



Companions *of and for* the Heart

Scientific studies reveal what many pet owners have known all along...

While pets certainly are known for bringing joy and companionship to many seniors, scientists confirm that animals also bring good health to their owners. One study published in the Journal of Clinical Nursing found that in the elderly, owning a pet has an impact on their lifestyles that in affect makes them significantly healthier than non-pet owners. A growing body of evidence suggests that senior pet owners have lower blood pressure, experience less stress, get more exercise and generally are healthier than older people without furry felines.

Most people report feeling better both psychologically and emotionally being around animals, which in turn helps the body function more effectively. Pets are sort of like emotional vitamins. They help with the “get-up-and-go” of daily life for elderly people. People who are older than age 65 and live alone and experience some stress related chronic diseases would benefit enormously from having a pet to care for and love. Here are just some of the ways seniors can benefit from pet ownership:

- Seniors who own pets cope better with changes in their health conditions and other stressful life events.
- Senior pet owners are more likely to keep up with daily activities and take walks, or other physical-type exercises.
- In several studies, pet owners have shown to have lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol levels and lower triglyceride levels than those living without pets.

As much affection and apparent positive health impact that our four-legged friends have on us, pets may not be a good idea for every senior. In particular, dogs may not be advisable to have around elderly people that may be a little unsteady on their feet. Also, those with allergies or compromised immune systems should certainly check with their doctors before confiscating a canine. For most people however, the benefits of pet ownership outweigh any disadvantages. So, do yourself and your heart a favor, adopt a pet today and start living a healthier life tomorrow.

 **The Elliot.**
Live Better!