

Dog walking can be harmful for older people

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It once seemed common sense to believe that having and walking a dog was good for older people. Dogs are great companions and provide a healthy excuse to go for a walk and get a bit of exercise. However, new research shows that taking the dog

for a walk can have its downsides for seniors. A report published in the American medical journal 'JAMA Surgery' says injuries among seniors related to dog-walking are becoming increasingly prevalent. From 2004 to 2017, researchers calculated that there were over 32,000 cases of people in the USA aged 65 and over suffering fractures attributed to walking their dog. Some of the injuries were serious and required the senior to undergo emergency surgery.

The researchers advised the elderly to consider the possible dangers to owning and walking a dog. They said: "For older adults - especially those living alone and with decreased bone mineral density - the risks associated with walking leashed dogs merit consideration." They added: "Even one injury could result in a potentially lethal hip fracture, lifelong complications, or the loss of their independence." Lead researcher Dr Jaimo Ahn blamed what he termed as a "small person/big dog" scenario for many of the accidents. He said a dog is sometimes mismatched with its owner's inability and strength to handle it. One elderly dog owner said: "Old people need dogs. We need our soul mates."

Sources: foxnews.com / cnn.com / sciencedaily.com

Writing

A dog is the best pet a person could have. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

common sense / walking / a dog / companion / seniors / injuries / fractures / surgery researchers / living alone / bone / hip / complications / independence / accidents

True / False

- a) The article says dogs are great companions for older people. T / F
- b) The article says dog-walking has no downsides for the elderly. T / F
- c) Over 32,000 elderly people got injured while dog-walking in 2017. T / F
- d) Most elderly people injured while dog-walking need surgery. T / F
- e) Elderly people with lower bone mineral density should take care. T / F
- f) The article says walking leashed dogs merits consideration. T / F
- g) A researcher talked about a "small dog/big person" scenario. T / F
- h) An elderly person said dogs are soul mates for old people. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| 1. companions | a. common |
| 2. excuse | b. control |
| 3. downsides | c. face |
| 4. prevalent | d. solidness |
| 5. undergo | e. reason |
| 6. advised | f. context |
| 7. density | g. urged |
| 8. lethal | h. friends |
| 9. scenario | i. deadly |
| 10. handle | j. drawbacks |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of dogs?
- b) Do you like going for walks?
- c) What are the good and bad things about walks?
- d) Are dogs the best kinds of pets?
- e) Should seniors think carefully about taking a dog for a walk?
- f) What other injuries can dogs cause?
- g) How can seniors protect themselves while walking the dog?
- h) What kind of exercise do you get?

Phrase Match

1. It once seemed common
 2. Dogs are great
 3. becoming increasingly
 4. researchers calculated that there were
 5. undergo
 6. decreased bone mineral
 7. merit
 8. result in a potentially lethal hip
 9. a "small person/big dog"
 10. We need our soul
- a. prevalent
 - b. scenario
 - c. emergency surgery
 - d. density
 - e. fracture
 - f. companions
 - g. over 32,000 cases
 - h. mates
 - i. sense to believe that
 - j. consideration

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of dogs as pets?
- c) Should old people be educated about walking the dog?
- d) How beneficial is it to walk a dog?
- e) Are dogs better for young people or old people?
- f) How dangerous are rabbits and hamsters as pets?
- g) What is the small person/big dog scenario?
- h) What questions would you like to ask elderly dog owners?

Spelling

1. Dogs are great mnpaioicns
2. published in the American medical orujnal
3. becoming increasingly reapelvnt
4. suffering tacfurres attributed to walking
5. Some of the nrujiies were serious
6. undergo emergency urgesry
7. bone mineral esndity
8. the risks sscaaioted with walking
9. otnpaitlely lethal
10. lifelong mloaictcoipns
11. a "small person/big dog" nesaciro
12. sometimes smtamciehd with its owner's inability

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. e	3. j	4. a	5. c
6. g	7. d	8. i	9. f	10. b

Role Play

Role A – Dogs

You think dogs are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): snakes, fish or birds.

Role B – Snakes

You think snakes are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): dogs, fish or birds.

Role C – Fish

You think fish are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): snakes, dogs or birds.

Role D – Birds

You think birds are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): snakes, fish or dogs.

Speaking – Pets

Rank these with your partner. Put the best pets at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- cats
- snakes
- hamsters
- parrots
- dogs
- fish
- spiders
- cows

Answers – True False

a T	b F	c F	d F	e T	f T	g F	h T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.