

How Pets Contribute to Healthy Aging: Benefits, Challenges, and Changing Perceptions



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www.healthyagingpoll.org



Q1. Do you have any pets?

1. Yes
2. No

If Q1 = 2

Q2. What are your main reasons for not having any pets? Select all that apply.

1. Allergies (your own or household member)
2. Cost
3. Don't want to be tied down
4. Just choose not to have a pet
5. No interest (your own or household member)
6. Not healthy enough to take care of a pet
7. Not enough time to care for pet
8. Pets not allowed where I live
9. Pet recently died
10. Too messy
11. Another reason

If Q1 = 1

Q3. What kind of pet(s) do you currently have? Select all that apply.

1. Cat
2. Dog
3. Fish
4. Bird
5. Reptile
6. Small mammal (rabbit, guinea pig, hamster etc.)
7. Large mammal (horse, sheep, pig, etc.)
8. Another kind of pet

If Q1 = 1

Q4. Does having pet(s) help you... Select all that apply.

1. Be physically active
2. Enjoy life
3. Feel loved
4. Cope with physical or emotional symptoms
5. Reduce stress
6. Stick to a routine
7. None of the above



If Q1 = 1

Q5. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Having pet(s)...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
connects me with others				
gives me a sense of purpose				
strains my budget				

Data Source and Methods

This National Poll on Healthy Aging report presents findings from a national household survey conducted exclusively by NORC at the University of Chicago for the University of Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation. This survey was administered online and by phone from September 3rd–29th, 2025, to a randomly selected, stratified group of U.S. adults age 50–95 (n=2,698). The survey completion rate was 51% among panel members invited to participate. The margin of error is ± 1 to 3 percentage points for questions asked of the full sample and higher among subgroups.

The sample for the Michigan Poll on Healthy Aging included Michigan adults age 50–95 (n=1,270), with 364 from the AmeriSpeak probability-based panel and 906 from non-probability panels. The survey completion rate was 63% among probability-based panel members in Michigan that were invited to participate. The margin of error is ± 1 to 4 percentage points for questions asked of the full Michigan sample and higher among subgroups.

Read [past National Poll on Healthy Aging reports](#) and [about the poll methodology](#).

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