

**Rehoming your pet can be a difficult decision, and we understand and appreciate you doing what's best for both your pet and your family. Before surrendering them to an animal shelter or rescue, we recommend trying to rehome them privately first.**

A shelter environment and lots of change can be stressful for an animal – and animal shelters and rescues face high demands that can cause delays – so it is often in your animal's best interest if they can go directly into a new home. Self-rehoming also gives you the benefit of being able to meet and potentially stay in touch with your pet's new family.

This guide will help you navigate the process with compassion and responsibility, to ensure your pet continues to receive the care they need in a new, loving home.

### Step 1: Assess the Situation

Depending on the reason you're considering rehoming your pet, there may be resources and support available that would help keep your pet in your home, like low-cost programs, temporary boarding, assistance from friends and family, and behaviour support.

If you have not already done so, check out the [HELP \(Helping Every Loved Pet\) Tool on our website](#) to find the resources available for various issues.

**IMPORTANT:** If your pet has a history of aggression (e.g., biting a person or another animal) and/or a current medical issue, please seek the advice of a professional trainer or veterinarian or contact our admitting team before you proceed with rehoming your pet privately.

### Step 2: Prepare Your Pet

Before rehoming your pet, ensure they:

- ✓ Are up to date on vaccinations and any preventative care
- ✓ Have a clean bill of health from your veterinarian
- ✓ Are spayed or neutered
- ✓ Have a copy of any veterinary records
- ✓ Have a copy of identification records, like a microchip registration

You may also consider charging a modest rehoming fee to help cover the costs of updating their vaccinations or purchasing new supplies to pass along your pet to their new guardian, such as a crate, carrier, leash and harness/collar or flea and tick prevention.

### Step 3: Create a Rehoming Profile

A detailed bio of your pet can help capture the attention of potential adopters while ensuring it's a good match for both the family and pet. Include the following details:



- Name, age, breed, and weight
- Temperament and personality traits
- Training they've completed and the skills and tricks they know, like basic cues and house and crate training
- Medical history and any special needs, like allergies or conditions that require medication or ongoing care
- Routine and favourite activities
- Compatibility with children and the age of children (or if unknown, specify this information)
- Compatibility with other animals (or if unknown, specify this information)
- Clear, high-quality photos and videos

You can use free design tools available online to create their profile poster or social media post.

### Photo Tips:

- ✓ Use natural light and avoid flash to prevent red eyes and shadows.
- ✓ Get down to your pet's level to capture their personality.
- ✓ Take close-up shots with your pet making eye contact with the camera to show your pet's face and expressions.
- ✓ Show your pet doing something they enjoy, like playing, cuddling, or doing tricks.
- ✓ Show your pet with other animals and people if they get along with them.
- ✓ Include a few full-body shots to give potential adopters a clear idea of their size and appearance.

### Pet Bio Writing Tips:

- ✓ Start with a catchy introduction that highlights your pet's best qualities.
- ✓ Describe their personality and behaviour in detail.
- ✓ Mention their daily routine, likes, dislikes, and things they know, like cues and house training.
- ✓ Be honest about any medical conditions, special needs, and behaviour conditions.
- ✓ End with a positive note about why your pet would make a great addition to a new home.
- ✓ If you are willing to provide their supplies or transport your pet, let potential adopters know.

## Step 4: Reach Out to Your Family, Friends & Personal Network

Start by asking people you know if they or someone they know can adopt your pet. A familiar face can make the transition easier for your pet. Someone who already knows and likes your pet may be willing to adopt them, providing peace of mind for you.

You can post on your personal social media profiles or reach out to people you know directly. While this may feel daunting, most people want to help and will understand you are doing what's best for you and your pet. You don't need to explain your situation in this initial reaching out, you can simply say:



*'Due to my own personal circumstances I'm having to make the difficult decision to rehome (pet's name) but I know it's what's best for them and they'll make an amazing companion for a new family!'*

In addition to family and friends, you can also ask other connections such as: your veterinarian, colleagues at work, school, religious groups, clubs, or other community centres you frequent. If they don't know anyone personally interested in adopting, they may be able to help spread the word about your pet needing a home.

Have printed copies of their profile available or a digital copy that you can send to anyone who expresses interest.

### Step 5: Advertise on Social Media & Online Platforms

There are many websites and social media groups which advertise pets in need of rehoming.

We recommend using Adopt-a-pet's Rehome tool at [rehome.adoptapet.com](https://rehome.adoptapet.com), which will advertise your pet among those available at local rescues and shelters and provides helpful tools and resources along the way.

#### How to Use Rehome by Adopt-a-pet

You can start your pet's listing with Rehome by [clicking here](#). There is a small fee (between \$5 and \$50 based on the type and age of pet), however you can use EHS' referral code to get the listing fee for \$1: **RCXHAQTL2U8AD8Z**

Visit Rehome's [How It Works page](#) for more information, and their [Help Center](#) for resources.

Rehome will notify you when a new application is received for your pet, provide guidance on screening and meet-and-greets, and provide a transfer of ownership template once you've found the right adopter.

### Step 6: Have a Conversation with the Potential Adopters

Once someone expresses interest in adopting your pet, you may choose to first have a phone or video call with someone before meeting them.

Ask open-ended questions to get to know them and share more about your pet. Making the right match is best done through conversations to learn about each other's preferences and expectations.

