



To walk with a dog... is to share his world. What sights and sounds he encounters. What past and present smells he reads. To stretch his legs, to bask in the sun, to discover and wind his way through this brave new human world.

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Dogs in Action: Autism Service Dogs

Also called autism assistance or autism alert dogs, these are dogs that live alongside children or adults with autism. (In contrast to autism therapy dogs, who visit treatment and residential centres.) Of course, children and adults with autism are individuals and not all benefit from a service dog. But for those who respond well, it can be life-changing.



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Did You Know: These Doggie Facts?

- With their swivelling ears, dogs can locate the source of a sound in 0.06 seconds.
- Dogs have far fewer taste buds than humans, but the 200 million scent receptors in their nasal folds (compared to our 5 million) nevertheless make some of them very finicky eaters.
- The hair on a dog's muzzle, eyes, and jaws are touch-sensitive hairs called vibrissae that can sense tiny changes in airflow.
- Dogs have 39 pairs of chromosomes. Humans have 23.
- Dogs have about 10 vocal chords. Cats have more than 100.
- Studies show dogs can learn to distinguish up to 100 words, though Chaser the Border Collie has learnt the names of more than 1,000 objects alone.
- Dogs' eyes are more sensitive to light and movement than ours but lack our focal range flexibility — you spot the tennis ball in the grass right away; your dog notices a bug flitting a wing somewhere in the periphery instead.

cont.

....Autism service dogs

Characteristic of most autism spectrum disorders is the tendency to live in one's own world. A dog can be a bridge to the outside world. The unique bond that grows between dogs and humans entices many kids and adults with autism to open up, communicate more, initiate interactions, and relax in situations that otherwise cause stress.

Dogs chosen as autism service dogs must be "bombproof," meaning they stay calm in almost any circumstance. The singular skill of an autism service dog includes distracting from repetitive behaviours or 'meltdowns' with a nudge of the nose or a paw, as well as being tethered to a person to prevent and protect him from wandering. The benefits can include positive changes in behaviour, emotional comfort, being able to go to restaurants and shops, and better and longer sleep for everyone in the family as the person with autism may wake less when co-sleeping with the dog.



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Tips & Tools: Safety at Your Fingertips

Spotting illness. Aside from things you can see, smell, or hear (rashes, discharge, wheezing, etc.) look out for loss of appetite, disorientation, lethargy, persistent scratching, coughing, or head shaking. All should prompt a trip to the vet.

Danger-free driving. Use a car crate or harness. Don't roll windows so far down that your dog can squeeze out. Always keep the leash on for entries and exits. Never leave your dog in a hot car.

Doggie first aid kit necessities. Antiseptic wipes, antibiotic ointment, eye wash, petroleum jelly, anti-diarrhoea tablets, pad bandages and bandage scissors, a syringe, tweezers, vet wrap, and a rectal thermometer.

Safeguard your pooch with... A reflective vest or lighted collar, a life jacket for any water sports, up-to-date ID tags, and a microchip implant with your contact information.

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