

Shelter animals need your help during the pandemic

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(HealthDay)—Fostering a shelter animal during the coronavirus

pandemic could benefit both of you, an animal welfare group says.

"Shelters are swamped in the best of times, and with more and more staff in every sector of American life self-quarantining and falling ill, animals already abandoned and without homes are going to be increasingly vulnerable," said Robin Ganzert, president and CEO of American Humane.

"At the same time, so many of us, especially the elderly, are coping with the loneliness, stress and anxiety that comes with isolation and the sheltering in place so necessary during a pandemic," she said in an organization news release. "Why be home alone when you can snuggle up with a loving new buddy? You might save a life, improve your own during these trying times, and end up with a new best friend."

Each year, 4 million to 6 million animals end up in U.S. shelters and more than 1.5 million are euthanized. As shelter workers are hit by the [coronavirus](#) and [false rumors](#) spread about its transmission from pets to people, shelter animals will need help more than ever, according to American Humane.

The benefits of fostering a [shelter](#) animal go both ways, the association said. Engaging with [animals](#) has been shown to reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol and to lower [blood pressure](#), according to the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

People who have the time, desire and physical and financial ability to foster an animal at least for the next several weeks will be providing much-needed help, Ganzert said.

"Please think about it and spread the word," she said. "You will be helping yourself and an animal in need, and best of all, only their unconditional love is contagious."

More information: The Oregon Veterinary Medical Association has more on the [coronavirus and pets](#).

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