



Commonly Asked Questions

After an 8th Grader sent us some questions for a research paper she was doing, we decided to share the answers on our website! We are often asked these questions and hope that you find the answers helpful. If you have other questions, please contact us at info@UVHS.org.

What is the average number of animals at the humane society?

In 2019, the average number of animals in our care was 67. That number fluctuates based on the seasons. We have fewer animals in the winter and more in the summer. Often during the summer, we have 100 or more animals in our care.

What is the main reason for animals being at the humane society?

Almost 40% of the animals at UVHS were surrendered, which means a pet's owner can no longer care for them and trusts UVHS to care for them and find them a new home.

Approximately 25% of the animals at UVHS arrive as strays. Caring people sometimes find cats or dogs, and even domesticated bunnies, wandering around outside and bring them to UVHS.

Roughly 22% of the animals here come for special help through programs such as trap-neuter-return and emergency boarding.

Around how many animals get adopted a year?

Our programs, such as the pet food pantry, vaccine clinics, and spay/neuter clinics, help thousands of animals every year. Many lost pets that arrive at UVHS as strays are happily reunited with their families. Approximately 500 pets are adopted each year.

Do the majority of your animals have medical problems or not?

Every animal who comes to UVHS is examined by a vet. Some older cats and dogs require medication for arthritis or need special diets due to food allergies or sensitive stomachs. Occasionally, an animal has serious special medical needs that require surgery, have dental problems, or even arrive at UVHS with broken bones. UVHS takes care of those needs. Medical issues are explained fully to potential new families so they can give the best care to their new pet.

What is the average age of dogs that usually come to the humane society? Cats?

Animals of all ages, sizes, and breeds come to UVHS from day old kittens to eighteen- and twenty-year-old cats.

How do you afford the needs for the animals?

Donations keep UVHS open. 80% of our income is donated by people, foundations and businesses. Just 20% of our income is from things like adoption fees and spay/neuter clinic fees. We also receive donations of items from generous people and businesses, such as food, blankets, beds, and toys.

What is the most common breed of dog at the humane society? Cats?

The most common breed of cat that comes to UVHS is the common, domestic shorthair. Most dogs at the shelter are a mix of breeds, but we do occasionally care for purebred dogs.

What is the most stressful part about working at UVHS?

All of the cleaning! Working at an animal shelter means that there is always some poop to shovel or floors to clean. Cleaning and disinfecting is a huge part of our job. We also feed animals twice per day, for approximately 50,000 meals fed every year! This keeps all of the animals healthy and happy.

On average, how many hours a day do you work at the humane society?

The average work day is 7.5 hours. There is always someone working every single day of the year, including holidays. We also have volunteers who work 2 – 8 hour shifts doing all sorts of things that help the animals! The pets at UVHS always come first.

Do you have any advice for people wanting to adopt?

Be open to meeting the shy cats and loud dogs! Animals behave differently when they are in kennels or cat condos. Sometimes the sweetest cat is the one that is hiding in the corner of their condo because they are afraid of loud noises. They may act very differently when they are in a loving home. Sometimes the dog that barks the loudest in its kennel is the one that just really wants your love and attention! Also, be patient when you adopt a pet. Most pets take about a month to truly settle into their new homes.

Do you ever have to put animals to sleep? If so, how do you do this?

Putting an animal to sleep is called humane euthanasia. It is often a compassionate choice for an animal who is suffering. UVHS goes above and beyond to help every animal. Over 95% of the animals who come to UVHS are adopted or returned home.

At the Upper Valley Humane Society, we seek to meet every pet in their place and time of need. While we recognize the need for humane euthanasia in extreme cases, we treat this philosophy with a high level of respect. Each pet comes with their own unique set of circumstances and these circumstances,

combined with their response to a shelter environment, can drive our individualized compassion-filled approach to our time with them.

Pets are given the chance to settle in, have any and all appropriate medical treatment, be evaluated behaviorally, and are provided every opportunity to succeed in their journey to a new home.

Occasionally, the team that works with these pets feels it is in the pets' best interest from a quality of life standpoint or the community's best interest from a safety standpoint to humanely euthanize the pet. Before we make this decision, we have a discussion with the people who know the animal best, especially our medical team that has examined the animal and our behavior team who are familiar with the animal's personality. Ultimately, any euthanasia decision is made by a team of people and always with great love and care.

We only euthanize an animal for one of two reasons: 1) they are too sick to be cured or treated, or 2) they are too dangerous to responsibly place in our community.

Once the decision to euthanize an animal has been made, staff are given a chance to say a personal goodbye. Often, they will bring the dogs a hamburger from the drive thru or an ice cream cone. The procedure is done in a quiet space and is an injection. We treat this process with tremendous respect. We follow the protocols set forth by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The decision to humanely euthanize an animal is never easy, nor taken lightly. But in our desire to responsibly care for the lives entrusted to us, UVHS recognizes this need does exist and we seek to meet that need for the people, communities, and pets that we serve.