



WHAT TO FEED YOUR NEW FURKID

By Natural Pawz Co-Owner Nadine Joli-Coeur

New pets at Christmas used to mean puppies and kittens. That is no longer the case. Many of us adopt a new family member from one of the local rescues or pet organizations. The new pet can be young, old, small or large and may also have some special needs.

It's a time of great joy but it's challenging to determine the best food for your new pet. There are so many choices out there. Whether you get a pet from a breeder or adopt from a rescue or shelter, it's important to ask a couple of questions:

- 1) What has he/she been eating? How much and how often is he/she fed?
- 2) How old is the pet?
- 3) Does the pet have any allergies or skin issues?
- 4) Are there any medical conditions that you should know (past or present)?

A little information can help guide you on what to do next. If your pet has been on a poor diet or you have a multi-pet household, you might want to change the food. The first thing to do is find a food that meets the best needs of your pet. Should you buy canned food, dry food or something else? The answer really is that there is no one right answer.

Puppies – What to Feed

Feeding your pet healthy food is essential if he/she is to grow into a healthy adult. A puppy diet will provide the extra nutrients and fat needed. Additionally, other ingredients are critical such as DHA for brain development, omegas for a shiny coat and enough (but not too much) calories for energy. For small and medium breeds, you should feed puppy food for at least the first nine months. For large to giant breeds or breeds that tend to have hip and joint issues, you can feed a breed-specific puppy food for up to 18 months. (Timing is determined on when they stop growing).

Rescue Pets – What to Feed

Often newly adopted pets are stressed and may not have been on a proper diet prior to their arrival in your household. Select a diet based on needs, including overweight, dry coat, poor digestion....

POOR COAT – A better food will improve the pet's coat. Start with a food that provides additional omegas or ingredients for the coat (such as coconut oil, fish protein, fish oil, canola oil, flax). If the pet's ears and between the paw pads are irritated, the pet probably has allergies. Look to feed a diet formulated with limited ingredients and a protein source that they haven't had before such as duck, rabbit or lamb.

POOR DIGESTION / LOOSE STOOL – If your pet has loose stools or diarrhea, it may be due to stress, a poor diet, too fast a transition to a new diet or feeding too much. If you are feeding a good diet, you may be feeding too much during a meal. Either

(Continued on Page 2)



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(Continued from Cover)

cut back or feed more often. A good diet starts with high-quality ingredients as opposed to lower quality or highly processed ingredients such as glutens, starchy grains and by-products. A pet cannot be healthy

without a healthy intestinal tract. To improve intestinal health, add the following to the diet:

- Pre and/or probiotics: a supplement specifically designed for pets will work better than plain yogurt
- Enzymes: Try a supplement, raw food or bones; Pumpkin is also a good option that's full of fiber and minerals.

Food transition Guide

Day 1 & 2: 75% old food, mixed with 25% new food

Day 3 & 4: Equal amounts of both food

Day 5: If poop looks good, feed 75% NEW and 25% old. Otherwise, repeat the 50:50 split.

Note : many less-processed will require less feeding than the directions say. Start with 3/4 the amount and add more or less, depending if your pet starts to gain or lose weight. For more details, you can pick up a Pet Food Transition Guide at Natural Pawz.

Transitioning to a New Diet

OVERWEIGHT – Overweight pets are susceptible to many health issues (joint pain, heart stress). Feeding a low-fat diet often will not result in reduced weight. Your pet needs high-quality protein for optimal health. Here are some ways to lose those extra pounds:

- Replace 1/3 of the diet with canned pumpkin. Feed a good senior or weight management diet. (The extra glucosamine in a senior diet helps the joints.) Cut back the current diet and slowly increase the pet's exercise.

SENIOR PETS – If you adopted a pet over seven years old, I thank you. Increasingly, old pets find themselves in shelters or rescue groups because their owners cannot take care of them. Senior pets are some of the most loving animals and with a little focus on nutrition and supplements, there is no reason why senior pets can't live a long and happy life. As our pets age, their bodies do not process foods as efficiently, so look to feed a less-processed diet, make sure to manage their weight and increase water /moisture in their diet.

As parents of a new furkid, you are responsible for what your pet eats. Not all pets are the same and not all pets like the same things. With some research and a little trial and error, you can make a difference in what your pet eats and the life your pet enjoys.



