

Pets Delay Memory Loss

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. memorization /ˌmeməˈrɪzəʃ(ə)n, ˌmemərəˈzəʃ(ə)n/ (noun) the process of committing something to memory or learning something by heart.
Example: She is brilliant in memorization.
2. preliminary /prəˈliməˌnerē/ (adjective) denoting an action or event preceding or done in preparation for something fuller or more important.
Example: The discussions were seen as preliminary to the policy paper.
3. prevalent /ˈprev(ə)lənt/ (adjective) widespread in a particular area or at a particular time.
Example: Drought conditions have been prevalent across the area for several years.
4. evidence /ˈevədəns/ the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid.
Example: He has been unable to find evidence to support his theory..
5. chronic /ˈkränik/ (adjective) (of an illness) persisting for a long time or constantly recurring.
Example: Chronic kidney disease (CKD), also known as chronic kidney failure, means a gradual loss of kidney function over time.



Having a long-term pet companion may delay memory loss and other kinds of cognitive decline, a new study has found. Pet ownership was especially beneficial for working verbal memory, such as **memorization** of word lists, according to the **preliminary** research.

"To our knowledge, our study is the first to consider the effect of duration of pet ownership on cognitive health," first author Jennifer Applebaum, a sociology doctoral candidate and National Institute of Health predoctoral fellow at University of Florida, told CNN in an email.

And it's not just cats and dogs that can boost the brain. People in the study also cared for rabbits, hamsters, birds, fish and reptiles, Applebaum said, although "dogs were most **prevalent**, followed by cats."

Owning household pets for five years or more produced the most benefit, delaying cognitive decline by 1.2 points over the six-year period of the study compared with the rate of decline in people without pets, said clinical neuroimmunologist Dr. Tiffany Braley, an associate professor of neurology at the University of Michigan, via email.

"These findings provide early **evidence** to suggest that long-term pet ownership could be protective against cognitive decline," said Braley, senior author of the study to be presented in April at the American Academy of Neurology's 74th Annual Meeting.

Why did having pets for more than five years have the most positive impact? The study, which could only show an association, not a direct cause and effect between pet ownership and cognition, was unable to answer that question.

However, previous studies have pointed to the negative effects of stress on brain health, especially **chronic** stress, Braley said. (CNN)

DISCUSSION

1. What is the benefit of having a companion?
2. Why are pets important?
3. Which is better: a human or pet companion? Why?
4. What can people do to prevent brain deterioration?
5. What do you think is the worst mental illness?