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**Cost of living crisis: Here are seven ways to help keep your pet healthy –**

**and their medical treatment costs down**

The cost of living is making pet ownership unaffordable for many UK ‘pawrents’, with vets bills being one of the biggest outlays.

Brits spent over [£4billion](https://www.statista.com/statistics/308276/consumer-spending-on-veterinary-pet-services-in-the-united-kingdom-uk/) on veterinary fees in 2021, with the majority of vets charging between £40 and £60 for a consultation alone.

When it comes to keeping our furry friends healthy, prevention really does pay. Avoiding problems is much cheaper and easier than treating them once they arrive. Here, Rob Steele, from global pet brand [PetSafe®,](http://www.petsafe.com/UK) shares his top seven tips to help keep our pets healthy and happy – whilst reducing potentially unnecessary treatment costs.

**Encourage play**

Playtime is much more than just fun. it’s essential to our pets’ health and wellbeing as it helps to boost their mood, prevent boredom and relieve stress.

Any stimulation - mental, as well as physical - helps our pets to relax, whilst enabling us to spend quality time together in a way that doesn’t involve extra treats – and therefore weight gain! There are many [pet toys available](https://uk.petsafe.net/collections/pet-toys) to provide lots of fun and stimulation for cats and dogs of all ages, improving pet health and keeping them alert and active – as well as providing opportunity for essential exercise.

Those dogs and cats who don’t spend enough time playing can sometimes show behavioural problems – such as anxiety and aggression - because they don’t have a proper outlet for all their pent-up energy.

**Keep them hydrated**

Hydration is really important for our pet’s health. They need water to regulate their body temperature and keep them cool, just like we do.

Dogs are made up of nearly 80% water – and cats, around 60% to 70% – so incorporating good hydration practices into your pet’s daily routine brings with brings with it many essential health benefits. These include helping to prevent infection and disease, increasing energy levels, aiding blood circulation, digesting food and improving recovery time from illness.

For more reluctant water drinkers, [pet fountains](https://uk.petsafe.net/collections/fountains) are a very effective way to encourage consumption, due to their enticing free-falling streams of water. Adding water to dry food, tuna or broth flavoured ice cubes to water bowls and placing a number of bowls throughout your home and garden are also good tactics to try if you’re concerned that your pet isn’t drinking enough.

**Watch their weight**

Managing our pets’ weight is one of the most crucial factors when it comes to their longevity, quality of life, and disease prevention.

Pet obesity is a common problem in the UK, with experts suggesting that nearly half of dogs here are obese and more than [three million of our pet cats](https://www.cats.org.uk/cats-blog/cats-getting-fatter-in-lockdown) are overweight.

Cats and dogs need a balanced diet and the right amount of exercise to stay fit and healthy, so to manage their diet, take a proper look at the nutritional value of their food, reduce their calorie intake by measuring out their food and encourage them to move more. Oh, and limit the treats.

**Exercise regularly**

Keeping our pets active goes hand in hand with watching their weight. Exercise improves muscle tone, increases metabolism and helps reduce boredom.

As well as walking, encourage your dog to swim, run and play fetch. And playing games with favourite toys can also help to shift unwanted weight for cats too.

It’s especially important to encourage house cats to exercise as they don’t burn as much energy on outdoor adventures. Try increasing their **access to the garden or secure outdoor areas, make your home as cat friendly as possible with lots of hiding spaces and toys –** [interactive cat toys](https://uk.petsafe.net/collections/cat-toys) **are particularly good for keeping our favourite felines entertained and on the move for hours - and provide a choice of scratching options around the house.**

**Keep on top of grooming**

Not only does grooming keeps cats’ and dogs’ coats and nails in great shape, but they also bring other health benefits.

Gentle grooming with rubber brushes is an effective massage, loosening stiff muscles, improving muscle tone and promotes lymphatic drainage.

Regular grooming can also often bring to light any underlying diseases or conditions – such as bumps on the skin, excessive shedding or bald patches and if any areas of your pet’s body are more sensitive than usual – which could indicate an underlying issue.

**Reduce pet stress**

Our pets can become stressed, just like we can.When it comes to cats, stress is frequently presented with cystitis – which has nothing to do with bladder infections, as is usually the case with humans.

Stress has been identified as a significant component of - or trigger for - most common cat behaviour problems and some common diseases. One of the most common causes of stress is other felines intruding into their territory.

Fitting selective entry cat flaps – such as [microchip cat flaps](https://uk.petsafe.net/products/microchip-cat-flaps) that that allow only your cats to return through them will go a long way towards reducing the resident cat’s anxiety.

**Take preventative medications**

Preventative medications can keep your pet free of unwanted health issues - like heartworm, flea-related diseases and tick-borne illnesses - so make sure that they’re up to date with their immunisations.

Brushing your pets’ teeth regularly is also the single most effective way to reduce dental plaque and maintain long-term oral health, with dental chews helping to prevent gum disease, which can lead to more serious health problems.

PetSafe® Brand’s Rob Steele said: “Unfortunately, our pets don’t have the luxury of free healthcare and as the cost of living continues to rise, we’re all doing what we can to save on unnecessary expenditure.

“When it comes to our pets’ health, prevention of illness is key and there are lots of straightforward ways that we can support it at home, every day. Lots of water, plenty of exercise and play and a balanced nutritional diet work wonders to keep our furry friends healthy and happy - and hopefully our household spending down.”

For further information visit [www.petsafe.com/UK](http://www.petsafe.com/UK)

**ENDS**

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

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**About PetSafe® Brand**

PetSafe® Brand is a global pet product expert renowned for developing high quality, reliable product solutions that strengthen the bond between pets and pet parents.

Following its launch in 1998, the PetSafe® brand was quickly and solidly built around the provision of trusted training solutions, with innovative ideas in Containment, Training and Bark Control. Whilst these popular categories remain today, other product solutions include Pet Doors, Harnesses and Walking Solutions, Pet Fountains & Feeders, Cat & Dog Toys, Waste Management and a Travel, Access & Mobility range.

Its in-house teams of engineers and innovative design specialists are constantly researching, testing and developing new products, working closely with pet behaviourists, veterinary professionals and every day pet parents to ensure products are effective at keeping pets healthy, safe and happy.

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