

The HEALTHY DOG AND CAT GUIDE Created for Your Vet's Office

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Oh, Baby

How to introduce your pooch to your newborn



Q ▶ My 4-month-old kitten is up and about and plays all night long. How can I get her to sleep, so I can sleep?

A ▶ Nighttime kitty play is a common problem. Cats are crepuscular (meaning they're most active at dawn and dusk). Many new kitten owners find themselves sleep-deprived because their little fur balls are crashing around the room, trying to snuggle under the blankets, and honing their hunting skills by attacking their humans' feet or hair in the middle of the night. But there are tried and proven ways of coping with kittens who don't sleep through the night.

First, have faith that as your kitten gets older, she'll settle down a bit and start sleeping more.

Second, be sure your kitten has food, water, and a clean litter box before you go to bed, so she doesn't wake you to get her needs met.

And third, try to tire her out during the day. Catnip might work—although cats often don't start reacting to it until about 6 months of age (and some cats never react to it at all). You can also set her up with toys that she can play with herself. Inexpensive ones hang from doors, and fancy ones have timers that can turn on or off while you're at work.

Of course, playing directly with your kitten is a great way of bonding. Try laser lights, toys on strings, and squeaky toys that you can throw. The harder she plays during the day, the better she'll sleep at night.

Q ▶ I'm expecting a baby this fall. What's the best way to introduce my dog to her?

A ▶ You're smart to start planning early. While most dogs will do fine with a new baby, your best bet is not to count on it. Pets and babies can both be unpredictable, and accidents do happen.

Before your baby is even born, you can gradually put your dog on a schedule that you will be able to continue after the birth, especially with petting and exercise. You may not notice how much you interact with your pet, but he is very aware and will notice if you start giving less attention.

Once the baby is born, don't introduce her directly to the dog. Start by letting him sniff some of her clothes instead so he gets used to the smell. When you play with your dog, make sure the baby is near. That way he associates human interaction with the presence of the baby—instead of dreading abandonment every time she is near. You can also drop little pieces of dog treats while you're holding the baby, as if the baby is doing so herself, to keep the dog interested in her in a good way.

Finally, never let the dog and child be together unsupervised. The cry of an infant is very stressful to a dog, and little hands can pinch and poke.



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DOG Champ

By Melanie D.G. Kaplan, WebMD Contributing Writer

Imagine a world in which none of us hid our flaws, and all it took to see others' souls was a deep look into their eyes. When actor Maggie Q (Maggie Quigley), star of the CW spy drama *Nikita*, gets going on her favorite topic—dogs—she wonders why we can't all be more like her four-legged best friends.

"If I have a pimple, I don't want to leave the house," says the former model, 32. "But my son Cesar [her 9-year-old shepherd mix, one of three dogs she rescued while living in Hong Kong] has this deformity that was so bad they were going to put him down before I adopted him. And the minute he meets you, the first thing he does is stick out his handicapped leg so you can shake it, saying, 'Look, here's my flaw!' And you love him even more because of it. Why don't we all understand that it's OK we're not perfect?"

Born in Hawaii to an American father and Vietnamese mother, Q now lives in Los Angeles. When she's not learning life lessons from her dogs, she splits her time between *Nikita* and a broad range of film roles—credits include *Mission Impossible III*

(2006, her first leading action role in an American film), *Live Free or Die Hard* (2007, with Bruce Willis), and *Balls of Fury* (2007, starring opposite George Lopez).

Most recently, she played a priestess in the post-apocalyptic sci-fi thriller *Priest*, trying to track down a murderous band of vampires. Before it hit the theaters in May, Q did some promotional interviews at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills. Cesar was at her feet, greeting reporters while his siblings, Lady, a shepherd mix, and Pedro, a chihuahua, both 13, were at home.

"These are dogs I used to not be able to take into public," Q says. "I always go for the large-breed aggressive dogs that people won't adopt, but you can't just adopt them—you also have to rehabilitate them." At one point, Q had eight rescue

Nikita star
Maggie Q fights
for the rights of
all animals

dogs and says the pups were constantly fighting, getting hurt, and heading to the vet. "People say, 'You're so tough in your movies.' Well, you have no idea. I have broken up like five dog brawls. Girlfriend is tough!"