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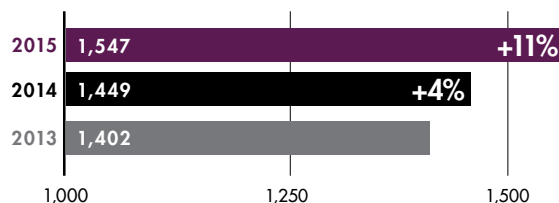


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PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM FREEZING WEATHER

- Wrap all exposed pipes located outside or in unheated areas of the home.
- Remove garden hoses from outside faucets.
- Cover vents around the foundation of your home.
- Know where your property owner's cut-off valve is located and how to use it. The valve is located adjacent to the water meter box under a 6" metal lid.
- In sustained sub-freezing weather, let water drip slowly from inside faucets.
- Take extra precautions to protect pipes that have frozen in the past.

If You Are Not Going To Be Home:

- **In Sub-Freezing Weather**
- Drip outside faucets 24 hours a day (5 drops per minute). This is not necessary unless temperatures are expected to be 28 degrees or below for at least 4 hours. (Be sure to turn off the faucets after the threat of freezing weather.)
- Open cabinet doors under sinks adjacent to outside walls.
- In unheated garages, shut off water to washing machines. Water softeners should be drained and protected from freezing temperatures.
- Shut water off at the property owner's cut-off valve.
- Drain all outside water faucets if your house will be unoccupied for several days (leave outside faucets open).
- Or, leave home heating system on at a low setting.
- Open cabinet doors under sinks adjacent to outside walls.
- Renters and tenants may be responsible for personal property damage caused by broken water pipes during severe weather conditions. Residents should contact property management/ landlord or maintenance personnel to locate property owner's cut-off valve and find ways to avoid pipe breakage during a freeze.

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Fabulous Foxes

Members of the Canidae family are all dog-like mammals, and in the United States that includes wolves, coyotes, domestic dogs, and true foxes. They are adapted to running swiftly over open terrain, and typically have long muzzles, upright ears, bushy tails, and teeth



that can crack bones. The family is further divided into two tribes, with the wolves, coyotes, and dogs in the Canini tribe, and the true foxes in the Vulpini tribe. In central Texas, two species of true foxes exist, the native Common Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) and the introduced Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*).

Most active at night, and sometimes in late afternoon or early morning, the Gray Fox is a medium-sized fox with grayish upperparts, tawny sides, and reddish-brown legs. It has a whitish throat with a distinct black patch on the sides of its muzzle and lower jaw. Often confused with the Red Fox, the main distinction is the black tip on the tail and the fact that it is found throughout Texas. Gray Foxes are adept tree climbers, highly unusual for Canids, and they use their rounded claws to ascend trees much like bears. Once up in the canopy, they can hunt birds, escape predators, bask in the sun, or jump from branch to branch like a cat.

Also active at night, and frequently at dawn and dusk, the Red Fox is similar in size to the Gray Fox, but differs mainly in its coloring.

(Continued on Page 6)

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(Continued from Page 5)

A photograph of a gray fox standing in a grassy field. The fox has a mix of gray, tan, and white fur, with a white patch on its chest. It is looking directly at the camera with large, upright ears. The background is a blurred green field.

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, check out our book, *Nature Watch Austin* (published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com.

6 The Gazette - January 2016

"SPRINGTAILS"

Springtails are very small, jumping insects that can sometimes become a problem inside homes. Springtails are usually found in areas of moisture, so indoors they may be located near potted plants, sinks, bath tubs or kitchen compost areas. These insects are typically found outside in gardens, near swimming pools or near where there is excessive moisture or standing water.

Springtails are small (about 1/16 of an inch long), wingless and come in various colors. These insects have a "tail" that latches into a space on the underside of the body that they can use to "jump" several inches into the air.

Springtails are considered a nuisance insect, but some may chew on roots and leaves of sapling plants. They usually do not cause enough damage to warrant control measures to be taken. If you have springtails in your home it points to a moisture problem that should be fixed.



Options for helping reduce springtail problems:

- Remove excessive mulch and/ or leaf litter near the home
- Change watering schedule to reduce the amount of moisture near the home
- Use fans or dehumidifiers to reduce moisture indoors
- Seal cracks, crevices, pipe & wire penetrations on the outside of the home
- Replace or repair any screening on doors and windows that is damaged
- Replace weather stripping around doors and windows that does not provide a good seal
- Suck up any indoor infestations with a vacuum

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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“HOW CAN I GET IN SKI-SHAPE?”

Written by Kelly Cunningham, MD Sports Medicine specialist Founder. Austin OrthoBiologics.

Dr. Cunningham spent 15 years as a traveling doctor for the men's Olympic downhill team, accompanying the athletes throughout the US, Canada and Europe on the World Cup tour. He was able to pick up tips from some of the world's finest altitude athletes and their trainers.

