

# ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

## How Many Is Too Many?

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

Believe me, as a Veterinarian, I have ample opportunity to take home more pets than I need. I also seem to have more than my share of strays come to my house, too. It would be very easy for me to end up with more pets than I can handle. But how many is too many?

There are several ways to look at that. Personally, I don't feel that an exact number can be stated because it really depends on each person's situation. To me, both money and time play the most important roles in determining how many is too many.

If you cannot afford to get even one pet spayed or neutered, get its rabies vaccination every year, provide good quality food and reasonable parasite control, then even that one pet is too many and you should definitely not get anymore. If you can pay your bills, all your pets are spayed or neutered, vaccinated, well fed and healthy, then your only limit is time.

Pets take a lot of time. There is the time it takes to groom, feed, train and exercise them, but most important is the time it takes to socialize them. By socializing I mean making the pet part of your family. You should take your dog for walks, play ball with him and spend time just petting him. Your cat also needs to be petted and played with. This interaction is extremely important for puppies and kittens in order for them to develop healthy personalities. When you have too many pets to know when one is sick or not eating well, that means it's time to rethink your maximum number.

Many people feel lonely or unloved and get more pets than they can take care of because they are trying to fill a void. We have all seen the stories of the old man or woman living knee deep in cat feces while the health department comes to take these pets away. Often this "pet collecting" is triggered by the loss of a spouse or abandonment by other family members.

Other times the excess number of pets is caused by a stray that showed up then immediately began having litters of babies. Two cats can lead to the production of a half million cats in seven years. For many people the problem started when their cat or dog was not spayed early enough, she came into heat and was pregnant before they could get around to making an appointment for a spay. Soon they felt they had too many cats or dogs to afford spaying and neutering for all of them, so they end up taking care of none of them.

So how many is too many? Only you can answer that question. Sometimes you should listen to the advice of others. Sometimes you

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need to say “no” when someone offers you yet another cat. Sometimes you have to take the stray dog to the Animal Shelter instead of taking it home. With so many wonderful animals needing good homes, it is hard to turn them down, but it is important to be fair to the other pets you already have at home that love you and depend on you.

If you have any questions, please feel free to talk to us at the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🌐