In a short session with world-renowned dog behavior specialist Cesar Millan, she learned everything she was doing wrong with her dogs, she says. After a good cry, she went on to find Los Angeles trainer Tyson Kilmer. Kilmer worked with the dogs but also trained Q to be a dog trainer, which she says has completely changed her life—and the dogs'. She calls Kilmer her hero.

But while Q has mastered dog issues on the domestic front, there remains an infinite amount of work to be done on a

"It's important to me that, while I'm alive, I don't create the kind of [animal] suffering that would be created if I didn't care."



MICHAEL BRIAN

local, national, and global scale. She has been vocal in supporting animal rescue and the proposed Los Angeles legislation that would outlaw puppy mills, which gained momentum last month.

Earlier this year, she reluctantly started using Twitter and has found it an effective vehicle for sharing her views and learning from her followers about new animal issues that need to be addressed. She posts puppy pictures from the local shelter, expresses revulsion toward circuses' use of animals, and urges adoption (one recent tweet: "Go to a shelter and show the ones 'nobody' wants that they are GOLD!").

Q is also the spokesperson for Best Friends Animal Society's (bestfriends.org) "Saving America's Dogs" campaign, which educates people about the good in pit bulls, and once a year she volunteers for a week at the organization's sanctuary in Kanab, Utah. "They think I'm giving them something with my time," she says, "but it does so much for me as a human being I go up there to recharge. It's soul food."

Internationally, she's involved with bear rescue in Vietnam and an elephant orphanage in Nairobi, Kenya, through Animals Asia (www.animalsasia.org). She also co-produced *Earthlings*, a documentary narrated by Joaquin Phoenix that explores society's treatment of animals, which Q admits is tough to watch for its graphic truth about animal abuse.

In the course of her animal rights work, Q sometimes thinks back to an article she read in *VegNews*, a vegetarian lifestyle magazine, about activist burnout. "At the time I didn't really feel burnt out, but I read it anyway," she says. "It's like world hunger or the environment—they're all big issues." She says thinking she can "win" and conquer these issues leads to feeling overwhelmed and defeated, so instead, she finds positive ways to contribute.

"It's important to me that, while I'm alive, I don't create the kind of [animal] suffering that would be created if I didn't care," she says. "When I die, my physical body will be gone. But I do believe my energy will stay here, and the decisions I've made will matter." ■



Feline FAQs about going to the vet

By Christina Boufis, WebMD Contributing Writer

Although people in the United States keep more cats than dogs as pets—82 million versus 72 million—cats see a veterinarian only about half as frequently as their canine counterparts do. Why is that?

“I think people sometimes don’t go [to the vet] because they think their cat’s shots aren’t due. But cats should be seen at least once a year,” says veterinarian Brian Collins, DVM, lecturer at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine’s Companion Animal Hospital. “I like to check them every six months if possible,” he adds.

What happens during a well-cat visit? Probably the most important thing is the “nose to tail” physical exam, says Collins. During the appointment, which can last from 15 to 30 minutes, your veterinarian will check all over your cat’s body, looking for signs of disease or anything unusual. For

example, he will examine the cat’s ears for parasites, such as ear mites. He’ll look at the eyes for general retinal health, peer inside your cat’s mouth to look for signs of tartar or gum disease, listen to the cat’s heart and lungs, and survey the skin for any lesions or bumps. “Basically, we’re just looking to see if everything is normal,” explains Collins.

The vet will also weigh the cat and assign a body conditioning number from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 5 depending on the scale your vet uses). “The higher the number, the fatter the cat,” Collins says. Ideally, you want your cat to score in the middle range, or a 5 on the 1 to 9 scale, which means the cat is at the

appropriate weight. “The problems we tend to see most with cats are obesity and dental disease,” explains Collins, who notes that obesity is usually more of a problem with older, indoor cats.

