

# Potbellied Pig Relationships

Pigs are quite intelligent creatures and, because they are smart, they are also social and sensitive beings. To be content, they need the companionship of others. Pigs love being in the company of other pigs, so please consider adopting two pigs instead of one. A pig without piggy friends can become bored or depressed, which could lead to the pig exhibiting undesirable behaviors or even becoming ill. Besides, two



pigs can entertain each other; if you have just one pig, you'll need to provide a lot more physical and mental stimulation to keep your pig happy.

Pigs can and will bond with people, just as dogs and cats do. In fact, they can become so attached to their people that they suffer greatly when separated from them. If separated from his people, either permanently or for a long period of time, a pig will often become depressed. The outward signs of depression are lethargy and lack of interest in food. Pigs who have other pigs for companionship fare much better if separated from their people because they still have each other.

**Socialization.** Many potbellied pigs have had bad experiences with people or have been neglected by them. These pigs will eventually come around and trust humans, but it can take months and months for them to feel comfortable enough with people to start trusting them. It's important for the new caregiver to be aware that this process takes time. If the pig is pressured into interacting with people, she will retreat emotionally. The caregiver needs to be understanding, nurturing and patient while waiting for the pig to gather the courage to trust a human once again.

**Cats and dogs.** Pigs and house cats typically get along well. Pigs and dogs are another story, however. Pigs and dogs can get along well: It all depends on the pig, the dog and the circumstances. In one situation, a pig was raised from a piglet with a family's three dogs, and all was fine for several years. But then the family moved into a house with a smaller yard – and eventually one of the dogs attacked the pig. The pig was not severely injured, but he was quite stressed by the incident. Things went back to normal between the pig and the dogs for several years, but then the pig was attacked again. The second attack involved all three dogs and the pig was injured badly enough that he required veterinary care. The moral of the story is this: To be absolutely safe, pigs and dogs should never be together without human supervision.

**Introducing pigs to each other.** If you intend to have two pigs living together, start by putting them in side-by-side enclosures for a few weeks. When it is time to allow them to truly meet and greet each other, find a neutral area for the introduction. Regardless of how many weeks they've spent in neighboring enclosures, they will fight for dominance. The fighting won't usually result in serious injuries (unless tusks are involved), but there

may be superficial injuries that do bleed a bit. In most cases, after several minutes one of the pigs will “give in” and walk away in an act of submission. Before you house the pigs together, it’s a good idea to have several meet-and-greet sessions to slowly allow the pigs to get to know each other.

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