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## **Avoid impulse buying of pets as Christmas gifts**

With the festive season fast approaching, pet care company Purina is encouraging New Zealanders to avoid impulse buying of pets as Christmas gifts.

Pet care Advisor for Purina, Shivaun Statham, says the company is drawing attention to the issue now because many of the pets that are bought as Christmas presents every year inevitably end up unwanted in animal shelters.

“Puppies or kittens can be hard to resist buying when you see them in a pet store, but careful consideration should be made before you add another member to your family.”

Ms Statham quotes statistics from the Auckland SPCA that show more than 1000 newly abandoned animals were collected in December 2008 alone.

She says Purina doesn't want to discourage people from buying pets for Christmas as they make wonderful Christmas gifts, but says it's vital to make sure first that the intended recipient is in agreement and is involved in the purchase.

“If the recipient of the ‘present’ did not actually want a pet in the first place or were not aware of the responsibilities of owning one, that pet is more likely to end up in the animal shelter.”

Ms Statham says that people need to be fully aware of all the responsibilities and costs – in time and money – of taking on and caring for a new pet, including:

- Vaccinations and health checks
- Behaviour training
- Correct food
- Bedding and toys
- Collars and leashes
- Pet carriers for transport
- Appropriate exercise
- Fenced yard for dogs

Ms Statham says it's also important to make sure you can look after the new pet during the holiday season immediately following Christmas.

“Find out if the recipient can take the pet with them on holiday. If not, can they book it into a kennel or cattery? Many boarding establishments won't take pets if they are not fully vaccinated and get booked up months in advance for Christmas, so it's important to consider these things well in advance.”

Ms Statham says that the recipient of a gift pet also needs to consider whether there are provisions made for the pet's care once they go back to work.

“A pet is a wonderful gift that can bring much joy and happiness to someone on Christmas morning, but proper planning is essential to avoid the tragedy of abandoned pets come New Year's Day.”

For in-depth information about maintaining optimal nutrition and care for new pets, visit the Purina web site at [www.purina.co.nz](http://www.purina.co.nz)

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**About Nestle Purina New Zealand**

- For over eighty years Purina has been a leader in the advancement of pet care and pet nutrition.
- Purina's expert nutritionists, food scientists, vets, and animal behaviorists are constantly discovering new ways to help pets lead healthier, happier, longer lives.
- No one invests more in research and development, and as a result Purina has made more breakthroughs in the field than any other company.
- Today Purina is one of the world's leading pet care companies, producing some of the best known pet food brands; many of which have served pet owners for generations. Each is the result of the very latest advances in quality, taste and nutrition.
- Purina products are designed to give pets and their owners the best possible choice of recipes and formats, for every life stage and lifestyle.
- Purina is also a committed member of the wider pet care community, supporting charitable organisations, working closely with the communities in which we work and operate, and promoting responsible pet ownership in New Zealand and worldwide.
- With over seventy per cent of New Zealand households owning pets, Nestlé Purina is servicing a growing market.
- Throughout the company's long history in the pet care business, it has built strong brands such as TUX, FRISKIES and FANCY FEAST.
- In 2002 the company acquired Ralston Purina, which saw the introduction of brands such as Purina ONE, BENEFUL and PRO PLAN.