

## **Congratulations, You're a Dog Owner! Now What?**

### **General Care**

This includes feeding your dog, taking it outdoors frequently, grooming, exercise, and lots of affection.

### **Vet Care**

This includes annual visits to the vet for a check-up, dental exam, vaccinations, and heartworm test and prevention. Any flea treatments/prevention or monthly heartworm prevention can be bought from your vet. Store bought brands can be dangerous to dogs and cats, and are normally not completely effective. Animals should be taken to the vet immediately if the pet is thought to be ill or injured.

### **Identification**

Even if your dog is indoors most of the time, it is important for you to keep an identification tag on your dog's collar in case it gets loose. You may also want to microchip your dog. Also, licensing is sometimes required, such as in the cities of Alcoa and Maryville.

### **Hazards**

Human foods such as onions, grapes, raisins, and chocolate are toxic to dogs and should not be feed as "treats" or in "scraps." Dogs should also never be left alone outdoors if not in a secure fenced-in yard.

### **Healthy Weight**

Keeping your dog at a healthy weight is almost as important as keeping yourself healthy. Overweight dogs are prone to painful and crippling arthritis in later adulthood. Overweight dogs also tend to have a shorter lifespan. It is important to find the right food and the proper amounts of food in order to keep your dog healthy.

### **Obedience**

Many dogs greatly benefit from obedience classes. Ask your foster to recommend one that gives discounts to rescued animals such as one adopted from Arfnets. Obedience training is also important to the pet-owner relationship.