

Pet Quiz

ARE YOU READY FOR A PET?

1. Do you own or rent?

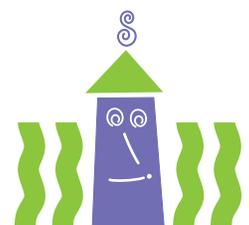
- **Own:** If you're a homeowner, a fenced-in backyard would be great a dog. For those who own a condo or townhome, ask your association if there are certain restrictions on pets. Some allow cats and birds, but not dogs. Others have size or breed restrictions, as well a limit on how many pets you can have in your unit.
- **Rent:** Check with your landlord to learn whether they allow pets. If so, they might ask for a separate deposit or charge an extra fee per month. Keep in mind that from here on out, you'll need to make sure any place you're renting allows pets.

2. How much access do you have to outdoor spaces?

- **A lot of access:** If you have a fenced in yard and are considering a dog, you're all set! Dogs need ample exercise, and a yard can provide the space they need. However, they still benefit from daily walks.
- **Some access:** Do you have a dog park nearby? Make sure your dog is properly socialized before turning it loose with the other dogs. Introduce it gradually to the pack with each subsequent visit.
- **Not a lot of access:** If you have no yard or park in walking distance you might want to consider a cat, bird or hamster for an animal companion, as they don't require as much space to roam as a dog.

3. What is your work schedule like?

- **Busy schedule:** If all the adults in the house work full time with unpredictable hours ~ A pet isn't out of the question, even with your busy lifestyle. You can consider a low maintenance animal that will still need attention and care, but requires less predictable schedule. Your pet will rely on you no matter what, so if you have an erratic schedule, consider hiring a dog walker or investing in pet daycare to make sure your pet is happy and healthy.
- **Mixed schedule:** Does one parent work part time and the other full time? The majority of the pet's care may fall more on one person because of their more flexible schedule. Be sure to discuss the arrangement as a family to make sure any adjustments in the schedule can be accommodated if need be.
- **Flexible schedule:** Do you have older children to help care for a pet? Pets are a wonderful way to teach older children about responsibility, but even the well-intended teen can be forgetful. Be sure your teens understand the consequences of not taking care of the family pet if it's their job.



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4. Does anyone in your house have pet allergies?

- **No:** Great! You can look into getting whatever pet fits your lifestyle and interests.
- **Yes:** Consult an allergist before making any decisions about adopting a pet. If you still want to expand your family, there are allergy-friendly pets and even some hypo allergic dog breeds.

5. Do you have any physical limitations that would make caring for a pet challenging?

- **No:** You will still want to consider the pet you're considering is one you can handle. If your pet needs to be lifted frequently, is strong or if it runs after something, you'll need to be strong enough to handle it. Remember that strength isn't the only thing you'll need to handle a pet. Good training and patience go a long way.
- **Yes:** Consider getting a smaller low maintenance pet that mostly only requires food and love.

6. Do you have toddlers or older children in the house?

- **Yes:** Research the type of pet you have in mind and make sure it's kid-friendly. If your children are younger, they may need to be eased into a relationship with the family pet. Make sure to spend the time acclimating everyone. And remember, pets are great ways to introduce responsibility to older children and teens. Teaching your children to respect and care for other living things is an important lesson!
- **No:** You have many options for pets, but still consider if you ever have children that visit your house or if there may be children living with you in the future.

7. Do you have other pets?

- **Yes:** Consider how your pet is around other animals and if another addition will be welcome. Do some research and find out ways in which your animals can become friends.
- **No:** Your pet options are very numerous. When choosing your pet consider whether they will interact with other animals outside or be indoors only.

8. Are you prepared to provide the financial obligations of a pet?

- **Yes:** Consider all the costs associated with pet ownership, beyond the adoption fees. Stay on the safe side and do some research to estimate what your annual costs may be. Aside from food, toys and yearly shots, there are emergencies to consider, not to mention leashes, grooming, crates, microchips and the cost of caring for your pet as it gets older and needs more medical attention.
- **Not Really:** You might want to wait until you're on more stable financial ground before bringing a pet into your life. A fish may be a pet to consider.

