

# TO YOUR *Pet's* *Health*

## THE *Back to* *School* SWING

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Back to school means getting into a more structured routine for kids. As you are preparing to get back into the swing of things, don't forget about your four-legged family members as well.

If your family has children, chances are your pets have enjoyed being able to spend extra time with them that summer affords. Longer daylight hours and late nights often allow for more time spent in outdoor activities that can involve the family pet. Even that extra time children are home during the day allows for more attention.

Pets love interaction with their family members, that is what makes them such good companions. It shouldn't be hard to believe at the very least your pet goes through periods of loneliness if not depression when their family members start spending more time away from home. Some of these feelings are expressed by unwanted behavior, such as destructiveness or house soiling; or other behaviors like not eating well or even weight gain.

It is important to remember school and related activities can mean less time spent at home

and with the family pet. Special consideration needs to be given to how you can make sure to spend needed time with your companion. As you are creating the schedule and routine for you and your family's daily life, make sure to set aside time throughout the day to spend with your pet. Even if it is 10-15 minutes at a time, your pet needs that extra attention.

If your pet is exhibiting signs of bad behavior, keep in mind some of it may be stemming from boredom. Try to find some enrichment activities that can keep your pet occupied for periods of time throughout the day. There are multiple treat puzzles on the market and other enrichment activities. Every pet is different and what may appeal to one may not work for another, so don't give up if the first attempt fails.

The dog days of summer have almost passed us by, and a new school year looms in the future. As your family prepares to get back into the routine of the coming school year, just don't forget to schedule some time for your pets as well. You will never regret spending more time with them.



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