

the beat



Pet Therapy Healing , Recovery and Love

Researchers are finding that pets truly have the power to heal their owners, especially the elderly. The most serious disease for older people is not cancer or heart disease, but loneliness.

Too often, people who live alone or are suddenly widowed die of broken hearts. Love is the most important medicine and pets are one of nature's best sources of affection. Pets relax and calm. They take the human mind off loneliness, grief, pain, and fear. They cause laughter and offer a sense of security and protection. They encourage exercise and broaden the circle of one's acquaintances.

Patients in hospitals and nursing homes who have regular visits from pets - whether their own or those brought in from various agencies - are more receptive to medical treatment and nourishment. Animals give the patient the will to live and in nursing homes, the medical staff is often surprised to see residents suddenly "become alive." Animals have a calming effect on humans and benefit mental well-being, especially with children and the elderly.

In recent years, the experts have been relying

on pet therapy as a valuable aid in reaching out to the elderly, the infirm, and to ill or abused children through-out the country. Therapy animals go to convalescent homes, hospitals, day care centers, juvenile halls, and prisons. These animals are trained to be calm, gentle and well-mannered, especially around rambunctious children. There are no breed requirements.

Animals, especially small ones, have shown promise for many conditions, both social and physical:

* Pets help Alzheimer's patients by bringing them back to the present. Specially trained pups can also help alert others that an Alzheimer's patient has wandered into harm's way. "Pets can provide a measure of safety to people with the disease," says Thomas Kirk, a vice president of a chapter of the Alzheimer's Association.

* Children who suffer from attention deficit disorder (ADD) are able to focus on a pet, which helps them learn to concentrate.

EXIT
→

* Mentally ill patients, or those with emotional problems, share a common bond when a cat or dog enters the room. Instead of reacting negatively to one another, it boosts morale and fosters a positive environment.

* Pets are an antidote to depression. Life in a care facility can be boring. A visit from a therapy cat or dog breaks the daily routine and stimulates interest in the world outside.

* Pets provide social interaction. In a health care facility, people come out of their rooms to socialize with the animals and with each other.

* Everyone has the need to touch. Many humans are uncomfortable hugging or touching strangers, even those close to them. Some people are alone and have no hands to hold, no bodies to hug. But rubbing the fur of a cat or dog can provide a stimulation that is sorely lacking. The nonverbal connection is invaluable in the healing process.

* Pets are a source of expectation, hope and communication. Looking forward to a social call or getting home after time away gives that spark of anticipation all humans need to help feel alive. Pets can help start a conversation, and help one who is struggling against unusual difficulties in learning to speak for the first time or after a speech impairment such as a stroke.

The incredible abilities of pets are astounding



Come see us at the show!

Together We Care Convention and Trade Show 2011 on Sunday, April 10th to Tuesday, April 12th at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Stroke Warning Signs

LEARN THE FIVE SIGNS OF STROKE:

Stroke is a medical emergency. Recognizing and responding immediately to the warning signs of stroke by calling 9-1-1 or your local emergency number can significantly improve survival and recovery. If a person is diagnosed with a stroke caused by a blood clot, doctors can administer a clot-busting drug available only at a hospital, and only within a few crucial hours after symptoms begin.* That's why it is very important to be able to recognize the 5 warning signs of stroke and immediately call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.

Stroke can be treated. That's why it is so important to recognize and respond to the warning signs.

THE FIVE SIGNS:

ONE-Weakness

Sudden loss of strength or sudden numbness in the face, arm or leg, even if temporary.

TWO-Trouble speaking

Sudden difficulty speaking or understanding or sudden confusion, even if temporary.

THREE-Vision problems

Sudden trouble with vision, even if temporary.

FOUR-Headache

Sudden severe and unusual headache.

FIVE-Dizziness

Sudden loss of balance, especially with any of the above signs.

Heart & Stroke Foundation of Ontario



**Education,
Clinical Services
& Technology**



111 Zenway Blvd., Suite #3, Woodbridge, ON L4H 3H9
Phone 905 856 1250 • Fax 905 856 2316
Toll Free 877 785 8511 • www.pulserx.ca

Toronto • Ottawa • London