats & Mice** make wonderful pets for children. However, they need plenty of cleaning up after and can multiply profusely. Sterilization of the males is recommended. A number of interesting objects to climb over, under and into can be provided to make their lives more exciting.

**Rabbits** also make wonderful pets for children. However, they too need plenty of cleaning up after and can multiply profusely. Sterilization of the males is recommended. Rabbits need plenty of space to move around, explore and burrow.

## **BIRDS**

Unless you have good reason to help an injured, incapable bird, it is best avoided to keep birds in cages. Feeding local bird life, providing them with water and protection during nesting, is a much more satisfying hobby than keeping captive birds. Even the traditional pet parrot or pet peacock is not recommended. They are protected under the wildlife act. The only legal bird pets are the captive bred birds of foreign origin. But please be cautioned, in your quest for an exotic bird you could be responsible for the depletion of a wild bird population somewhere in the world. The illegal trade of birds has been responsible for millions of deaths; for each captive bird- 20 have died during capture. If you truly love birds, join the Bird Watchers Society of A.P. and help protect birds.

## **FISH**

Aquarium fish can be fascinating pets. Regular daily cleaning and aerating of the tanks are required. The depth of the aquarium, availability of light and ph balance of the water is important. That Fish are trouble free is a myth. It is very sad to see them die as they will most definitely and frequently will.

## **TURTLES & TERRAPINS**

Most turtles or terrapins are exotic wildlife from Malaysia and other countries. Please check the WWF list of protected exotic wildlife so that you do not buy any such creatures as pets.

## **WILDLIFE**

**Squirrels, snakes, mongoose, monkeys, star tortoise, etc:** These are all protected wildlife and are best left to live naturally in the wild. Wildlife have certain traits of aggression, and communicate diseases that make them unsuitable as pets hence the term wildlife. Some like the star tortoise are just far more useful in the wild are far too endangered to be allowed as pets. No moral debate on this, just plain and simple caution about the Law, what is good for you and what is good for the animal.