

# Before Adopting a Potbellied Pig

Potbellied pigs can make wonderful companion animals, but they are not the right pet for everyone. There are many, many potbellied pigs in shelters, sanctuaries and rescues all over the country and that doesn't include the ones abandoned and neglected in people's yards.



Pigs are extremely intelligent and sensitive animals. They require caregivers who are knowledgeable about their care and behavior, and are committed to providing them with tender loving care and mental stimulation.

**Check the zoning laws.** So, you're thinking about adopting a potbellied pig and you haven't had one before. Where to start? The first thing to do is to check with local government officials to find out if the area where you live is zoned for potbellied pigs. Some places do not allow potbellied pigs as pets. Other places allow them, but impose restrictions such as housing requirements or weight limits.

Many people have brought pigs into their homes even though their area was not zoned for pigs, and they ended up having to give the pig up, often because a neighbor complained. Please don't put a pig (or yourself) through this heartbreak: being a part of your family and then having to be placed elsewhere because of a zoning issue. If you love pigs and your area isn't zoned for piggy pets, you can always volunteer at a pig rescue and/or sponsor a pig or two.

**Volunteer.** Then, if you have never spent time with these engaging critters, it's a good idea to volunteer at a place that rescues potbellied pigs so that you can get to know them up close and personal. Potbellied pig sanctuaries and rescues are usually at capacity and not only welcome volunteers, but count on extra help. Please contact us for the sanctuary closest to you or plan a trip to Best Friends to learn about pigs!

**Do some research.** Read the potbellied pig resources in the You & Your Pets library on the Best Friends website (at [www.bestfriends.org/theanimals](http://www.bestfriends.org/theanimals)). The resources contain information about potbellied pigs – their behavior, correct diet, housing needs and veterinary care – and links to other websites for more information.

The more you know about potbellied pigs, the better prepared you will be to create a happy, healthy home for the pig. If you don't have Internet skills or access, you can contact us and we'll send you an information packet to help you get started.

**Find a pig-friendly vet.** Potbellied pigs need a vet who specializes in their care. Since potbellied pigs are a bit more "exotic" than cats or dogs, you'll want to check out whether there's a veterinarian in your area who's experienced in treating potbellied pigs.

**One pig or two?** Potbellied pigs can live indoors or outdoors. Pigs can be house-trained to go outside to go to the bathroom. They can even be trained to use a “litter box” – usually a sandbox or kiddie pool. If you are interested in an outdoor pig, adopt two, since they are very social creatures and are much happier and emotionally healthy in pairs.

*Yvonne McIntosh is the potbellied pig specialist, adoption coordinator and manager for Best Friends Animal Society. If you have questions related to anything piggy, please send an e-mail to [yvonnem@bestfriends.org](mailto:yvonnem@bestfriends.org).*