

27 UNEXPECTED HEALTH
BENEFITS OF

Having a



DOG

From the founder of WWW.DREAMDOGFORMULA.COM MIKE JAMES

PREFACE

A dog is a man's best friend.

But apart from the companionship they offer...

Did you know that having a canine by your side also improves your health?

Let me tell you about the many incredible ways that they do.

Keep reading to find out:

- 27 surprising health benefits of having a dog.
- How canines help pregnant women, kids, and elderlies.
- 7 heartfelt ways a dog improves your mental well-being.
- And many more...

CONTENTS

PREFACE	2
27 unexpected health benefits of having a dog	5
#1: They make you visit the doctor less	5
#2: Having a dog can add structure to your life	5
#3: They help lessen cholesterol and triglyceride levels	6
#4: They lower your blood pressure	7
#5: You get more active because of them	7
#6: They bring healthy love	7
#7: They can improve your sleep	8
#8: Dogs take away your stress	9
#9: They can reduce psychological distress	10
#10: They make you feel less alone	10
#11: They emotionally support you	11
#12: They help you calm down	11
#13: They aid in psychological recovery	12
#14: They help you make friends	13
#15: Pregnant women with dogs have healthy babies	14
#16: Fur babies help pregnant women prepare for motherhood	14
#17: Dogs help improve a child's cognitive & critical thinking skills	14
#18: Dogs raise children to be more emotionally intelligent	15
#19: Canine companions make kids confident	16
#20: Dogs make kids well-socialized	17
#21: Dogs can assist children with ADHD	17
#22: They strengthen a child's immune system	17
#23: Canines keep the elderly sharp-minded and happy	18
#24: They help older people socialize	18
#25: They improve your mood	19
#26: They make your life better	20

#27: Dogs help you live longer

20

REFERENCES

22

27 unexpected health benefits of having a dog

#1: They make you visit the doctor less



What do a dog and an apple have in common?

The answer: They both keep the doctor away.

To explain, let's look at this research from 2006:^[1]

They found that dog parents had fewer annual doctor visits by 15% than non-dog parents.

#2: Having a dog can add structure to your life

Like dogs, humans are creatures of habit.

That's why you'll thrive in a routine.

To be exact, doctors reveal it impacts your well-being in ways like:^[2]

- Getting better sleep.
- Reducing stress levels.
- Eating timely and better food.

Now, where do dogs come in?

Well, your pup's routine relies on yours.

Moreover, they're dependent on you for resources.

With that, most dog parents create a habit with their pooch.

Examples include walking your dog every morning and late afternoon. Or regularly taking them to a playdate.

Things like that are healthy for both parties.

As it adds or strengthens structure in the lives of everyone involved.

#3: They help lessen cholesterol and triglyceride levels

Harvard research found evidence that:^[3]

Taking care of dogs can lower your *cholesterol* and *triglyceride* levels.

The former is a fat-like type of lipoprotein. While the latter is a type of fat found in the blood.

And if the amounts of those present in the body get lower...

The chances of them contributing to heart problems decrease as well.

#4: They lower your blood pressure

Study says:^[4]

Simply pet your dog and your blood pressure will decrease.

And low blood pressure is vital in maintaining a healthy heart.

With it, your blood won't have trouble flowing through your arteries.

Which makes it easier for your heart to pump blood.

#5: You get more active because of them

As revealed by this survey, dog parents walk their pups for more than 300 minutes a week.^[5]

And that value is twice the needed frequency of weekly exercise.

Apart from that, dog parents also play with their fur babies...

Some games like frisbee or fetch need you to be on the move.

In the end, that makes dog parents 4 times more active than those without a canine.

#6: They bring healthy love

Look at your pooch.

That's the face of love.

Research tells us that a dog's face is scientifically appealing to humans.^[6]

Because staring at them feels the same way as looking at babies.

So, that triggers the innate caregiver in you...

Then, looking after a pooch is fulfilling.

So it gets you overwhelmed with healthy love.

And multiple studies say that drives you to be a better and healthier person.

#7: They can improve your sleep



There are pros and cons of sleeping with your dog.

As for the former, they include getting improved sleep.

Here, doctors investigated women's *Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI)*. Which is used to measure sleep quality.^[7]

And they found out that:

- Dogs improved the subjects' sleep quality.
- Fur parents had earlier bed and waketimes.
- Women felt more comfortable and safer when sleeping next to their canines.

#8: Dogs take away your stress

Stress is a normal reaction toward pressure.

And I'm sure most of us have felt it and dealt with it in various ways.

Although, this 2020 data says Gen Z has an average stress level of 6.1 out of 10.^[8]

Which makes them the most pressured age group.

And in this 2019 study conducted among university students:^[9]

They reported high levels of stress.

So, researchers tried to find out if dogs can make them feel less troubled.

First, they tested the students' initial *cortisol levels*. Which is the amount of stress hormones in the body.

Then, the subjects interacted with animals, including dogs.

