

# Cat population in city rises as space shrinks

Joel Joseph | TNN

Are you a cat person or a dog person? If you ask a Gurgaonite this question, chances are the answer would be of a feline kind. No, it's not because we've suddenly developed an aversion to the man's best friend. Dogs remains the quintessential choice for an ideal pet, but if the veterinary doctors in the city are to be believed, more and more people in the city are adopting cats as pets, for practical purposes.

One of the reasons for households choosing cats over dogs is the shrinking space in the city. As more and more people are moving into apartments, they prefer pets that are easily manageable. A dog needs space. It also needs more pampering than a cat, says Ashok Kumar Dhaka, who works in an MNC. He explains: "I had a dog when I was single. After I got married, there was a constraint of space. Also, since both I and my wife work, it was difficult to keep the dog locked in the house for the whole day. For the cat we have, we call him Mew, he takes care of himself. He is out as we are out of the house and returns when we are back from work."

This is, however, not the sentiment everyone would accept, as it can be seen with the morning walkers accompanying their dogs in the post residential localities of the city.

According to veterinary doctors at the CGS Hospital, located in DLF Phase-III, whatever animal you may prefer to have, the trend about pets is changing in the city. Earlier, say doctors, pets used to be a status symbol. If you a powerful man, you'll keep an Alsatian. If you are a socialite, you will cuddle a Pomeranian, and so on. Now, pets are a part of an average household, not to show off, but as a companion, a friend indeed.

It especially works for working professionals,



CAT IS IN THE CRADLE



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

says Sikha Singh, who works in the finance sector. "Nowadays, we are so busy with our personal and professional lives that we have no time to socialize. Hence, I cannot do without my pet dog, Jumbo. After a busy day at work, when Jumbo cozies up to me, it's a great stress-buster. My pet is my best friend."

"These days, with the rise of nuclear families, and with children moving out and elderly parents left

alone at home, a pet like a dog or a cat as a companion is an ideal choice. This is especially true in Gurgaon," says Samar Mahendran, director, CGS Hospital. "Since dogs need more space and are high-maintenance, we have seen a substantial rise in the feline population in the city. While cats are low-maintenance, they are also very loyal," he adds.

According to Mahendran, out of the total num-

ber of patients the hospital gets, over 10% of them are cats.

With the rise in the animal population in the city, there has been a rise in the demand for pet hospitals and veterinary doctors.

Gurgaon has just one modern pet hospital, which is seeing a huge rush of pet patient these days, especially with people from other states visiting the hospital as well.

The hospital conducts

around 80 surgeries every month. It also has an in-patient department. "Most pets come here for general check-up and vaccination. However, we also conduct laser surgeries, including on stray animals injured in accidents," says Mahendran. "Our hospital is open 24 hours and we get calls even during the night about injured animals."

Not just the health issues, pet lovers in the city also approach the hospital

## Stem cell therapy, pet blood bank in offing

Gurgaon: Apart from the services that are already being provided at the CGS hospital in the city, the authorities plan to start a few other facilities, including stem cell therapy and pet blood bank.

"Recently a team of veterinary scientists working on stem cells at IVRI (Indian veterinary research institute, Bareilly) visited us and has earmarked our hospital for stem cell therapy in dogs in collaboration with IVRI scientists. Stem cell therapy is a drug free treatment for dogs, cats and other animals suffering from osteoarthritis, hip dysplasia, ligament and cartilage injuries and other degenerative diseases.

"In this treatment stem cells from the animals own body are used. When stem cells are collected and activated, they are injected into an affected area, such as an arthritic joint, allowing them to regenerate and grow into healthy tissue. The result is a diseased area becoming more stout and strong thanks to the new cellular growth," explained Dr Mahendran. Within two to three weeks, most animals that have been in severe pain with a restricted range of motion are able to walk, run, and jump again. They are no longer in need of prescription anti-inflammatories and pain medications. Depending on the severity of the condition, this treatment may last a lifetime.

The other projects include cataract surgery, pet aphrenesis, hemodialysis and pet blood bank.

seeking suggestions, like what kind of pets to keep. "We tell the people to be careful before selecting the pet they want to keep. It's a huge responsibility," said a doctor at the hospital. "There are some dogs that face breathing problems because of their flat nose. There are others who cannot survive the heat. We advise their owners depending on where they live and how they plan to take care of their pet."