



An unneutered male pig will have sex with many things. Often, he will make a gooey stinky mess you will have to clean up. Female pigs get very testy during mating periods when they are not spayed. Spay and neuter surgery is essential to maintaining a peaceful loving home for you and your pig. The surgery is more delicate for pigs than it is for cats and dogs and so it is important to have a qualified vet perform the surgery.

A pig not eating is potentially a sick pig. We have noticed that pigs may go off feed for one meal and get back on track with the next meal. This does not happen often. If a pig quits eating it is important to get her to the vet. As soon as possible. As prey animals they will mask some symptoms until they are very sick.

Potbellied Pigs need yearly vaccinations, hoof and tusk trimming, yearly worming and general health exams with veterinarians. Potbellied pigs need their ears and eyes cleaned regularly. Some of these tasks can be performed by caretakers. Others, such as rabies vaccinations cannot. Someone who has a lot of experience with PBP's or a vet, can teach you how to do those things you can.

Please make sure you have a good vet in your area before deciding to bring a pig into your family. Just because a vet says that she/he is qualified to treat PBP's, does not make it so. Ask us for a referral to a vet here on the Central Coast. If you live outside of our community, check with the closest Potbellied Pig rescue group in your area. If your pig gets sick, a good vet is essential to saving her life.



Potbellied Pigs!

An Overview of Their Care.

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Piggies!

Potbellied Pigs can be one of the most endearing companion animals we have the opportunity to bring into our families. They can also be very challenging. Potbellied Pigs are herd animals and enjoy the company of other pigs. When not with other pigs, they will bond with their human families. However, they do better when living with other pigs. They should always have companions. We have seen pigs bond with goats, chickens, and dogs. Given the chance to be with other pigs, they will immediately gravitate to their own. If you are considering your first Potbellied Pig, it is a good idea to start with one and create a bond with her, with the idea that another pig will probably be added to your family later.

Smarter than dogs, they are easy to train. Like dogs, it takes time and patience. Pigs can be housetrained, and can live quite happily in the home. They do not normally leave their waste in the area where they sleep, so training them to go outside is very possible. However, it will take training.

A quick way to teach your pig to trust you, remember they are prey animals so trusting humans is not a natural instinct, is to sit on the floor with food in your lap. Because of their high intelligence, Pigs "get it" when humans offer friendship.

They do have natural instincts to strive for a position in the family hierarchy. This can create problems if the pig feels a need to assert dominance over a new family member. Potential problems can be averted with training and patience.

Housing

PBP's like to root. They need a secure outside place where they dig up soil. This area must be secure so that the garden isn't destroyed and to protect the pig from hazardous materials, toxic plants, escaping, or generally getting into trouble. They are capable of breaking pvc, (plastic), pipes and pushing through fencing or other barriers. Pigs are very, VERY, strong.

Pigs can live outside but need shelter from cold and wet weather. They are best kept at temperatures between seventy five and ninety degrees. Though more cold sensitive than heat sensitive, summer weather means providing them with shade and, ideally, a mud bath to stay cool. Never wet a pig down to cool them off. Apply water only to the stomach to avoid shock.

Pigs like to sleep in snuggly beds. Straw or old non-electric blankets, (some electric blanket have asbestos, a hazardous material, in them), are good bedding materials.

Feeding Time

Potbellied Pigs generally weigh around 100 lbs when fed correctly. They can reach 300 lbs if overfed, and they never stay at 40 lbs unless starving. After neutering, males become very food aggressive.

Choosing the right food for PBPs can be challenging. Though there are many brands available, some can be detrimental to their health. It is important that the feed not contain too much ash and be higher in fiber than the feed manufactured for "farm pigs." The most widely available feed that promotes good health is manufactured by Purina Mills; Mazuri Mini Pig food. It is available for different age groups and can be ordered by any animal or feed supply stores that carry Purina Mills products. When feeding your pigs, it is important to know what they weigh because the amount of feed given is relevant to their body weight. Check with your vet for this information.

It is okay to give your pigs treats within reason. An occasional cookie, un-buttered popcorn, an animal cracker or two, are all acceptable treats. Fruit and fresh veggies are also good choices, but keep in mind that fruit and carrots are fattening.

Another appropriate food item to use as a supplement for fiber and as a treat is forage or alfalfa hay. But be careful, the nutritional content of their pellets is well balanced, so added items should be limited so as not to upset that balance.

Pigs need to be fed twice a day to avoid liver problems and brands of feeds should never be switched suddenly or kidney problems are possible.

And...

The kindest thing you can do for your pig, besides belly and behind the ear scratches, is to crate train her so that if, or when, you have to transport her to the vet or a new home it is not a traumatic event for her or you.

Some PBP's like toys, several of ours have their own stuffed animals that they keep. Care must be given that toys do not have small parts attached or inside that could cause choking or gastronomical obstructions if swallowed.

Pigs are prone to dry skin problems and light colored pigs can get sunburned. Skin lotions and sunscreens may be needed to keep your pigs skin in good health.

There are many Pigs, young and old, in shelters all over the country. They are more likely to be euthanized than dogs or cats because shelters do not have the expertise or facilities to care for them. Additionally the public is not generally aware of the fact that shelters house animals other than cats and dogs. Please adopt. Contact us for referrals to pigs available near you.



Questions? 805.227.0205

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