

## Pros and Cons of Potbellied Pigs

Having a pig as a pet can be a rewarding experience, as with any animal, they **do** require a great deal of effort and commitment. Pigs are not maintenance-free animals and are not as easy to care for as a cat or dog. Vietnamese potbellied pigs have been heavily promoted as house pets - although they should not be raised **full**-time as house pets. Anyone considering a pig as a pet should know that potbellied pigs are expected to live 10 to 15 years or more and a full-grown pig often weighs well over 130 pounds.

PROS	CONS
Pigs are intelligent and have been placed fourth on the intelligence list (first are humans, second- primates, third-dolphins/whales, fourth-pigs).	Because of their high level of intelligence, pigs that are kept as FULL-time house pets can become bored easily and are often destructive when finding ways to entertain themselves. It is not uncommon for them to root up carpeting or linoleum floors, eat drywall, learn to open the cupboards or refrigerator, overturn house plants and root through the dirt.
Pigs that have been neutered or spayed are generally sweet-natured and sensitive animals. In fact, pigs are so sensitive that you can hurt their feelings.	Pigs are herd animals and have a pecking order similar to that of chickens. Each member of the herd has a particular standing in a pecking order and a pig will usually vie to be "top pig" in the herd. When raised in the house, the family members will become the pig's herd. At around 18 months of age, the struggle for "top pig" will begin. To determine the order standing, pigs fight. They will charge their opponent, snapping and swinging their head. When the opponent is a family member or a guest that has come to visit, this can be quite dangerous.
Pigs can be litter-box trained. Outside pigs <b>generally</b> use only one corner of the yard as the bathroom.	Pigs do root. Anyone desiring a perfectly manicured lawn should not have a pig. Placing a ring in their nose is cruel because rooting is a natural instinct for pigs. By rooting, they obtain necessary vitamins and minerals from the ground as well as food. They have been known to eat worms and grubs and also will root to find acorns or truffles.
Pigs <b>generally</b> enjoy hardy health. Pigs should receive yearly vaccinations, yearly hoof trimmings, and a yearly physical. There is no approved rabies vaccine for a pig; therefore they are not given rabies shots.	Pigs are very susceptible to pneumonia. The biggest cause of pneumonia is weather, but it can also be brought on by stress. Pigs can "stress out" quite easily. Because of their small lung size, bronchitis or pneumonia can kill a pig quickly.
Pigs have bristle-like hair. People allergic to dog and cat fur generally are not allergic to the hair of a pig.	Finding a vet knowledgeable in the health-care of potbellied pigs can prove difficult. Vet care can be expensive, depending, of course, on your particular area and the health condition of your pig. Emergency treatment and/or specialized surgery can be especially expensive. Potbellied pigs should not be treated as domestic farm hogs. Also spaying & neutering a pig is quite different from a dog or cat. Due to the size and difficulty in transporting, a vet willing to make house calls is recommended.
Pigs are generally clean, odorless animals. The only reason they "roll in the mud" during hot weather is to cool off, the mud also protects their skin to keep off flies.	Pigs need a pool or mud puddle for cooling off in hot weather. They do not sweat and must have a way of lowering their body temperature when they become overheated. They need plenty of bedding in their sleeping area during the colder months. In the winter, they love to bury themselves under straw and blankets.
	Local zoning laws may not allow pigs as pets. Many people are forced to get rid of their pig is not zoned.
Pigs do not stink - except male pigs that are not neutered.	Pigs should be neutered or spayed before 8- 12 weeks of age. If they are not, female pigs can become quite moody. An un-neutered male pig generally has a strong, foul odor. <b>Spay and/or neuter your pigs.</b>