

Five Freedoms

The ISPCA believes that the following freedoms should be afforded to all animals:

- Freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition
- Freedom from discomfort
- Freedom from disease and injury
- Freedom to express normal behaviour
- Freedom from distress and fear

Under the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013, anybody who owns an animal or is responsible for its care must provide for their animals' basic needs, which are outlined below.

All animal owners must provide their pets with adequate food, access to clean, fresh drinking water, and clean, dry shelter. ISPCA Inspectors are frequently called out on cases where these basic requirements are not being met, so please ensure that your pet has their needs taken care of. If you notice your pet is sick or injured, you must bring them to a vet. For those households with limited resources, you can look into low cost clinics in your area, or contact local rescue groups for advice. Failure to seek veterinary advice is an offense under the Animal Health and Welfare Act, and treating illness or injury quickly can help prevent further problems in the future.



The importance of companionship, socialisation, and physical exercise are often overlooked, but are key parts of any pets' care. All animals should be socialised from an early age if possible to make them comfortable with human interactions. Some species, like equines and rabbits, are naturally social, and should be kept in pairs to give them the companionship they require. Exercise is also vitally important for dogs and other species to allow them an outlet for their energy and to express natural behaviours.

When you are training any pet, you should always use positive training methods. Negative reinforcement will only create behavioural issues and does not work as a long term solution for any training, or stopping undesirable behaviours. Be patient, thoughtful, and positive in your training sessions. If you are having trouble with training or behaviour, please contact your vet for advice, and they should be able to refer you to a suitable trainer or behaviourist.

If you would like to find out more information about your legal responsibilities as a pet owner, you can refer to the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013. For more information on the ISPCA, please visit our website www.ispca.ie



ISPCA

CARING FOR ALL ANIMALS



Responsible Pet Ownership

Know your legal and ethical responsibilities
when becoming a pet owner

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Microchipping

On the 1st April 2016 it became a legal requirement for all dogs to be microchipped once they are 12 weeks old. The microchip is about the size of a grain of rice, and is painlessly inserted under the skin by a vet, or suitably trained person like a vet nurse. It stores a unique number which can be read by an electronic scanner. You will have to register your contact details with the microchip provider, and obtain your certificate from the provider. Remember to keep your details up to date if you move house or change your number. Microchipping is universally recognised as the best way to make your beloved pet permanently identifiable, and gives you the best chance of being reunited in the event that your pet goes missing. Please ensure that your dog is microchipped, the chip details are up to date, and that you are in possession of your certificate.

It is also a legal requirement for equines to be microchipped, and to have a passport once they are six months of age. Since 2014, it is also a legal requirement to report all changes of horse ownership to the Passport Issuing Authority that issued the original passport for the horse. Horses must be microchipped by a vet.

While it is not a legal requirement for cats or small mammals to be microchipped, the ISPCA highly recommend microchipping for these animals as well. Please talk to your vet about microchipping your pets.

Neutering

There are many reasons to spay or neuter your pet. Spaying or neutering your pet can:

- Reduce the risk of certain cancers
- Have a positive effect on health and lifespan
- Curb unwanted behaviour and marking
- Help reduce the number of unwanted pets in Ireland

Early neutering will prevent uterine infections, as well as mammary, uterine, ovarian, and testicular cancers. Additionally, the procedure may eliminate or curb undesirable behaviours such as the crying and pacing of a cat in heat, and roaming in search of a mate and sexual mounting in males.

There are many myths about neutering, such as the myth that neutering leads to obesity. Pets will become overweight and less active as a result of overeating and lack of exercise rather than as a direct result of neutering. Similarly, neutering will not alter your pet's personality, apart from the elimination or curbing of behaviours related to reproduction.

In addition to the health benefits for your pet, neutering will also mean that you will not be contributing to the canine and feline overpopulation issues in Ireland. Only a limited number of people want pets, so every home you find for your pet's offspring means there is one less home available for animals already at a rescue centre.

Regular Health Care

You should have your pets vaccinated at a young age and maintain their protection by visiting your vet for periodic boosters. Puppies should have their first vaccinations at 6-9 weeks old, with a second vaccination shortly after, followed by boosters for continued protection. Kittens should have their first vaccinations at 9-10 weeks old, and will have a second vaccination shortly after that, followed by boosters. Small mammals like rabbits should also be vaccinated against common diseases. Equines will also have to be vaccinated against common illnesses and receive boosters. Talk to your vet about the vaccinations your pet should receive and how often they should have their boosters.

Pets should also be protected from internal and external parasites with regular worming and flea and tick treatments. Parasite prevention treatments for cats and dogs are commercially available, generally as an oral treatment for worming and as spot-on or treatment for fleas and ticks. A good flea and tick prevention regime also includes washing dog blankets and bedding in conjunction with the spot-on. Your vet should be able to provide advice regarding products for parasite prevention.

Equines should be treated for internal parasites, and the type of parasite treatment will depend on the time of year as some equine parasites present only a seasonal threat. Please consult with your vet to devise a suitable annual worming programme for your equine.

