



## Pet Insurance Is it for you?

Submitted by Tami, CVT

There are a lot of companies offering pet insurance these days. How do you decide which one to choose or if you need it at all? The best way to find out is to do some research. Check out this website: [www.petinsurancereview.com](http://www.petinsurancereview.com). I recommend you look through Pet Insurance 101 and the Dog and/or Cat insurance tabs. The Dog and Cat tabs list many different insurance companies, their features, starting prices and links to each company's website. There are a wide variety of plans, rates and features to choose from to best suit you and your pet's needs.

Some companies offer a free trial of pet insurance through your veterinarian. We offer a 30 day trial of one here if you are interested in "test driving" pet insurance for your pet.



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## Common Misconceptions About Humane Societies

Written By Brenda, CVT

We hear from a lot of people who are struggling to take care of, or find homes for, unwanted pets. Sometimes it is their own pet - something has happened since they acquired their pet; the loss of a job, a new baby, an unexpected move, illness (of owner or pet), a change in the pet's behavior, etc. Sometimes they are doing someone else a favor. Sometimes they are trying to help a stray animal.

In discussing options with people, I have encountered a lot of resistance to the idea of surrendering a pet to the humane society. The most common reason is that they believe their pet will just be put to sleep because they won't want to deal with the pet's problems. This is just one of many misconceptions that many people have about humane societies and shelters. While I cannot account for all humane societies everywhere, I can recount what I've learned about our local organizations, and I believe that they are representative of the great majority of animal welfare organizations in our state, and country.

Many people suspect that a humane society will euthanize any animal that has a health problem, behavior problem, or is "too old." Or that they will euthanize an animal that has been on the adoption floor for a set period of time. Or worse, that they provide unwanted animals to research facilities. Perhaps the perception is that the goal of the organization is to eliminate unwanted pets by the simplest or cheapest means possible.

Rest assured that the goal of animal welfare organizations is to HELP as many pets as possible to live long, happy lives. People don't go into the animal welfare field because they hate animals, or because they think the work will be easy, or because they expect a big paycheck. In fact, most animal welfare staff are volunteers! People do the work because they believe that animals deserve love and respect.

Euthanasia is sometimes necessary, but only when it is determined to be the most humane solution for the pet. Most humane societies will conduct an intake interview when a pet is surrendered, so that problems that warrant euthanasia can be identified early. Sometimes they are able to suggest other ways that the owner can find help for their pet. Some organizations will refuse an animal that will not be adoptable. Some will ultimately take any pet, and do what they determine to be the best care for the animal. Even impound facilities no longer euthanize unclaimed pets after the required holding time. They are working with shelters and humane societies and breed rescues to find care and new homes for unclaimed pets.

I think what would surprise most people is how few animals are actually turned away. Animal welfare staff understand that many behavior problems can be managed by a change in environment, i.e.; a new home. Animals with behavior problems are only turned away when they would pose a danger to staff and new owners. Animals with behavior or health problems are often placed in foster homes while the problem is treated. These animals are placed for adoption when the problem has been fixed, or can be managed by a new owner. Many aging pets are still very "adoptable" also. Old age is not often a cause for refusal.

Of course, some organizations will refuse more pets than others. Some organizations simply don't have the facilities or resources to re-home pets with serious health or behavior problems. Some are able to take in any animal that needs them. The key is to call around, let them know your situation, and see if they can help.

Sometimes people are deterred from humane societies because they don't want to pay a surrender fee. While most humane societies will ask for a fee, some only request a donation. Again, it's important to ask. This is where it is

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important to understand the difference between a humane society and a shelter, or rescue. While a humane society's main purpose is to take in unwanted pets and find new homes for them, shelters and rescues are in place to provide care to animals that have been stray, abandoned, or abused. In other words, pets who are not being surrendered by an owner. Most shelters do not ask for a fee to take in stray animals, though donations are always encouraged. If you have found a stray animal, you should first check with your local municipality to see if the animal can be impounded. If impound is available, that is the best way to see that the pet is reunited with its owner. Ultimately, you have to remember that the cost of caring for a pet is much higher than the one-time surrender fee or donation will be.

Animals that are not adopted quickly are not simply given up on. Organizations have many new avenues of adopting out pets in this digital age. Pets are advertised on sites such as PetFinder.com. Facilities are in touch with other facilities to see where the need, or demand, is greater. They work closely with breed-specific rescues for purebred animals. Pets are even being transported across the country to find that forever home!

Animal welfare organizations do not sell animals to research facilities. Most research requires animals to be fairly uniform in size, age, health, etc. These facilities often have their own breeders that provide their test animals.

I also have found that people are nervous about looking for a new pet at a humane society or shelter. Perhaps they think that shelters are full of "damaged goods." Often there's a perception that humane societies are charging too much for adoption fees.

The reality is that animal welfare organizations are full of pets that need a new home for any one of the many reasons listed earlier in this article. Unlike so many "free" pets, these pets have usually been tested for Heartworm disease (for dogs) or Feline Leukemia/FIV (for cats), de-wormed, vaccinated, microchipped, and even spayed or neutered. Health and behavior issues are often treated before animals are placed

for adoption, and are disclosed to potential new owners to make sure that the new family can manage the pet properly.

Fees collected at surrender and adoption cover only a small portion of the cost to care for these animals. Most of the money that's needed to run these facilities comes from fundraising efforts. Take into consideration that the adoption fee you pay to a shelter is much less than the cost of care that is usually needed for that "free" pet you found on Craigslist, or what you would pay to a breeder for a puppy or kitten in addition to the extra required care. They also have a return policy, just in case your new pet is not a good fit at home. Sometimes you can even find a purebred pet at a humane society. If you are looking for a particular breed of pet, consider checking into a breed-specific rescue. If you don't agree with the adoption contract at a particular organization, keep looking. They're all different, and they all have great pets to choose from!

The Animal Humane Society has a very informative website and great references. Check them out at [www.animalhumanesociety.org](http://www.animalhumanesociety.org).



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## Featured Pets



### Chesney and Easton

Submitted by Janet

It is our pleasure to share another happy endings story submitted by a family in Mayer, MN, who has connections with the Minnesota Boxer Rescue. This is what Catherine had to share:

Chesney is a female, fawn Boxer, approximately 6 years old. Until about a year ago, she had spent her life living in a cage in an Indiana puppy mill, having puppies twice a year. When she could no longer have puppies, the owner of the puppy mill brought her to the shelter to have her euthanized. The shelters are well-networked and the angels at Minnesota Boxer Rescue were able to make arrangements for her to come to Minnesota. She was scared and very timid and didn't know how to be a dog. With lots of love, patience and spoiling, Chesney has learned how to do the "Boxer wiggle" with the best of them. Then we got Easton.

Easton is a male, brindle Boxer, who also hails from Indiana. We are not sure what his story is. We fostered to adopt him through Minnesota Boxer Rescue. We knew the minute we saw him that he had found his forever home and there was no way he was going to live anywhere else after his foster period was up. We think he might have been a stray but he has been taken care of so we know he lived with people at some point. He is about 10 months old, is as tall as a horse, but he's all puppy! He is a sweetheart and loves to cuddle. He loves to play and chew on his Kong and he is teaching Chesney how to do the same.

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