

petpourri

# five

## Ways to Keep Your Pet Healthy in 2009

By Jennifer Taylor

Let's face it: we're busy. Between work, school, kids, home repairs, car maintenance, grocery shopping and all the other tasks that consume our days, it sometimes seems that Fido's needs fall to the bottom of the bowl, er, list.

During the week, it's all too easy to just take an obligatory walk and refill the food and water bowls. No one needs more to cram into the day, but doing a few quick, easy tasks can enhance your pet's well-being, as well as yours.

1) Compare your pet's medical needs to your own. When looking for a new doctor for yourself, you try to find one with a tailored plan. So be sure to find the right vet for your pet. Shawn Messonnier, DVM, author of *"The Natural Health Bible for Dogs & Cats"* and host of radio show, "Dr. Shawn—The Natural Vet," says, "Adopting a holistic approach is my best advice if this approach focuses on health rather than simply making the patient feel better. It also recognizes that each pet is an individual and requires care unique to that pet rather than a cookie-cutter approach."

2) Evaluate how much exercise your pet requires. Jennifer McCarthy is head of "The K-9 Ranch Training Center and Jennifer McCarthy World Class Dog Training" in Boulder, Colorado. She suggests the amount of exercise needed is based on your specific pet.

"Exercise should be determined by age, breed and



weight." For dogs, she adds, "The single most important thing pet owners can do to ensure a long life with their pet is off-property exercise. Playing ball in the backyard just doesn't count for the mental and physical stimulation a dog gets when out for a walk, hike or run. Off-property exercise taps into an animal's primary nature to move with the pack in search of food."

3) Decide the nutritional plan for your pet. CJ Puotinen, author of *The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care* and *Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats* mentions the importance of a high quality diet. "Many holistic vets recommend an all-raw diet, such as a raw meat- and bone-based diet. Some of the fastest-growing segments of the pet food industry are companies that prepare frozen raw or freeze-dried raw convenience foods for dogs and cats. In the recent pet food recalls, none of the affected brands were labeled organic."

4) When it comes to vitamins, our pets are no different than we are, so choose the right supplements. Holistic veterinarian Jean Hofve, DVM, states, "If you can only give your pet one supplement, make it omega-3 fatty acids. The best forms for pets are fish oil and cod liver oil." For digestion, she recommends a combination enzyme and probiotic powder (see "Pet Eats" sidebar). And don't forget pets need antioxidants too.

5) Lastly, spend time with your pet. This is the most rewarding part of ensuring that he or she has a balanced lifestyle. Whether it's snuggling on the couch or taking a walk, your pet will really appreciate your time and effort. H2O

### PET EATS

Here are a few examples of quality pet foods, snacks and supplements compiled by H2O's editors.

**Halo Purely for Pets Spot's Stew**  
(for Dogs, for Cats) (800-426-4256)

**Nordic Naturals Omega-3 Pet for Dogs & Cats**  
(supplement) (800-662-2544)

**Jarrow Formulas Pet Dophilus** (probiotic powder) (310-204-6936)

**Designing Health Missing Link** (Canine, Feline) (800-774-7387)

**Flora Udo's Choice Pet Essentials** (800-446-2110)

**PetGuard Organic LifePath** (for dogs), **Premium Cat Dry Food**  
(www.petguard.com)