



## Misconceptions about Pets - mental\_floss on YouTube (Ep.6)

### Misconceptions

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Hi, I'm Elliott and this is Mental Floss on YouTube. Today I'm going to talk about some misconceptions about your pets - uh, normal pets, that is. If you own something exotic like a skunk then, um, why?

OK, miscon-pet-ions here we come!

(Intro)

Misconception number 1: there are hypoallergenic pets.

Mm-mm, no. In 2011, a study examined how much various breeds of dogs were shedding the main dog allergen, Canis familiaris 1 or Can f 1. They studied 173 homes and found Can f 1 in all but 10 of those homes. They were all one-dog families, some with dogs that are typically considered hypoallergenic and some with dogs that aren't. The researchers found that there wasn't even a difference in the levels of Can f 1 from home to home. The American Kennel Club backs this information up. Though they have a list of dogs that people who have allergies are usually less affected by, the club notes that this is not the guarantee.

As far as cats go, scientists aren't sure if there is a hypoallergenic breed. Some people with cat allergies feel fine around certain breeds but, like with dogs, it varies. Personally, I'm super allergic to most cats' personalities.

Misconception number 2: dogs see in black and white. We've known since 1989 that dogs can see color. And we now know that dogs can also distinguish hues thanks to a 2013 study at the Laboratory of Sensory Processing at the Russian Academy of Sciences. The study used different colored papers in front of locked boxes, including one box that contained meat. Researchers found the dogs learned in three trials which colored paper were associated with the box that had the treat inside. The dogs chose the correct color 70% of the time. In the words of Doctor Ian Malcolm from Jurassic Park, "Life finds a way".

Misconception number 3: you should totally give your cat milk. Most cats do love milk but some are lactose intolerant. These cats will get upset stomachs and/or diarrhoea after drinking milk. Your cat might not be lactose intolerant but most veterinarians still suggest that you do not give your cat milk. It's not essential to their diet and it's just not worth risking them getting sick, 'cause they're less cute when they're sick.

Misconception number 4: cat food and fish are interchangeable. Most experts agree that you should not give your cat fish because fish is actually the third biggest allergen for cats, behind beef and dairy.

Speaking of fish, misconception number 5: a goldfish only grows to the size of its bowl. This myth is actually probably true, if you're keeping your goldfish in a bowl. But by doing that it's actually you, not the bowl that's preventing your goldfish from growing to its full size. Fish are poikilotherms, which means they're internal heat is varied, as opposed to homeotherms, like mammals. Poikilotherms actually continue to grow throughout their entire lives. Putting a goldfish in a small bowl with bad living conditions, including a poor diet and poor water quality stunts its growth. So, if you move your fish into a bigger tank and properly care for it, your fish will continue to grow forever and ever until it can have its revenge on you.

Misconception number 6: a dog's mouth is cleaner than a human's mouth.

Uh, I'm gonna be frank with you, both a person's mouth and a dog's mouth contain bacteria. And comparing the bacteria isn't really relevant because we're two very, very different species. In fact, because they're bacteria's only found in dogs, you're less likely to

get a disease from coming into contact with your dog's mouth as opposed to another human's mouth. The cleanliness of your dog's mouth actually depends on you. Take care of your dog, keep it away from the toilet and the trash can, and brush its teeth, and make visits to the vet because that's how you'll know if your dog has a serious problem like gum disease, which is gross.

Misconception number 7: cats always land on their feet.

Cats have something called the cat righting reflex or aerial righting reflex. Thanks to their bone structure they're usually able to shift their bodies mid-air so they can land on their feet. In fact, in 2006, a cat from South Carolina fell 80 feet completely unharmed, minus, like, some dehydration and stiffness. But, a few factors may affect a cat's ability to land on its feet like shock, disorientation, injury etc.

Misconception number 8: you can't teach an old dog new tricks.

Uh, yeah, this is just an expression. Older, healthy dogs can absolutely learn new tricks. In fact, they might enjoy the activity and mental exercise. Fine, Gilligan, I'll teach you how to look adorable - oh, wait, too late.

Speaking of exercise, misconception number 9: if you leave your dog outside, it'll exercise by itself.

Mm-mm, no. Some people believe that providing a dog with a yard means that it will take care of its own exercise but if you observe your dog in the yard, you'll probably notice that it is not running around or getting a decent amount of exercise at all. Even if you have a yard you should still be taking your dog for regular walks.

Misconception number 10: if you want a short-term pet commitment, you should get a rabbit.

Actually, a well cared-for rabbit can live up to 12 years. In fact, the Guinness World Record for oldest rabbit was a rabbit named Do, who lived for 17 years and 2 weeks. You know, it kind of makes you wonder, if Do's owner had known he was going to live that long, would she have given him a better name? Anyway, if you're planning on getting a rabbit, prepare yourself for a long-term pet.

Thank you for watching Misconceptions on Mental Floss on YouTube that is made with the help of all of these wonderful people. If you have an idea for an upcoming topic or an episode of Misconceptions, please leave it in the comments below and I will see you next week.