Cat Vaccinations

Will your cat get vaccinations during the visit? That depends partly on age, Collins says. Kittens usually receive a series of vaccinations for distemper, upper respiratory disease, and rabies. But cats are not necessarily routinely vaccinated for other infectious diseases, such as feline leukemia. “It sort of depends on the lifestyle of the cat,” Collins says. Even cats that go outdoors are not necessarily at greater risk for the disease. “They have to have pretty much direct prolonged contact with other cats to get leukemia,” explains Collins.

Note, however, that outdoor cats are at a higher risk of disease in general, including viral and parasitic infections, and indoor cats that occasionally get outdoors are often unprotected from infectious diseases as well.

Vaccines for other diseases can vary from annually to every three years, depending on the type of vaccine and your vet’s philosophy, says Collins. “When we’re trying to determine what vaccinations a cat gets, we always look at each one as an individual rather than as one recommendation for all cats.”

Vet Visit Do’s

Are there ways to make the well-cat visit less stressful for your pet? “The best thing is starting early,” says Collins. Ideally, it’s best to take your cat for car rides as a kitten and get the cat accustomed to a carrier. Buy a carrier that’s comfortable for your cat. Take it out of storage a few days before the visit and make it a safe, fun place, filled with treats or toys, to help make the trip to the vet less stressful. Once at the office, putting a blanket or towel over the carrier may keep the cat calm.

The best part of a well-cat visit? “It’s so important to have a relationship [with your veterinarian],” says Collins. “We really focus on preventive care,” which can help keep your pet healthy for years to come. “It’s not uncommon to see cats approaching 20,” he adds. “Many live into their late teens,” particularly with good care. ●

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Dog Gone



Expert tips for hitting the road with your canine companion

By Matt McMillen, WebMD Contributing Writer

It wouldn't be a family car trip without Fido, but if you want everyone who's along for the ride—two-legged and four-legged—to have fun, you need to do some prep work.

"People just jump in the car and think they are prepared," says animal behaviorist Kristen Collins, MS, CPDT, with the ASPCA Animal Behavior Center. "But preparation needs to start as far in advance as you know you are going on a trip."

dreaded trips to the vet, take him somewhere fun, like a park where he can run, Collins says. That way, he'll begin to associate getting in the car with receiving a reward.

Many dogs, Collins says, only feel comfortable eliminating at home, so it's also

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essential to train your dog to go to the bathroom in unfamiliar places. "The poor dog could be near exploding because it doesn't feel right to go elsewhere," she says.

Before you leave on vacation, spend a few weeks developing a potty cue. Whenever your dog is on the verge of eliminating, say a phrase like, "Time to go!" Then, when he's done, praise him and give him a treat. By the time you hit the road, saying your cue should get him to do his business on demand.

Research where you will stay along your route. Not every hotel is dog-friendly. If you reserve online, don't take a website's word for it; pick up the phone. "You don't want to show up in the middle of the night and find they don't accept pets," says A. Chea Hall, DVM, of the Murrayhill Veterinary Hospital in Beaverton, Ore. "You need to sit down and plan where you will be each night."

On the Road

Most dogs are like their humans—they can't go too long without a potty break. Plan to stop every few hours. Look for places where your dog can get some relief but also enjoy some exercise, which will help your pet relax in the car. So will chew toys.

Stick to your dog's feeding schedule. If he eats at 8 a.m., feed him then. And keep plenty of bottled water handy. Another rule of the road: Dogs should not be left alone in the car. Cold and hot weather can be deadly to animals. If you absolutely have to leave your dog for a short while, park somewhere where he can see you, and crack a window so he can get some fresh air.

Finally, make sure your dog's head stays in the car window. You want to make sure everyone arrives in one piece. ■

Before You Go

Acclimate your pooch to the car in the weeks leading up to your trip. Collins recommends taking your dog on short car rides around town. It will help him get used to the doggy seat belt or carrier—a must for safe travels—and it will reveal any tendencies to get overly nervous or carsick. Ask your vet about motion sickness and sedation medications. If your dog gets in your vehicle only for