Ski conditioning begins about 6 weeks prior to travel, and involves three phases:

1. Muscle training 2. Stamina 3. Agility

Muscle training for the skier or boarder utilizes stretching, closed & open-chain strengthening exercises, and emphasizing the core muscle groups of the spine, hips, quadriceps & hamstrings. For most recreational athletes, low-weight/high-repetition sets will be best. Another option may be a personal trainer or workout club pro to help you design a program to strengthen your core without over-stressing your joints. Joint pain is a common skier injury so muscle training will aid in prevention.

Stamina is crucial for a recreational athlete, especially at altitude. (That's another discussion for later!) Cardio conditioning can be as simple as running, jumping on a bike or elliptical, preferably using “interval” periods to increase your heart rate. Sports like tennis, swimming, and basketball have built-in interval training

as part of the sport.

Speaking of sports, these are great for honing the athletic agility that helps prevent ski injury, especially at the end of a long, fatiguing ski or snowboarding day. These are “ski-adaptive” sports. “Ski-specific” training involves side-to-side training tools that focus on the specific ski muscles and coordination. Slide boards, closed-chain waist belt regimens, in or out of ski boots, are popular.

The goal is to decrease fatigue-related injury but also to increase your enjoyment, help you relax, and enjoy the sport!

If you have a history of joint pain or arthritis (DJD), consider your options before you head to the slopes—perhaps 3 to 4 weeks before your trip, you might want to explore PRP or stem cell injectable treatments in Austin as a autologous, potentially regenerative medicine alternative to steroids to ensure that you get the most out of your trip.

By Kelly Cunningham, MD, Sports Medicine specialist

Austin, Texas, resident Kelly Cunningham, MD is board certified by the American College of Orthopedic Surgeons, and an active member of the Arthroscopy Association of North America and the International Cartilage Repair Society. Learn more about preventing and treating sports injuries at:

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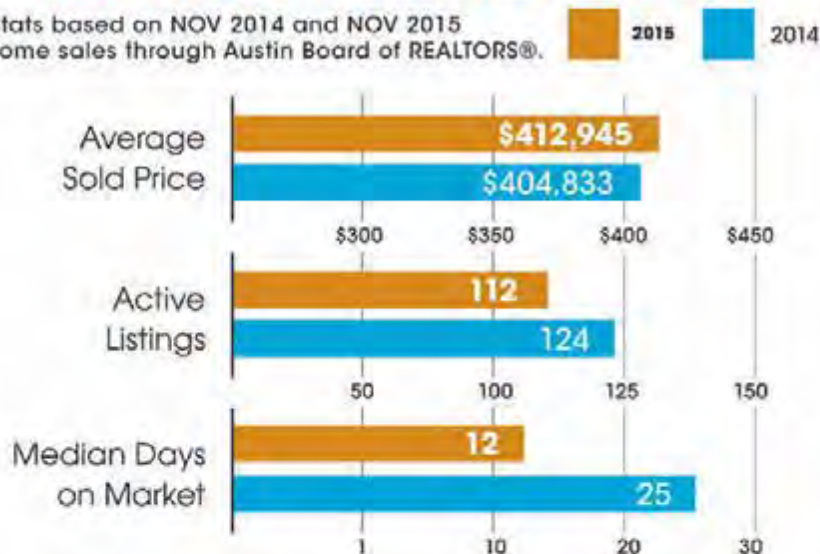
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10 Easy Ways to Make Your Home Safe

A home should be a sanctuary and a safe haven. You can ensure that you and your loved ones remain out of harm's way in the precincts of your homestead.

To avoid all kinds of accidents you should make it an accident-proof dwelling. It's really simple if you observe specific steps to keep mishaps at bay.

Here are 10 easy ways to make your home safe and secure. These will help you take care and protect yourself, family members and house-guests. Employ these effective tips:

1. Keep interiors and exteriors well lit. This is important at nighttime and also in winters when daylight is not very effective. Critical areas that need to be illuminated are the stairs, outdoors and foyers.

2. Never leave electrical problems pending at any point. The slightest fluctuation should be attended immediately. Make it a cardinal rule to switch off appliances after use.

3. Smoke alarms are a necessity and you must have the very best. Practice regular safety drills with your family to ensure awareness of procedures.

4. Keep ordinary appliances safely as they could be dangerous. Especially with kids around. Make electrical outlets safe by safety plugging and child proofing them. Keep sharp objects like scissors, knives, weapons and match boxes out of reach.

5. Ensure locks and bolts on doors and windows are in order and tamper-proof. Keep an eye out for suspicious characters and never invite strangers into your home. Teach your children not to entertain queries from strangers.