#### Questions to Consider Asking by Phone:

- Tell me about the kind of pet you'd like to adopt.
- What is a typical day like for you and your family?
- Do you have other pets, and what are they like?
- Are your current pets spayed or neutered and up-to-date with their vaccines?
- Have you had pets in the past? What happened to them?



- Who lives in the home, and are there ever visitors? Do you have kids?
- Does anyone in your family or who frequently visits have allergies to pets?
- Are you comfortable with the pet's medical or behavioural needs?
  - *It is important to be open and honest about any special care requirements your pet needs, to ensure that the potential adopter is prepared and the adoption is successful.*
- Are you wanting an active companion, or a more relaxed one?
- How do you train your pets? How and why would you discipline them?
  - *EHS recommends positive reinforcement training methods and avoiding punishment. If they do not know, ask if they plan to seek guidance or refer them to EHS' [training resources](#).*
- Is it important that your pet is social with other people and animals, or is it okay if they're shy?
- Would you be bothered by a talkative pet?
- Are you renting? If so, have you spoken with your landlord about this type of pet?

Rehome by Adopt-a-pet also offers [advice on questions to ask on the phone here](#).

### Step 7: Schedule a Meet-and-Greet

If the introductory phone call goes well and both you and the potential adopter feel it could be a fit, schedule a meet-and-greet to introduce the potential adopter to your pet. For everyone's safety, we recommend meeting a **public, pet-friendly place** where your pet will be comfortable but won't be too distracted. This could be a walking path, pet-friendly store or your vet clinic (check with them first). Dog parks are not recommended as there are too many distractions.

It is recommended that they bring their whole family and if you are rehoming a dog, they should bring any current dogs.

You know your pet best, so you may want to adjust your meet-and-greet approach or plan for multiple, slower introductions if you feel it may take them some time to become comfortable.



### Meet-and-Greet Tips

- Start by talking to the potential adopter, giving your pet time to explore the area and new people.
- Some pets may be excited and want attention right away, while others might need more time to warm up. Both are normal!
- Bring some of your pet's favourite treats for the adopter to give to your pet.
- Give the potential adopter some time and space to interact with the pet on their own and observe from a distance.
- Feel free to ask any additional questions you have, and let the adopter know you are open to their questions as well. Questions are a good sign that both you and they care about ensuring it is a good fit for both them and your pet.

[See more meet-and-greet advice](#) from Rehome by Adopt-a-pet.

Neither you nor the adopter should feel pressured to make a decision right away. You may decide to follow up in a few days once you've both had a chance to think about the adoption. **Always trust your instincts!**

### Step 8: Finalize the Rehoming & Transfer Ownership

Once you've chosen your pet's new family and have verbally confirmed they are ready to welcome your pet to their family, do the following to finalize the adoption:

- **Create an agreement:** A written and signed agreement can help both you and the adopter be on the same page about the adoption and can act as proof of the transfer of ownership.
  - If you are using Rehome by Adopt-a-pet, a *Transfer of Ownership form* will be available in your account. You can also [download a copy of their form here](#).
  - Your pet's microchip company may also have a *Transfer of Ownership form* you can use.
  - Both you and the adopter should receive a copy of this agreement form.
  - Include in the agreement what will happen if the adoption does not work out. Should the adopter return the pet to you, or rehome the pet themselves? Consider the timeline and how flexible you are.
- **Assemble a new home kit:** To help your pet with the transition, gather the following to provide to the adopter:
  - Food and treats
  - Bed
  - Toys
  - Litterbox and litter
  - Leash, collar and/or harness
  - Crate/carrier



# Animal Resource

## A Guide to Self Rehoming Your Pet



- Medication

You can also prepare a transition guide to give their new family as much information as possible. [See advice here](#) from Rehome by Adopt-a-pet.

- **Arrange the drop off:** Decide on a public, safe place to meet. Avoid parking lots, dog parks or crowded areas to reduce stress for both you and your pet. Exchange the *Transfer of Ownership form* and new home kit.
- **Transfer veterinary records:** Provide physical copies of their veterinary records – including proof of spay/neuter and vaccines – to the adopter. You should also let your veterinary clinic know your pet has been rehomed and will need their records to be sent to their new clinic.
- **Update identification information:** If your pet has a tattoo or microchip, contact the registration company to update the information to the new owner and provide the new family with these records.
  - If you are unsure of your pet's microchip number, check their veterinary or adoption records from when you got your pet, or take them to your vet to be scanned.
  - If you have their microchip number but are unsure who they are registered with, use [PetMicrochipLookup.org](http://PetMicrochipLookup.org).
- **Ask if they would like to keep in contact:** If you would like to maintain contact with the adopters after rehoming, ensure they are comfortable with this and willing to provide updates.

Rehoming a pet can be difficult, but by taking the time to find them a new home yourself, you're giving them the best chance at a smooth transition and a successful adoption. By following the steps outlined in this guide, you're ensuring they find a family who will love and care for them as much as you have. Thank you for making thoughtful, compassionate decisions for your pet.

### Additional Resources

Find more free guides on our website by visiting: <https://www.edmontonhumanesociety.com>

### Did You Know?

You can also ask us behavioural questions by emailing:  
[askthespecialist@edmontonhumanesociety.com](mailto:askthespecialist@edmontonhumanesociety.com)

**It takes approximately \$7 million to keep the Edmonton Humane Society operational for one year and 40% of these funds come from generous donations made by supporters like you. [Donate to help.](#)**