After that, researchers measured their cortisol levels again.

And since there was a slight decrease in the levels...

It proves that dog interaction can momentarily relieve your stress.

#9: They can reduce psychological distress

As experts describe it, psychological distress feels more intense.^[10]

Because it's a mix of anxiety, stress, and depression.

Eventually, it can leave you overwhelmed and make you feel helpless.

The good news is:

Dogs can be there for you when you go through that.

What I like the most is they willingly shower you with love...

And sometimes, that's all you need when life tries to get the best of you.

Take it from this study:^[11]

Homeless people in Australia say their dogs *rescued* them.

Both from negative emotions and situations.

Moreover, they feel responsible toward their canines. Which inspires them to improve and go on.

#10: They make you feel less alone

Social support is crucial for your welfare.

Which you mainly fulfill by interacting with other people.

But research proves that dogs are just as great sources of social support.^[12]

By being with them, you'll feel less alone.

And that fact was observed further when the pandemic started in 2020.

Many people felt isolated due to the lockdown protocols.

That's why there was a boom in dog adoption and sales at that time.

For example, an LA shelter reported processing 10 to 13 dog adoptions daily.^[13]

Which is double their usual rate pre-pandemic.

And in this survey by National Geographic during the virus' rise:^[14]

95% of the respondents agree they can't imagine being without their dog.

#11: They emotionally support you

As physician and researcher, Dr. Ann Berger, stated:^[15]

"Dogs are very present. If someone is struggling with something, they know how to sit there and be loving."

I can't agree more...

Many times, I find my dog under my office table while working.

And while I go through the work I need to do...

She just sleeps at my feet, which is one of the most comforting things ever.

#12: They help you calm down

You can call your dog your chill pill...

Because in the same study from #8, researchers also revealed:

Petting a dog, even for just 10 minutes, can calm you down.

Here are the ways that Fido does so:

- Slowing your breathing.
- Relaxing muscle tension.
- Decreasing your heart rate.
- Lowering your blood pressure (lessens stress).

#13: They aid in psychological recovery



As I mentioned, dogs give you strong emotional support.

So much that they can help you cope with trauma.

Vets in this study discovered:^[16]

With a service dog, military veterans experience fewer PTSD symptoms.

And when they do, the signs are less severe.

Moreover, it also reports the following in the veterans:

- Lower anxiety levels.
- Fewer bouts of anger.
- Rarer sleep disturbances.
- Decreased alcohol abuse.

#14: They help you make friends

They're as smooth as butter when helping you grease conversations.

And canines are also the greatest wingman ever.

In fact, a study says 40% of dog parents find it easier to make friends.^[17]

Plus, dogs help fur parents be closer to their neighbors.

All in all, they help improve your social connection.

And according to another study, that's a core psychological need in humans.^[18]

Without it, you might live a dissatisfactory life.

Which affects your confidence and ability to empathize with others.

#15: Pregnant women with dogs have healthy babies

In this study:^[19]

Mothers who had dog companions during pregnancy had healthier babies.

Tests showed that infants have higher levels of 2 specific microbiomes.

There's *Oscillospira*, which lowers the odds of allergies.

As well as *Ruminococcus*, which helps reduce the chances of obesity.

#16: Fur babies help pregnant women prepare for motherhood

A study showed:^[20]

A mother had a similar brain response to her baby and her dog.

Because not only are they both lovable...

They also require your time, attention, and care.

Moreover, babies and dogs have the same routine:

Sleep, eat, play, poop, and repeat.

That's why taking care of dogs prepares pregnant women for motherhood.

#17: Dogs help improve a child's cognitive and critical thinking skills

Childhood is a crucial stage for learning.

And studies say interacting with canines nurtures a child's cognitive skills.

Now, this fact is widely known.

That's why some animal shelters let kids practice reading to dogs.

 **Fun fact:** When kids do this, the dogs also gain confidence. Which improves their response to visitors.

Moreover, this study informs us that dogs motivate children to be more self-reliant.^[21]

Which encourages critical thinking and makes them problem-solvers.

All in all, dogs help lower a child's risk of developmental delay.

#18: Dogs raise children to be more emotionally intelligent

Apart from the traditional measure of intelligence, *IQ*...

There's also *emotional intelligence (EQ)*.

It assesses a person's ability to use and manage their emotions. As well as understand others'.

And as you learned, dogs can help boost *IQ* in kids.

But multiple studies say canines also contribute to promoting *EQ* in children.

For one, a child can learn how to take care of their pup...

Then, it develops their capability to empathize with others.

 **Fun fact:** In 1699, Philosopher John Locke said that children must learn to care for animals. He believed it would make them tender to all sensible creatures. And he was right.

#19: Canine companions make kids confident



Referring to the same study from #17:

Taking care of dogs also gives children a sense of fulfillment.

Moreover, playing with canines gives them positive experiences.

And those leave kids feeling good and proud.