6. Do not share information about working or school hours. Teach family members to avoid telling people about schedules and routines. Do not put personal information online and never respond to voicemails.

7. The risk of accidents goes up when you are getting maintenance or repair work done. Ensure safety and precaution and be prepared to react quickly to accidents or injuries.

8. Do not attempt repair work of appliances involving undue risk. Many home accidents are the result of improper tampering with tools like lawnmowers and trimmers.

9. Maintain caution when driving vehicles in or out of your home. If you are backing the car up, watch out for children and pets on the road.

Make sure you don't leave stuff on stairs that may cause people to trip and fall. Be watchful when clearing snow from pathways that you do not heap it up in areas where people might walk.



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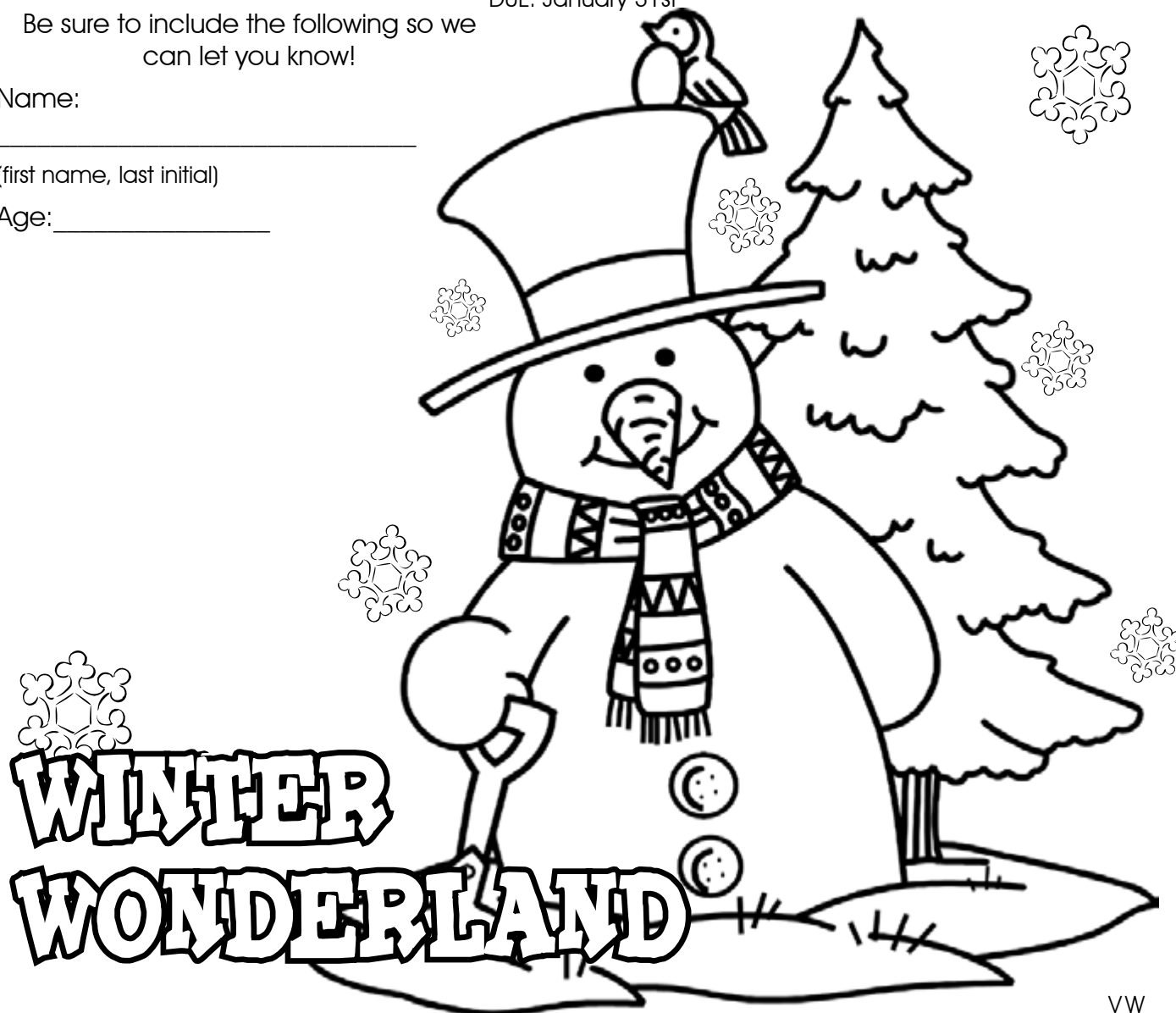
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