

6 Things To Consider When Bugging In With Pets

If you thought bugging in with children was more complicated than expected, you may be surprised to find a whole new host of challenges presented by bugging in with pets. While you don't necessarily have to worry about them trying to escape and going back to their old home, there are still many important things to consider.

Though some of these problems can be managed with additional space or revisions in training, others will more or less be matters of chance. That being said, you can still do your best to keep pets safe during a bug in scenario and ensure that they are able to stay with you as long as possible.

1. Providing Enough Food

Overall, individuals from small towns or rural areas are likely to find it easier to provide food for their pets. Since many pet animals rely on small game for meat, it may be possible to feed them food from the animals that you hunt. By the same token, herbivores may also be able to consume grass and other plants that may not be readily accessible in a city setting.

Today, most pet owners rely on commercial foods because they believe these inexpensive products offer better nutrition. At the same time, if you ask these people what they think about the ingredients, they readily admit that pet food is more than likely made from ingredients unfit for human consumption.

This includes ulcers and tumors cut from meat that is placed into the human food chain as well as bone marrow, fat, internal organs, roadkills, shelter kills, and all kinds of plant waste.

To add insult to injury, many of the “food” ingredients found in pet foods may actually contain higher levels of carcinogens and toxins than what registers in human foods.

Clearly, simply boiling everything down and forming it into nice neat little nuggets does not mean the food is truly the best or safest for your pets. In fact, research indicates that the rate of pet cancers are skyrocketing despite the fact that pet owners are fairly conscientious about buying special food for their pets.

From this perspective, it can be readily seen that perhaps you are best served by not stockpiling large quantities of pet food for your animals. In a bug in scenario, it is best to do some research on the actual nutritional needs of your pets and look for ways to wean them off commercial foods and onto those that will be used in a crisis situation.

Since animals will diarrhea when diets change suddenly, it is best to introduce survival foods slowly at this time so that they are fully adapted for any problems that come along. As an added bonus, if you decide to grow your own food (including raising insects), this is a perfect time to find out at least one part of how consumption of foods will compare to output.

2. Managing Waste

At the current time, you may honestly feel that you would never eat a cat, dog, pet fish, or bird. On the other hand, when people, including yourself, are starving, just about anything will be considered fit for eating.

Even if you would never eat your pets, anyone that comes across them may simply see a free meal. Under these circumstances, once a crisis hits, it will be extremely important to keep your pets indoors. If you have cats, dogs, or other larger sized animals, this means you are bound to have some problems managing waste.

No matter how hard you try, these obstacles will always be a challenge to overcome:

- There is only so much you can do to tidy up litter and use it for as long as possible
- Disposing of litter outdoors will reveal to anyone passing by that some human being has living animals nearby; and that there may be food and other items fit to loot
- Storing up large amounts of litter will require a lot of space and also may add more weight than the building structure can handle
- The odor of pet excrement can easily alert outsiders to your presence

While managing pet waste can be complicated, there are few things you can do to mitigate the situation. These suggestions are mainly intended for city areas where you may still have a larger population density to contend with. It may also be useful in rural areas where gangs have decided to rove or other problems prevent you from simply letting your pets out.

- Depending on the situation, you may be lucky enough to have functional toilets and other plumbing. In these cases, you can simply dump animal waste down the toilet.
- If you have to dispose of pet waste outside, make sure you do so in a place where it is not likely to be traced back to you. When you leave home, make sure that no one is following you, and that no one sees you.
- When preparing litter to carry, you will need to be able to carry at least 10 pounds. There are no easy ways to achieve this goal without coming uncomfortably close to the waste materials or using some kind of stroller or cart.
- You can use dirt for litter as long as it does not become obvious that you are routinely digging up the ground. You will most likely need a backpack or cart to carry new materials in.

- Today, there are some fairly new products on the market that utilize enzymes and bacteria for breaking down solid waste. If you can find one that is safe to use in an indoor setting, it may reduce the number of trips you need to make in order to dispose of pet waste. These materials may also be of use if toilets and other plumbing stop working. Before a crisis happens, you should experiment with these products to see which ones will work best for your needs. As with many other supplies, this is one that may take up more space than you wish to devote to this kind of product.

