



Pet Talk

-FAQs-

Welcome to *Pet Talk*, an occasional column about homeless pets and related topics. Today we're focusing on some Frequently Asked Questions posed by potential adopters and others. Also included are a few infrequently asked questions for good measure.

Q: Is there any truth to the rumor that impounded animals are simply euthanized at the Flathead County Animal Shelter?

A: No, otherwise it wouldn't be called a "shelter," right? In fact, the staff provides highly professional (best practices) care for its homeless animals—and only resorts to euthanasia when absolutely necessary, such as for intractable illness.

Q: Do I have to pay to adopt a homeless dog or cat at Flathead County

Animal shelter? **A:** Yes, the current fee schedule ranges from \$40-170, depending on animal type and age group. However, the relatively modest fees pale in comparison to breeder prices. (Based on 10 recent classified ads, the average price of a breeder dog was about \$1000!)

Q: Why do I have to pay to adopt? **A:** Although free adoptions would be nice, it's not realistic. The shelter, which is funded largely by county taxpayers, incurs substantial costs for housing homeless pets.

Plus, paying hard-earned money demonstrates a clear level of commitment on the part of adopters, right?

Q: What are some of the shelter's major operating expenses? **A:** In addition to basic budget items like employee salaries, supplies, utility bills, and pet food, every impounded animal must undergo a veterinary inspection, spaying/neutering if necessary, and other health related expenses. So, on average, caring for our homeless pets costs the shelter nearly \$1500 per day.

Q: Do folks have to pay anything when

surrendering animals at the Flathead County Animal shelter? **A:** Yes.

Surrendering a dog or cat costs \$25. Why so? See the shelter's operating costs described above.

Q: What does the shelter provide with each adoption? **A:** A lot. For example, each animal has received a wellness exam, vaccinations, heartworm test & parasite meds, sterilization surgery, microchip implantation, and a certificate for a free vet exam. (Now compare those benefits to a typical breeder transaction.)

Q: Does the shelter offer any services to the general public? **A:** You bet. For example, any community member can get a pet microchipped for a mere \$25, and a free week of GoodPup virtual dog training is available to anyone who's interested.

Q: Don't all shelter animals have behavior problems? **A:** No, many perfectly fine pets have been surrendered through no fault of their own. For example, some are homeless because of the local housing crisis or other difficulties, such as job loss or caregiver death.

Q: If I decide to adopt a dog or cat, should it be a newborn or older animal?

A: The answer is Yes!
Next question please.

Q: If I adopt a senior, won't there be significant vet bills? **A:** Maybe, maybe not. Health care is part of the deal when loving a pet. But it's well accepted that mixed breeds (mutts) often have fewer congenital health problems than purebred pets—which are also much more expensive to begin with.

Q: Is there a financial incentive for adopting senior animals? **A:** Yes. Flathead Shelter Friends nonprofit provides a Senior Pet Voucher that pays up to \$250 toward veterinary care for adopted cats and dogs who are 7+ years old. So go for it!

Q: I'm ready to adopt so what kind of pet should I get? **A:** If you have an active lifestyle, maybe you can adopt a medium- to large dog who likes to hike. Conversely, if you're relatively inactive perhaps a senior or small "couch potato" would be a good choice. Or, if you're a Republican, maybe adopt a conservative pet, and so on. (OK, just kidding about that last one.)

Q: But what if I'm not a Republican or Democrat? **A:** Then maybe adopt an Independent cat! (Whoa,

even more humor!)

Well, that's about it for today's Pet Talk. Now that you have useful info about pet adoption, maybe it's time for you to schedule a meet-and-greet at Flathead County Animal Shelter. Also, please help spread the word among family and friends to reduce the homeless pet problem in rapidly growing Flathead County.

For more information, please contact Flathead County Animal Shelter, phone number (406) 758-1310, or visit the website at <https://flathead.mt.gov/department-directory/animal>.

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Personal donations are always appreciated! For more information, see www.flatheadshelterfriends.org