

ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

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

New Pet Divorce

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

The first time I meet a new pet owner with their cute little puppy or kitten, I find it hard to believe that half of them will not be together a year from now. It is even sadder to realize that the reasons these sweet puppies and kittens are given away are usually not insurmountable obstacles. It is mostly due to misunderstandings and lack of knowledge.

Often, by the time an owner is ready to get rid of their young pet, they feel they have done all they can to correct the behavior or health problem themselves. Often they resist consulting a professional.

I cringe when I hear an owner say they got rid of their pet because of something easily treated like fleas. What is worse is when they go out and get another pet, not realizing that the fleas are still in their home. I flinch when an owner says "I've tried everything!" but come to find out that everything only means a bath once a week or some grocery store flea spray. The same thing goes for a cat that won't use the litter box. Often all that is needed is a better quality food and neutering, something that they should be doing anyway.

Behavior problems are the number one reason owners give their pets away. Behaviors like jumping on you, scratching and biting, barking, and destructive chewing are just your pet's way of saying, "I need more attention and exercise". Taking your pet to an obedience class or just for a long walk in the woods, is a great way to give him attention and burn off some excess energy.

"Cost of care" is another big reason people bring their pet to the animal shelter. Before you get a puppy or kitten, talk to your veterinarian about the cost of vaccinations, spaying and neutering, quality diets and flea control. If you can't afford it right now, wait to get a pet.

If you cannot spend at least 20 minutes, 5 days a week socializing your pet, don't get one until circumstances change. If you cannot be home every 4 hours to let your new puppy outside to relieve himself, wait to get a puppy and get a cat instead for now.

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If you have a pet and are having problems, talk to your veterinarian about it. If what he suggests doesn't help, ask another one until you get the information you need to make your relationship with your puppy or kitten last.

Before taking your pet to the animal shelter, call and ask them for names and numbers of people who can help you with whatever problem you are having. If you have a purebred dog or cat, ask for the phone numbers or email addresses of Breed Rescue groups that can help you. I guarantee you, they would much rather spend some time talking to you now than putting your pet to sleep later.

If you have any questions, please call us at the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🐾