3. Managing Noise

Chances are, the sounds of your birds chirping, cats meowing, or dogs barking represent the comforts and security of home. On the other hand, if someone is trying to find a place to loot, these sounds can easily alert strangers to your presence. From that perspective, managing pet noises can be very important to your well being and theirs.



Even though there are open mouthed muzzles that allow pets to drink water, it is not feasible let alone advisable to keep animals muzzled all the time. In most cases, even a muzzle that fits properly will not prevent sounds such as growls and whimpers from escaping.

To add insult to injury, your pet is likely to become emotionally disturbed very quickly when exposed to this kind of treatment. Since you will also need to take the muzzle off

at feeding time, this also presents a danger time when sounds can escape and alert others to your presence.

Perhaps the best way to control pet noises involves setting aside at least one or more rooms in your home and making sure that it is sound proof. Ideally, if you have a basement and an attic, you can sound proof each of them so that they are all ready in case of an emergency.

Individuals that live in small apartments should soundproof the room where they most expect to be staying during a crisis situation. While you may actually circulate through other areas of the home, your pets will have to stay in this room until you are certain that the noises they make will not invite the presence of unwanted invaders.

It should be noted that many people keep dogs in hopes that they will act as alarms and also attack unwanted visitors. Unfortunately, there are several problems with this idea:

- Guard dogs and security [dogs require years of careful training](#). Most homeowners that “play rough” with their dogs, use choker/prong collars, and try to make their dogs ready to attack usually wind up becoming victims of their own designs. Dogs only understand love and pain. If you hurt them, they will eventually turn on you. While this may sound very complicated, it is truly very simple. If you want a guard dog and intend to have one for that purpose, go into training with a suitable dog or buy one that has already been trained and then attend training sessions so that you know how to handle the dog. This is one of the few places where “DIY” solutions won’t work and may just cost more than you were planning to give.
- While pre-social collapse thieves may be deterred by a dog, those who survive a crisis may simply see the dog as an opportunity to grab some extra meat for dinner. Not only will these people come in prepared to loot your

home, they are also likely to be more than ready to neutralize and kill your dog. Unless you are fully prepared and trained to back up any threat your dog presents to unwanted visitors, you might just as well write a “guard dog” off your bug in list.

4. Injuries and Illnesses

As with human injuries and illness, you will find that pets will also be inclined to suffer more medical related problems during stressful situations.

This, in turn, means that you will need to store away at least some basic medications that can be used for both human and animal needs. In addition, if you are going to grow herbs for medicinal needs, make sure that all of the plants selected are safe to have in the same area as pets. Ideally, you should be able to use these herbs to treat both types of ailments.

Here are some supplies and information that you should keep on hand for [managing injuries and illness](#):

- Detailed anatomy and physiology information for each species of pet in your care
- If possible, try to obtain veterinary textbooks that will help you diagnose and treat pet diseases
- Herbal remedies that can be used in place of conventional medications. This includes medications that can be [used to sedate pets](#).
- As sad as it may be, there may be times when the pet in your care cannot be saved, and there is no doctor or vet on hand to help resolve the situation. Under these situations it is cruel to allow your pet to linger on and suffer until he/she dies. Do some research on herbs that can be used to euthanize your pet. Bear in mind that even veterinarians cannot always guarantee an easy death even though they are using modern medicines and tested protocols. You should also have second,

mechanical means available to euthanize your pet. For example, in many cases, a knife blade inserted between the vertebra at the base of the skull may work for both cats and dogs. If you have sedating herbs on hand, you may want to use those before delivering the final blow. As a last resort, you can try cutting the jugular veins in the neck, however that will be very traumatic for the animal and you.

5. Long Term Care Considerations

If you have ever kept dogs and cats, then getting them vaccinated may be a matter of routine. In the post-crisis world, these important medicines may not be available.

Therefore, you will have to be more careful than ever to make sure that your pets are not exposed to rabies, distemper, or other pathogens that will lead to serious, and possibly fatal illness.

In particular, since rabies can be transmitted from animals to humans, you must always be on guard once the rabies vaccine is 3 – 5 years past the last injection (unless your pet is under a year old and has not received the 1 year booster. In this case, the timeframe is much shorter.)

