



# Pets & People

## Helpful Tips For Adopting A Pet

(NAPSA)—The holiday season, the New Year and really, any time can be a wonderful time to think about adding even more happiness to the family by adopting a pet. Not only will you save a life through adoption, you can enrich your own life with a pet's unconditional love.

To help pet parents more easily transition a newly adopted pet into the home, Dr. Kemba Marshall, veterinarian and pet care expert, PetSmart, suggests these helpful tips:

### 1. Give your pet a safe space:

The holidays are a social time of year, but not all visits are welcome for pets just learning their way around a new home. When you're expecting visitors, your pet may be happier and safer in a space of his or her own. Make sure to leave treats, toys and other activities with your pet to keep him or her occupied and engaged. Before leaving a pet alone with a toy or treat, monitor the pet closely to ensure that he or she is safely interacting with the item.

### 2. Watch out for holiday decor:

The festive accents of the season are beautiful but they can be a dangerous attraction for pets. Keep an eye out for how your new pet reacts to your decorations and adjust accordingly. Some decor, including candles, should be placed high up out of pets' reach, while other items, such as plants with leaves, berries or sap, can be dangerous and should be replaced with artificial versions.

### 3. Consider holiday treats:

Sweet treats are hard to resist during the holidays and those aromas are just as appealing to pets. Unfortunately, many holiday treats are not safe for pets and so be sure you're taking extra precaution not to leave out human treats your pet could eat (or reach) by accident. Consider stocking up on pet-friendly holiday treats—there are lots out there featuring favorite flavors of the season such as Peppermint Bark and Holiday Spice—so pets can enjoy something festive, too.



**A new pet can bring great joy to your family if you take the right kind of care.**

**4. Maintain a routine:** It's important to maintain a routine for new pets, especially during the holidays when there are plenty of family gatherings and celebrations. A routine will help reinforce good behavior around potty training, mealtime and bedtime.

**5. Get a free Adoption Kit from PetSmart:** People adopting a pet—at PetSmart or elsewhere—can receive PetSmart's free Adoption Starter Kit, offered every day at stores and featuring tips for caring for a new cat or dog and a range of coupons valued at \$400 in savings on everything a new pet parent needs. Simply bring in your adoption papers and request the kit.

If you aren't able to open your home to an adopted pet, there are other ways to make a difference in the lives of homeless pets. A donation of just \$25 covers such necessities as shelter space, food, and veterinarian services needed to take care of a pet while he or she waits to be adopted into a forever home. You can make a donation in the name of a pet lover on your holiday gift list or in the spirit of the season because you just want to do good. A donation to PetSmart Charities is an affordable gift that gives back—and it's quick and easy. Visit [www.petsmartcharities.org](http://www.petsmartcharities.org) to learn more and donate online.