



Survey: Pet Owners and the Human-Animal Bond September 2016

The Human Animal Bond Research Initiative (HABRI) Foundation partnered with Cohen Research Group to conduct an online survey of 2,000 pet owners, which had a margin of error of plus or minus 2.2%.

This is the first survey of its kind to explore how pet owners' knowledge of the health benefits of the human-animal bond impacts pet care and welfare. The survey also looked for generational differences among pet owners on this subject. Key findings are as follows:

- **There is strong awareness of the health benefits of pet ownership.**
 - 71% of pet owners have heard about scientific research on the human-animal bond that demonstrates pet ownership can help improve physical or mental health in people
 - 88% of pet owners were aware that pets reduce stress
 - 86% of pet owners were aware that pets reduce depression
 - 84% of pet owners were aware that pets reduce anxiety
 - 81% of pet owners were aware that pets increase our sense of well-being
 - 80% of pet owners were aware that pets help with conditions like PTSD in war veterans
 - 68% of pet owners were aware that pets support healthy aging
 - 65% of pet owners were aware that pets help with conditions like autism
 - 60% of pet owners were aware that pets improve heart health
 - 56% of pet owners were aware that pets help with conditions like Alzheimer's disease
 - 47% of pet owners were aware that pets support child cognitive development and reading skills
 - 45% of pet owners were aware that pets support classroom learning
 - 32% of pet owners were aware that pets help prevent child allergies

- **The majority of pet owners have personal experience with the health benefits of pets.**
 - 74% of pet owners reported mental health improvements from pet ownership
 - 75% of pet owners reported a friend's or family member's mental health has improved from pet ownership
 - 54% of pet owners reported physical health improvements from pet ownership

- 55% of pet owners reported a friend's or family member's physical health has improved from pet ownership
- 83% of baby boomers and 82% of greatest/silent generations reported more personal experience with mental health improvements from pets than millennials (62%) and generation X (72%)
- **The more pet owners learn about scientific research on the benefits of the human-animal bond, the more likely they are to take actions to improve pet health.**

When educated on the scientific research on the health benefits of pets:

- 92% of pet owners are more likely to maintain their pet's health, including keeping up with vaccines and preventative medicine
- 89% of pet owners are more likely to take their pet to the vet for regular check-ups
- 88% of pet owners are more likely to provide their pets with high-quality nutrition
- 62% of pet owners are less likely to skip visits to the veterinarian
- 51% of pet owners (78% of millennials) are more likely to purchase pet health insurance
- **Knowledge of the scientific research on the benefits of the human-animal bond improves animal welfare.**

When educated on the scientific research on the health benefits of pets:

- 89% of pet owners are more likely to take better care of their pets
- 75% of pet owners are more likely to microchip a pet to ensure it can be found if lost or stolen
- 74% of pet owners are less likely to give up a pet for any reason

In addition:

- 77% of pet owners believe that pets benefit from the human-animal bond as much as people
- 80% of pet owners who were aware of the health benefits of pets reported spending most of the day or a big part of their day with their pets, compared to 71% of pet owners who were unaware
- **Knowledge of the scientific research on the benefits of the human-animal bond boosts pet ownership.**

When educated on the scientific research on the health benefits of pets:

- 87% of pet owners are more likely to recommend a pet to a friend or family member
- 81% of pet owners are more likely to get another pet in the future (if the one they have now passes away)
- 49% of pet owners (74% of millennials) are more likely to get an additional pet

- 57% of pet owners that currently reported having multiple pets are more likely to get yet another pet
- **Veterinarians are trusted resources for scientific information on the human health benefits of pets and have an opportunity to further strengthen their relationships with pet owners, especially millennials.**
 - Virtually all pet owners (97%) have a favorable opinion of their veterinarian
 - 66% of pet owners (77% of millennials) would have a more favorable view of their veterinarian if they discussed the health benefits of the human-animal bond with them
 - 61% of pet owners (74% of millennials) would be more likely to visit their veterinarian if they discussed the health benefits of the human-animal bond with them
 - 25% of millennials always talk to their veterinarians about the health benefits of pet ownership, more than generation X (16%), baby boomers (6%), or greatest/silent generation (4%)
- **Doctors can also benefit from increased communication on the human-animal bond.**
 - 88% of pet owners agree doctors and specialists should recommend pets to patients for healthier living
 - 65% of pet owners would have a more favorable view of a doctor who discussed the health benefits of the human-animal bond with them
 - 59% of pet owners would be more likely to visit a doctor who discussed the health benefits of the human-animal bond with them
- **Pet owners believe society should be more pet friendly and should act on the scientific research that shows pets improve human health.**
 - 93% of pet owners agree the government should provide service animals to veterans with PTSD
 - 69% of pet owners (83% of millennials) agree the government should help make it more affordable to own a pet
 - 84% agree health and life insurance companies should give discounts for owning a pet
 - 87% would be more likely to buy products from pet-friendly businesses
 - 58% of pet owners (74% of millennials) agree employers should consider allowing employees to bring pets to work
- **Pets are family**
 - 98% of pet owners agree that their pet is an important part of their family
 - 95% of pet owners could not imagine giving up their pet for any reason

For more information, please visit www.habri.org.