
New survey suggests human-animal bond stronger than ever amidst pandemic, lead-up to U.S. election

With nearly 70% turning to their pets to de-stress and 64% willing to have a conversation with someone they disagree with politically if that person is a pet owner, Banfield Pet Hospital® survey suggests growing power pets have in bringing people together



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Banfield Pet Hospital →

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VANCOUVER, Wash., Oct. 27, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- As people navigate feelings of uncertainty due to the current global pandemic and U.S. election on November 3rd, one thing is clear: pets are playing a more important role in people's lives than ever before. In May, Banfield Pet Hospital released a survey looking at the impact of people quarantining at home with their pets. Today, the practice unveiled a follow-up survey that suggests the human-animal bond is growing even stronger and a shared love of pets can bring people together.

Among key findings, nearly 70% of pet owners are turning to their pets versus activities like listening to music (63%) or reading (44%) to de-stress, and on election night, 53% prefer to spend time with their cats and dogs vs. their roommate or significant other. The survey also found that people aren't just focused on how their pets can be there for them, they're also thinking about ways they can better show up for their pets. 38% say they are more committed to prioritizing the preventive care of their cats and dogs than ever before, and 65% reveal that when voting, they're taking into consideration how different issues like climate change might impact their pets in the future.

"Not only is the human-animal bond stronger than ever before, our research shows that pets have the ability to impact the human-to-human bond, helping to unite people despite differences or disagreements," said Brian Garish, president of Banfield Pet Hospital. "We're incredibly encouraged that as a result of spending more time together, the bond between pets and their owners is only getting stronger and - even during the most stressful of times - people are more committed than ever to ensuring their pets get the preventive care they need."

PETS BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

This election season, pets are bringing people together. In fact, 64% of pet owners say they would be more inclined to have a conversation with someone with different political views if they knew that person was a pet owner. Further, 45% admit they've resolved a disagreement or found common ground with someone with different political views because of their shared love of pets.

PETS' PAWSITIVE EFFECT

People are enjoying the extra 1:1 time with their pets even more than they were five months ago, with 56% saying their household's happiness has increased while spending more time with their cat or dog during quarantine, compared to 45% back in May. Further, 40% say their pet has helped lower their feelings of uncertainty caused by the pandemic. Perhaps as a reprieve from work video calls and home learning difficulties, people are continuing to appreciate having their pets as their work from home buddies, as 22% say they prefer working alongside their pets over their co-workers, up from 20% in May.

GIVE ME A (PET) BREAK

People's lives may feel busier than ever, but owners are still making time for their pets multiple times a day. According to the survey, 75% of people turn to their pets 3+ times per day to feel better, with 16% admitting to 10+ times a day. How are they spending their time together? 71% have playtime, 66% engage in a good cuddle session, 63% spend their time petting their cat or dog, 38% exercise with them and 35% take photos or videos of/with them.

BEING THERE FOR PETS JUST AS THEY'RE HERE FOR US

How are pets faring now that they've had to share the house with their humans for several months now? 45% of owners believe their pets seem happier and more playful since the start of social distancing. They're also getting more attention, as 47% of owners say they're more responsible and attentive towards their dog or cat, with 23% having contacted a veterinarian over the past 30 days about their pet's health. In addition to more attention, they also might be getting extra treats or fuller food bowls, as 42% admit their pet has gained weight at this point in 

quarantine compared to 33% in May. With pets continuing to be a positive constant in people's lives, owners haven't forgotten about their pet's wellbeing – 36% say they're more committed than ever to helping manage their pet's stress.

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: (888) 355-0595.

METHODOLOGY

The Banfield Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research (www.wakefieldresearch.com) among 1,000 U.S. dog and cat owners, between October 15th and October 21st, 2020, using an email invitation and an online survey. The margin of error for the study is +/- 3.1%.

About Wakefield Research

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