Which ultimately boosts their self-esteem.

Then, it leads to healthy self-perception at an early age.

#20: Dogs make kids well-socialized

Research says a child who actively engages with dogs is more likely to:^[22]

- Cooperate.
- Share their feelings and discoveries.

With that, up to 40% of kids are less likely to have peer problems.

Which is socially and emotionally healthy for developing children.

#21: Dogs can assist children with ADHD

About 9.4% of kids in the USA have ADHD.^[23]

And this study focused on using *canine-assisted intervention (CAI)* on kids with ADHD.^[24]

Its findings show:

Children showed less severe ADHD symptoms when they went through CAI.

#22: They strengthen a child's immune system

Doctors determined how canines boost a child's first defense against diseases:^[25]

Among 1,193 mother-child pairs, *IgE* levels were 28.8% lower in children with dogs.

And since IgE is an antibody that creates immunity against allergies...

That means dogs make children less prone to the following:

- Asthma.
- Eczema.
- Food allergies.

#23: Canines keep the elderly sharp-minded and happy

Physicians confirm that 6 million Americans aged 65 and up have depression.^[26]

However, only 10% of them get treatment.

But when a dog comes into their life...

Research says their symptoms of depression can be less severe.^[27]

Moreover, dogs also keep the elderly's cognitive functions sharp.

#24: They help older people socialize

The fact of the matter is:

Becoming old can leave someone isolated. Reasons include:

- Retirement.
- Disability or illness.
- Death of loved ones and friends.
- Less energy to explore and socialize.

That's why researchers explored *animal-assisted therapy (AAT)* on older people.^[28]

15 nursing-home residents participated in AAT for 3 weeks.

And the results show a decrease in uneasy behaviors among participants.

Most of all, their social interactions improved during the study.

#25: They improve your mood



Since dogs make you feel less stressed, anxious, depressed, and distressed...

Ultimately, they'll improve your outlook and everyday mood.

Especially when you look into their eyes...

It seems that your problems are going away.

Well, the science behind that involves the hormone called *oxytocin*.

It's more commonly referred to as the "*love hormone*."

Because you usually get most of it after interactions with loved ones.
Especially during intercourse.

That aside, a study tells us:^[29]

You release lots of oxytocin when you gaze into your dog's eyes.

And that surge leaves you feeling good and warm.

#26: They make your life better

As mentioned, having a dog gives you things to look forward to.

They also inspire you to do well.

Moreover, your fur baby makes you a happier and more loving person...

And all of that ultimately gives to a motivated and fulfilled outlook.

Which leads to a healthier and better life.

#27: Dogs help you live longer

With the number of health benefits dogs have to offer...

From childhood, adulthood, until your late life...

It suffices to say they'll help you live longer.

To recall:

Dogs keep you active and make your heart healthy.

And that reduces your risk of heart attack or stroke.

Moreover, Yale revealed that chronic stress could shorten life expectancy.^[30]

But since canines can take your stress away...

They can protect you from a shorter lifespan.

Most of all, dogs provide you with many positive experiences.

And they make you feel loved...

Which sounds like an excellent way to live the long life they helped you gain.

REFERENCES

1. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11205-005-5072-z>
2. <https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/health-benefits-of-having-a-routine>
3. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/having-a-dog-can-help-your-heart--literally>
4. <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.119.005554>
5. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-41254-6>
6. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0058248>
7. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08927936.2018.1529354>
8. <https://www.singlecare.com/blog/news/stress-statistics/>
9. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2332858419852592>
10. https://www.healtheuniversity.ca/EN/CardiacCollege/Wellbeing/Stress_And_Sense_Of_Control/Pages/psychological-distress.aspx
11. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08927936.2021.1878683>
12. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2011-13783-001>
13. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/08/12/adoptions-dogs-coronavirus/>
14. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/pets-are-helping-us-cope-during-the-pandemic>
15. <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2018/02/power-pets>
16. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0306453018300441?via%3Dihub>
17. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0122085>
18. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0146167211405994>

19. <https://microbiomejournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40168-017-0254-x>
20. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2014/10/mothers-brains-show-similar-responses-to-her-baby-and-her-dog/>
21. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5369070/>
22. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41390-020-1007-2?utm_medium=affiliate&utm_source=commission_junction&utm_campaign=CONR_PF018_ECOM_GL_PHSS_ALWYS_DEEPLINK&utm_content=textlink&utm_term=PID100093539&CJEVENT=bfcad9c3681111ed82c2002d0a18b8f8
23. <https://www.additudemag.com/statistics-of-adhd/>
24. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24062278/>
25. <https://utswmed.org/medblog/pets-babies-allergies-asthma/>
26. <https://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/depression-elderly>
27. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1479-8301.2010.00329.x>
28. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/153331750301800610>
29. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19124024/>
30. <https://news.yale.edu/2021/12/06/stress-makes-lifes-clock-tick-fast-er-chilling-out-slows-it-down>