Some critical things to consider:

- Make sure that your pets do not gain access to mice, rats, or other prey animals that may transmit deadly diseases. Unfortunately, once your pet comes in contact with blood from these other animals or gets bitten by them, your pet may contract any number of diseases that were once covered by the vaccines.
- Make sure that you have a quarantine area for your pets so that you can observe them during crucial time frames if needed.

Aside from vaccinations, you must also think carefully about

other pet diseases such as fleas, mites, and worms. While there are herbal remedies that will help with these problems, you must know how to recognize symptoms and deal with them as quickly as possible. In particular, worms can be dangerous to you and your pets before you even realize what is going on.

6. A Special Guide for Fish



Contrary to popular belief, if you are in a crisis situation, it may not be as easy as you think to take care of fish. This is especially important to consider if you are going to use fish waste as a fertilizer in [hydroponics systems](#).

Since fish for this purpose can get quite large and become difficult to maintain in crisis conditions, it is important to make adequate provisions for helping them survive during a bug in scenario.

Unlike cats, dogs, and birds, fish only have one little aquarium to live in. Taking care of them in a crisis situation can be very difficult if you are unable to provide adequate filtration and aeration to the water.

It may be of some help to keep battery powered pumps and filters on hand as well as oxygen generation tablets.

It should be noted that bubble up filters can make a good bit of noise, as can the pumps that deliver air into the tank. To deal with this problem:

- Be careful about when you run the filters and then use either airstones or air curtains to increase aeration

when the filter is not running. Even though this will not provide filtration, it will help break the water surface so that oxygen can get to the fish.

- Use nitrate reducers, pH stabilizers, water softeners and zeolites to help preserve good water chemistry and compensate for the lack of mechanical filtration.
- Sludge reducers that are safe for aquariums may also be of some use.
- If you are starting a new aquarium in the pre-crisis world, choose fish that can live without large amounts of aeration and filtration. For example, a male betta can live very happily in a 2 – 3 gallon tank and can last for weeks or even months without a mechanical filter in the tank.

Aside from maintaining water chemistry and temperature, you will also need to stock up on fish food. Depending on the species of fish, you may also be able to feed them human food.

For example, some fish are notorious for loving to eat vegetables while others won't mind eating insects and other forms of meat. As long as you are aware of your fish's nutritional needs and how to meet them, you will find it fairly easy to keep your fish healthy and thriving.

When you decide to bug in, there is always a chance that you will have to leave your home. Fish can be very difficult to travel with because you either have to place them in plastic bags or some other water tight container.

Always try to use the biggest possible container since it will allow more oxygen and water for the fish to live in. Since fish consume more oxygen when they are stressed, the very act of moving them from their usual home to a bag or smaller vessel may be enough to cause their oxygen usage to double or even triple.

Therefore, while you are in transit from one place to another,

you may also need to stop frequently and run a battery operated pump and airstone to provide more oxygen for the fish. Needless to say, if you are using fish as part of a hydroponics system, it will be very important to secure the well being of breeding pairs so that you can repopulate tanks at your next location.

Since modern tropical fish are severely over bred, they also tend to suffer from immune system collapses from a narrower range of tank conditions.

For example, if an angel fish can tolerate a 10 degree temperature change tank water, newer fish may only be able to withstand a 5 degree temperature change before developing swim bladder problems, fungal, bacterial, and other infections. In most cases, you may not find much information on treating tropical fish with herbal remedies.

On the other hand, antibiotics and tank conditioners can be stored for several years without losing their potency. Since these items also take up fairly little space, it may be of some use to stockpile them.

As you can see, taking care of pets during a crisis and afterward can be every bit as challenging as securing your own survival. In some cases, if you have a specific need for certain animals, then you will need to be especially careful about making sure you can supply adequate food, water, shelter, medications, and waste removal.

If you cannot meet these needs in a bug in situation, then you will only cause you and your loved ones more hardship by holding unrealistic beliefs about "best case scenarios". If you would not leave your well being to fate or luck, then do not simply hope your pets or other animal dependents will get through the crisis somehow.

At the very least, if you believe that a life threatening crisis is within 2 – 3 days of happening, and find that you

cannot provide for your animals, during a crisis, it may be best to not take in any new animals, and also give the ones you have to others who will be able to care for them.

Interested in long-term survival? [CLICK HERE](#) to find out more!

*This article has been written by **Carmela Tyrell** for [Survivopedia](#).*