

Don't fall (ill) for buying a pet this Christmas!

Wednesday 11 December, 2019

When it comes to choosing gifts this year, the Emergent Disease Foundation urges people to keep pets off the list!

Over 60% of human diseases have some link to animals, as do 75% of newly emerging diseases, and around 60 human infections are known to come from pets. Such diseases, called zoonoses, affect many people but most are probably disguised as everyday 'flus, stomach problems, rashes and fever. Annually, in the UK, around 6,000 cases of salmonellosis may be attributable to pet reptiles, and one study found that 27% of children under 5 years that were hospitalized with salmonella infections contracted their illness from pet reptiles.

EMODE Pet Score - new online service to score pets

EMODE Pet Score is a new free website service (www.emodepetscore.com), launched today, that categorises animals according to how challenging they may be to keep. 'EMODE' (Easy, Moderate, Difficult or Extreme) is a user-friendly scientific algorithm designed by 18 biologists and vets, to help people make the right decision at the right time – **before** getting a pet. Many species are pre-scored on the website so the right answer can be just a click or two away. And while new species will be regularly added to the site, users can also find out how difficult an animal may be to keep by answering the Pet Score's 6 questions. Just researching the answers to the questions raises awareness about challenges and knowledge gaps regarding an animal's needs and care, as well as relevant health risks.

Not the animal's fault!

For many if not most animals the microbes and 'mega-parasites' they harbour are normal or even healthy - *for them!* But when in a human, these same 'bugs' can make us sick. It is not the animal's fault – but simply a significant mismatch of lifestyles: animals (in particular wild or 'exotic' species) are literally in the wrong place – our homes!

Playing it down for profit

Commonly, pet sellers and online forums play down potential risks from pets, and instead market many unsuitable animals as 'easy to keep' or 'suitable for children'. But if you are finding it easy to manage an animal and related domestic hygiene then you may be doing something wrong. Also, an animal suffering due to poor care may present an increased risk of shedding germs.

- Comments Clifford Warwick, a medical scientist specializing in zoonoses and a developer of the EMODE Pet Score service: *"Most pet keepers and their doctors probably overlook the link between pets - especially exotics – and a domestic bug. Sensible precautions, like handwashing, help but do not guarantee freedom from infection. Informed decision-making at the outset can 'put the brakes on pet purchase mistakes'."*
- Comments Catrina Steedman, a Trustee of Emergent Disease Foundation and a co-developer of EMODE Pet Score: *"Whether cute or curious, too many pets are annual victims of impulse purchases, and too many people also end up as casualties because they were misled into believing the animal to be 'easy to keep'. EMODE Pet Score will help avoid unknowingly inviting infection into the home."*

Media:



Related Sectors:

Children & Teenagers ::
Christmas :: Environment &
Nature :: Farming & Animals ::
Health ::

Related Keywords:

Pet :: Health :: EMODE Pet
Score :: Exotic Pet :: Christmas ::
Disease :: Animal Welfare ::

Scan Me:



Company Contact:

—

Emergent Disease Foundation

T. 0044 (0)7903 528702

E. mail@emergentdisease.org

W. <https://emergentdisease.org>

[View Online](#)

Additional Assets:

<https://emoddepetscore.com>

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:

<https://www.emergentdisease.pressat.co.uk>