

New Survey Reveals Effects Stay-at-Home Order May Have on Pets and their Owners

VANCOUVER, Wash. (May 26, 2020) — As the world continues to grapple with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new study from Banfield Pet Hospital® reveals how weeks of increased time spent at home has affected pets and their owners. As a result of the stay-at-home orders, key findings reveal 84 percent of owners feel more attuned to their pet's health and 67 percent plan to make changes to how they care for their pet, suggesting quarantining with our cats and dogs is about more than extra playtime and treats – it may have lasting effects on how people approach pet ownership.

“The human-animal bond now, more than ever, plays an integral role in people's lives,” said Molly McAllister, chief medical officer at Banfield Pet Hospital. “At Banfield, we are firm believers that regular preventive veterinary care is key to helping our pets live happy, healthy lives. This survey shows that pets are always here for us – even, and especially, during the most difficult of times – and we're encouraged that as a result of spending more time together, people are committed to finding new ways to better be there for their pets.”

The New Pet Normal

As people are spending more time at home than ever before, 20 percent say they prefer working alongside their pets over their co-workers. With some states easing stay-at-home orders, 73 percent of people are concerned about going back to the office and spending time away from their pets, with 59 percent worried their dog or cat may suffer from separation anxiety once their new work schedule begins.

As pet owners adjust to their new normal, 67 percent expect to make changes in how they care for their pet once they're not home as often. 47 percent of people are committed to spending more quality time with their pets when they are home, 21 percent will adjust their schedule to be at home with their pets more often, and 10 percent plan to adopt another pet to help keep their dog or cat company.

Human's Best Friend

Pets continue to bring joy and comfort to people's lives every day and pet owners can attest to this. 45 percent shared that their household's happiness has increased while spending more time with their pet during quarantine, with 39 percent revealing their pet helped lower their anxiety and uncertainty caused by the pandemic. The survey also uncovered 47 percent of millennials found increased emotional support from their pets, compared to 43 percent of Gen Zers and 43 percent of Gen Xers.

With owners spending more one-on-one time with their pets, 33 percent of people feel more attuned to their dog or cat now than before the pandemic began. That said, one-third of owners believe their pets appear to be happier (38 percent) and more playful (35 percent) during this time. Pets are also receiving extra “TLC,” with 65 percent of owners showing them increased affection. They might be getting extra treats as well, as 33 percent of owners say their pet has gained weight during quarantine.

Maybe it's because they can't talk (or argue!) back – 47 percent of pet owners reveal they're talking to their pets more than before the pandemic, with cat owners (51 percent) being chattier than dog owners (47 percent), women (50 percent) talking to their pets more than men (44 percent), and boomers / Gen Xers (each at 49 percent) talking to their pets more than Gen Zers (46 percent) and millennials (45 percent).

Caring For Pets During Quarantine

Spending more time with their pets may have made people more confident owners: 44 percent of people feel they are more responsible and attentive towards their dog or cat. 37 percent are paying more attention to their pet's personal care such as dental health, and 42 percent are exercising their pets more than before the pandemic. Owners are even learning new things about their pets, with 46 percent saying their pet is more active than they imagined before spending the additional time at home with them during the day.

Further, people are being forward-thinking about their pets' health, as 20 percent are committed to taking their pets to the veterinarian for preventive care check-ups more often after the pandemic than before, and 41 percent contacted their veterinarian during quarantine, whether in person, via phone, or through a telehealth service. Banfield Pet Hospital's telehealth service, [Vet Chat™](#), provides their millions of Optimum Wellness Plan clients access to one-on-one chat with a veterinarian anytime, anywhere via the Banfield website and through their app. Banfield has seen nearly a 90 percent increase in Vet Chat activity since the beginning of March, with the service providing owners with general pet care advice and triage support without having to leave their homes.

For more information about Banfield Pet Hospital, visit www.Banfield.com.

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About Banfield Pet Hospital®

Banfield Pet Hospital was founded in Portland, Ore. in 1955 and today is a pioneer in preventive veterinary care with more than 1,000 general veterinary hospitals in 42 states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. More than 3,600 Banfield veterinarians are committed to providing high-quality veterinary care to over three million pets annually. As part of the Mars Veterinary Health family of brands, Banfield is committed to its purpose—A BETTER WORLD FOR PETS®—because pets make a better world for us. Press seeking additional information are invited to call the [Media Hotline](tel:8883550595): (888) 355-0595.

About Wakefield

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Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted by Wakefield Research (www.wakefieldresearch.com) between May 11th and May 15th, 2020, among 1,000 US dog and cat owners, using an email invitation and an online survey. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.