

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR DOG

Below you will find the recommendations of the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA, pronounced "viszpa") regarding the basic questions of caring for dogs:

In order to stay healthy and happy, your dog needs

- *a balanced diet*
- *exercise*
- *companionship*
- *veterinary care.*

Where your dog lives

- A dog that lives outside needs a shelter which protects it from hot or cold weather.
- A dog needs comfortable, dry and clean bedding.
- If your dog has to be tethered, use a long running line. Fixed chains or rope can become tangled around the dog causing injury.

Food & water

- A dog needs a balanced diet of protein and fibre. Household scraps are not sufficient to maintain good body weight and strong muscles. Consult your vet on the diet of your dog.
- Sharp bones can be dangerous, as they may become stuck in the throat or cause problems if swallowed.
- Fresh water should be given daily in a clean bowl.

Exercise

- A dog should not be permanently tied up, it needs regular exercise.
- A walk each day, and perhaps a game with a stick or a ball, will help to keep your dog alert, active and relieve boredom.
- A bored dog may bark excessively, annoying neighbours.

Hygiene

- A dog that is kept in dirty conditions can become infested with worms, ticks, fleas or lice. Ask your vet for advice.
- Keep your dog and his living area clean.
- Regular brushing helps to keep your dog clean and free of tangles and provides an opportunity to check for unwanted parasites. In addition, grooming helps to get your dog used to being handled.

Vaccinations

- Dogs are vulnerable to many diseases which can be dangerous and costly to treat.
- Vaccination helps prevent illness and reduces the risk of infecting other dogs.

Breeding, spaying/neutering

- Every year hundreds of thousands of dogs are destroyed because there are not enough suitable homes available for them.
- To prevent unwanted puppies, have your dog spayed/neutered – an operation performed by a vet.
- Modern veterinary equipment and drugs make surgery safe, painless and recovery quick.
- Once a female dog has been neutered she will never come into season again and unwanted male dogs will keep away. Spaying can also reduce the risk of mammary tumours.
- In a male, neutering can help to reduce aggression and roaming.

Consult your vet!

Remember your vet can advise you on:

- diet
- training your pet
- treatment against parasites
- vaccination
- spaying/neutering

- any other health concern.

Discussion

Discuss the following questions in pairs or in class:

- Do you agree with the above-listed recommendations of WSPA?
- Could you add any other recommendations or advice?
- Do you have a dog? If yes, describe it (name, kind, age, colour, size, character, favourite meals, games, place for walks, etc.). If not, describe the dog of a friend or a relative of yours.
- How do you care for your dog? How does your friend/relative care for his/her dog?
- How often do you walk and play with your dog? How often does your friend/relative walk and play with his/her dog?
- How often do you take your dog to a vet? How often does your friend/relative take his/her dog to a vet?
- Do you accept that spaying/neutering is a good solution for preventing unwanted puppies? If not, what would you advise instead?
- What do you think of people who abandon their pets? What future can an abandoned dog (or cat) expect in Hungary?
- What do you know about the animal shelters in Hungary? Have you ever visited such a shelter? If yes, what was your impression?
- How do you think shelters are maintained in Hungary (donations from private persons, manufacturers of animal food, hypermarkets, etc.; 1% of the personal income tax; subsidies from the National Civic Funds, local municipalities, etc.) Are you a member of an association for the protection of animals? Would you be ready to join such an organization? If yes, what kind of work could you take on?

Read a poem by **Lucy Cove**, a 12-year-old poet, from Northamptonshire, United Kingdom (published in "Animal Action for Kids" of RSPCA, June/July 2005)

ABANDONED

I sit in this worn old sack,
wondering when my owner
will come back.

He'll be back soon, he will,
he loves me, this must be a
dream, I'll wake up soon,
sitting on his knees.

It's not a dream, it's
starting to rain,
my legs start to tingle
with a terrible pain.

The rain soaks through
this worn old sack,
I realize it now, he's
not coming back.

I'm so miserable,
I'm beginning to cry,
I hear the footsteps of
a man coming by.
I know that I will be OK,
because he's from
the RSPCA*.

And now I'm in my brand
new home, chewing on
my rubber bone.

I'm the happiest dog that
there could be,
but not all dogs are as
lucky as me.

*RSPCA – Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – the oldest and largest national animal protection organization in both the United Kingdom and the world.