



Rise in 'Instagram pets' concerns vets

Little dogs are the most popular in the Bay. Photo: Sharnae Hope.

It's a no-brainer that cute pets on social media are reeling in views, but if you're thinking about buying a pet to shake up your Instagram feed, two Tauranga vets say maybe you should re-think your decision.

With the rise of social media, many pets are being selected based on their looks or popularity, such as huskies, but in the Bay, French bulldogs and pugs, and birman and ragdoll cats are most popular.

However, buying trendy pets with a 'she'll be right' Kiwi attitude has a dark side, with many people not understanding the costs and time needed for an 'Instagram' pet.

Dr Liza Schneider from Holistic Vets says social media definitely influences people's decisions about buying pets, whether that be movies, TV programmes or social media.

"Social media definitely seems to influence people's decisions about buying pets," says Liza. "This is often positive as they obtain valuable information about what type of animal to get, where to buy them from and what they need to do to care for the animal but it can be a concern when they are misinformed."

Nick Sygrove from Tauranga Vetcare says when people buy pets based on trends, they don't think about whether that pet will fit into their lifestyle.

"People don't realise that designer, cute breeds are going to cost them.

"They think we're joking when we say they need insurance, but each pet comes with a list of health issues," says Nick.

"You can look at a bulldog and think the price of buying one is expensive, but that's actually nothing compared to what it will cost you in its lifetime for its issues, such as respiratory and skin issues."

He suggests when buying a pet you should get insurance for at least the first three years, as you don't always know what their issues or problems could be.

Some breeds are known to have health issues, but sometimes it is simply just down to your pet's personality.

Future pet owners not only need to do their research on the pet, but also need to research the environment they live in.

In the Bay of Plenty a large amount of pets each week suffer from skin diseases, such as sunburn and allergic reactions to Wandering Jew and kikuyu grass.

"Tauranga is terrible for allergies and nothing highlighted it more than after the earthquakes in Christchurch.

"Clients who moved up from Christchurch, never had any issues with skin disease, and then all of a sudden they were here every five minutes."

Liza says thankfully she finds the majority of people who buy pets because they are trendy do look after them.

"Unfortunately we do see cases where pets are very sick and their owners can't afford even the most basic medical care.

"In these cases we sometimes have to humanely euthanise these pets to ease their suffering," she says.

Read the rest of the story at:

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Sharnae Hope