

How to Keep Indian Pets Happy and Healthy Lifelong? 5 Simple Ways to Follow!

Vaibhavi Kodnani (Article written for Pampaw, a pet venture in the idea stage)



Our furry companions help us stay fit, shower us with unconditional love, take our blues away, ensure we never feel lonely, and make for perfect stress busters. In exchange for their selfless affection, it is our duly responsibility to care for their lifelong health and happiness! Unlike humans, pets do not have big demands. You only need to meet their five basic necessities and watch them enjoy each day to the fullest extent possible. Let's break down everything in detail for you!

1. Keep their food bowls full with nutritious meals and delicious treats

In Indian culture, it's customary to feed dogs and cats chapatis soaked in milk, bread or a packet of biscuits. While it may fill their tummies, these foods alone do not fulfil the nutritional requirements for adequate growth and development. Your pet's bowl should contain sources of protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals.

Take your veterinarian's help to decide on a suitable high-quality diet plan for your pet tailored to their unique breed, size, age, energy levels, and health. Secondly, understand the number of meals you should feed them. You do not want to end up overfeeding your pet and

putting them at risk for obesity and other associated health conditions. Remember to confirm with your vet if your pets need any supplements.

We have compiled an Indian homemade meals guide that is safe, healthy and enjoyable for your pets. However, you know the drill—ring up your trusted vet before introducing anything new to their diet!

Pet-friendly diet:

- **Meat and fish (cooked without skin, bones, and fat):** chicken, beef, salmon
- **Grains (cooked):** rice, pasta, oatmeal
- **Vegetables (cooked, in moderation):** carrots, beetroot, green beans, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, potatoes, peas, spinach, broccoli, cucumber, zucchini
- **Fruits (without seeds, pit, and rind):** apples, bananas, blueberries, strawberries, watermelon, cantaloupe, mango, pineapple, peaches, pears
- **Dairy:** cheese, cottage cheese, cooked eggs, curd
- **Treats:** kibble, plain popcorn

People food you should avoid feeding your pets: alcohol, avocado, chocolate, coffee, citric fruits, coconut, grapes, raisins, nuts, onions, garlic, salt, spices, pickles, mushrooms, tomatoes, ice-cream, raw meat

Indian homemade recipe ideas for your pets:

- Curd rice with boiled eggs
- Carrot rice with boiled potatoes
- Boiled chicken with rice
- Cooked boneless fish with sweet potatoes
- Khichdi (mixture of dal and rice with cooked vegetables like carrots, peas, green beans and boiled chicken or fish)

2. Get your pet pals moving daily

Just like doctors advise us to get at least 30 minutes of exercise every day to maintain overall health and well-being, vets recommend the same for dogs and cats. You can decide a physical activity routine based on your pets' preferences!

If you have a pooch, they compulsorily need their outdoor time. Take them out for long walks or jogging in your neighbourhood, visit a garden to play fetch, or go hiking on weekends. If you have a backyard with space for a pet pool set up and your dog loves water, swimming can be a fun activity for them! You must also engage them in indoor playtime such as hide and seek, tug-of-war, stair climbing, flirt pole, or treasure hunt!

Your feline friends may not necessarily need to go out in the open to be happy. However, keeping them physically active, mentally stimulated, and entertained with toys such as chase mice, cat wands, puzzle feeders, or laser pointers is essential.

3. Let your pets socialise and make friends

Socialising your dog or cat with other pets and people is crucial for their overall well-being. Why? Like us, they are social animals who need positive interactions to enjoy physical and mental health benefits.

Socialisation helps pets feel comfortable around unfamiliar people, animals, or environments. Instead of seeing them as threats and exhibiting fear, aggression, or other behavioural issues, they will react positively and be more open to new experiences. It also ensures their cooperation during grooming sessions and veterinarian visits, making their health and well-being maintenance easier.

On the other hand, isolating pets puts them at risk of developing low self-confidence, depression, anxiety, anger issues, trust issues, and other mental health problems, which ultimately affect their quality of life.

In India, you can go about socialising your pets in many ways. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Take your pet on regular walks in public spaces, allowing them to feel safe and comfortable with the world around them. Allow them to interact with different people and animals on the way and reward them with treats and praises for good behaviour.
- Invite one or two of your best friends to your house and let them interact with your pet.
- Arrange playdates with pets of similar breed and temperament to foster companionship and social skills.
- Introduce them to pet-friendly cafes, beaches, parties, and pet stores to diversify their experiences once they become comfortable with socialising.

4. Love and spoil your fur babies to the fullest

Have you heard of the five love languages? Whether it's acts of service, receiving gifts, physical touch, words of affirmation, or quality time, each is significant for pets.

Understanding and following their preferred love language can deepen your connection with your pet and strengthen your relationship like never before! Here are some ideas to put these five love languages into practice:

- **Acts of service:** Take them on a walk, help them socialise, groom them, treat them with a spa, create a comfortable space for their nap time
- **Receiving gifts:** Surprise them with new toys, treats, accessories
- **Physical touch:** Show affection by petting, massaging, cuddling, and scratching them in their favourite spots
- **Words of affirmation:** Praise them with positive words such as 'good' or 'well done'
- **Quality time:** Have a daily playtime, teach them new tricks, take them to pet events, talk to them

5. Prioritise health checkups, even if they are not a fan of them!

The final and most crucial step in ensuring your pet's continued well-being is vet visits every 6-12 months. During these wellness checkups, the vet performs a head-to-tail exam and does lab work, if necessary, to check for signs of abnormalities and start on an appropriate treatment plan. They also check if the vaccinations are up-to-date. Additionally, they discuss your pet's lifestyle, diet, training, and behaviour and offer tailored advice.

Pet health and happiness in a nutshell

Fulfil your pet's nutritional needs, ensure they get physical activity, encourage socialisation, show them boundless affection, and schedule routine vet visits—a simple 5-step recipe to keep your four-legged companions happy and healthy!