

# Carole Bryant, Naturopath

(ATMS & HATAA accredited)

- nutrition • herbal medicine • homoeopathy • flower essences • iridology • craniosacral balancing • massage
- manipulative muscle therapy • kinesiology • reflexology • reiki • Theta Healing
- Thought Field therapy • Neuro-Linguistic programming
- plus for pets:* • Tellington TTouch (Companion Animals) practitioner • canine craniosacral balancing
- behavioural dog trainer • Tellington TTouch (Horses) practitioner-in-training

ABN 28 275 787 633

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## DO PETS KEEP US HEALTHY?

A number of studies have been done on the health benefits or otherwise of pet ownership and it would seem that most studies agree that owning a pet has health benefits.

Australian statistics indicate that 64% of households have one or more pets. One 1999-2000 study showed that pet ownership saved \$3.86 billion in public health costs during a 12 month period. An earlier (1995) study quoted a saving in public health expenditure of between \$790 million and \$1.5 billion. All of which translates into big savings of tax-payer dollars.

According to a number of studies these are some of the benefits of pet ownership:

- \* 15% less visits to the doctor and less medication used
- \* lower systolic blood pressure and lower triglyceride levels (both indicators of cardiovascular disease)
- \* faster recovery from illness and surgery
- \* better able to cope with stress
- \* less lonely (pet owners felt more connected to their communities)
- \* a higher level of excellent or very good health reported in comparison to non pet owners.

One study showed the healthiest group of people were those who had owned a pet for a minimum of five years.

Other benefits of pets:

- \* 24% reduction in anxiety levels in heart failure patients in a medical centre after a visit from a dog and volunteer
- \* reduction in depression due to social isolation in the elderly
- \* psychosocial benefits for at risk groups such as the people with disabilities, children and the elderly, especially those socially isolated or abused
- \* companion animals may reduce the cost of medication and other therapies for Alzheimer sufferers in aged-care facilities
- \* children who had a pet to care for appeared to show more caring behaviour towards other children and towards other people in their community
- \* some studies showed a reduced risk of asthma in children exposed to pets early in life
- \* one study showed a reduction in allergies in children exposed to two or more pets.

But before you rush out to buy a pet: one study showed pet owners had higher blood pressure; were less well educated; were fatter; and smoked more than people who did not own pets!

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.... natural health care for people, pets & livestock

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Of course if your dog annoys the neighbours barking all night then drags you up the street at 100 kph on your daily “walk” or if your cat insists in digging up your garden or shredding your furniture, you may find that you aren’t benefiting greatly from pet ownership!

Which of course leads to the obvious – to get the most benefit from pet ownership, take the time to choose the most appropriate pet for your lifestyle, then spend the time training your pet so that it becomes a valued member of your family and you get maximum enjoyment from its company.

Well, must be off – I have a selection of pets just waiting for the opportunity to improve my health!

Carole Bryant©

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