Road Rules

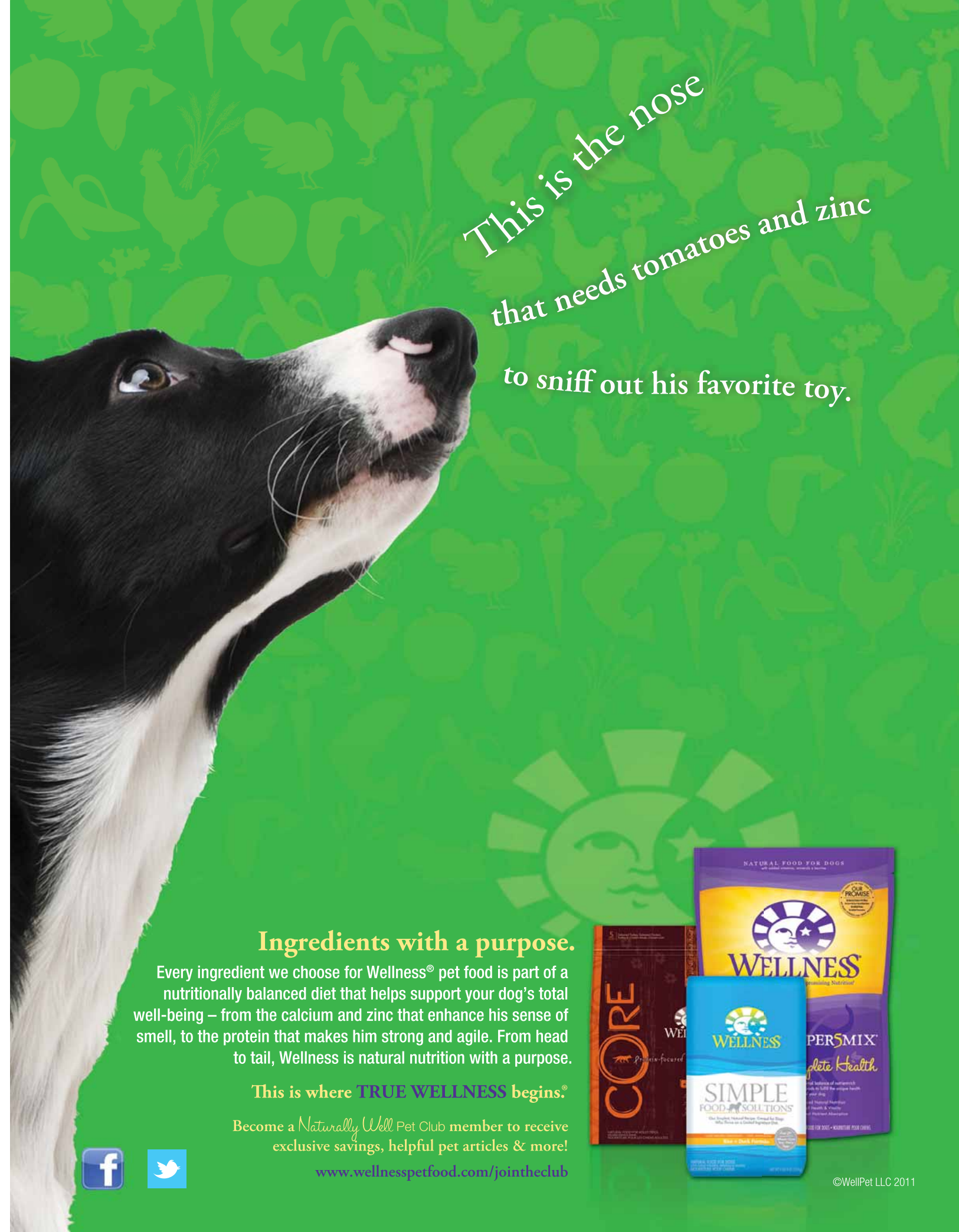
Make sure you don't leave home without these dog-travel essentials:

- **Medical and vaccine records**, in the event an emergency trip to the vet is needed
- **Food, bowl, and scoop**
- **Pet tags with your cell phone number** in case he gets lost
- **Leash**—should always be worn out of the car
- **Favorite toys** that will help your dog feel at home
- **Doggie harness or travel seat**
- **Your dog's meds**, if applicable



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