

# POT BELLY PIG SECRETS

THE ALL-IN-ONE GUIDE  
TO SUCCESSFULLY RAISING  
YOUR PIGGY!



## INTRODUCTION

If you are thinking of inviting a Potbellied Pig into your life, then there are certain things you need to know from the very start, that will save you much time and patience. Pigs are not like dogs or cats. They do not bow down to anyone. They have extremely strong personalities and dislike being disciplined or told what to do. They are pigs and pigs are 'Pig-Headed'.

The trick with Pigs is to start as you mean to go on. From the very first day you need to feed, train and treat them correctly. It is very difficult to re-train an old pig with new tricks.

Remember, before buying your pig, check your Zoning laws to make sure you are allowed keep one. Many people that live in urban areas will not be allowed by their local councils or community groups. I would also suggest telling the neighbours and making sure they are alright with it. There have been many long days in courtrooms trying to settle cases that could have been settled long before, if the right steps were taken.

Owning a Potbellied Pig is an addictive experience. They literally become part and parcel of one's family. They are naturally a herding animal, so they actually like fitting into the grand scheme of things when it comes to your family and your home. They will most probably not like your dog. They will accept your cat, but there will be no great love shown. Do not allow them upstairs, do not feed them sweets and try your utmost to communicate clearly with it, from the very first day it arrives into its new home. I hope you enjoy 'Pot Belly Secrets' and I wish you the best in keeping a Potbellied Pig.

Regards  
Sean

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## Origins of the Potbellied Pig

Most Potbellied Pigs originally come from Vietnam and various other parts of Asia. All of the breeds we know today have been mixed and modified to suit as domestic pets, although they still trace their lineage back to potbellied pigs.

Pot Bellied pigs were first brought into during the late 70's and early 80's. These were larger pigs than the breeds we know today. Because of huge media coverage, they became an instant hit with all sorts of folk who wanted more than just a dog as a pet; after all, pigs are intelligent, cute and funny. They were also popular attractions in many pet farms and zoos, because of their friendly personality and size, and their likeness for socializing and eating loads of treats.



Since that time, many breeds have been mixed to make them smaller/bigger/cuter, in order for them to be better house pets. Breeders are constantly developing more desirable characteristics (size, disposition, color, conformation, etc.) better suited for house pets, although the debate is still on, whether this is actually a good thing or bad. The potbellied pig is a direct descendent of the old world wild pig family: Order (Artiodactyla), Suborder (Suina), Family (Suidae), Genus (Sus Scrofa) the wild boar.

Most of the pigs we now buy in the USA and the UK originally descended from various parts of Vietnam, they share many common characteristics (pointed ears, sway back, straight tail, pot belly, size and gentle disposition, as well as being suited to being domestic Pets. The shorter breeds come from West Vietnam, while the larger Breeds of pigs originate nearer the Vietnamese/Chinese border.

## **Different Types of Mini Pigs**

The most common type of Mini Pig in the USA is the Vietnamese Potbellied Pig (also called Miniature Pot Belly Pig, or Chinese Potbellied Pig). The Kune Kune is also a mini pig, but weighs in at around 400 pounds on average and looks more like their cousin the farm pig. It is very hard to confuse them both. There is also the Guinea Hog as oppose to Pig), they look like the potbellied variety, but are hairier and tend to be harder to keep. If at all possible, do not buy super tiny pigs as it can lead to health problems. Most of these have been genetically modified to be cuter, but in the long run they cost much more in veterinary care and they don't tend to live as long

## **The Common Breeds in USA and UK**

### **Vietnamese Pig**



### **Juliani Pig (Painted Miniature Pig)**



**African Pygmy Pig**



**Mexican Hairless**



**Kunekune Pig**



## Things to Consider before buying a Piglet

### How Much Does A Pig Cost?

You will buy a well-bred pot bellied piglet for **200-400 dollars**. Make sure you meet the previous owners to know how the pigs mother was raised and if they were used to human contact. This will make the job of training the piglet much easier. Your new pig will be a member of your family for up to fifteen years and possibly longer, so you certainly will want to make a good investment in a new best-friend. That means that a few dollars extra should be considered a few dollars well spent. Realize breeders/ sanctuaries have individual pricing policies and conditions. Some breeders have taken great pains to get a better breed of pig that will be healthier and as a result, happier, through its days. Others are not really interested in the pigs themselves, but the money. **DO NOT BUY** from breeders like this.

### Now, how much will it Really Cost?

The money you use to buy your piglet or pig will be a fraction of how much this new friend will cost you in the long-term. It will need shelter, veterinary care, hoof trimmings and will possibly need to be spayed or neutered, depending on if you are going to breed them or not. You will need to provide a bed, harness, leash, and bowls. Of course, all this money will be spread out over the long-term and who knows? You may love them so much that you might become a breeder yourself and be so good at it, that you will actually make money back. Most good breeders do it for the love of animals.

### Can you give it the Love and Care it needs?

As all potbellied pig owners know, they will give many hours of joy to their owners, but they also need a lot of care and attention. Remember the saying 'A dog is not just for Christmas', well, the exact same applies to these creatures. Consider this to be a long-term relationship and ask yourself honestly if you are committed to being a part of it. Some questions to ask are:

- Have I done my research as a future pig owner?
- Have I checked about the pig's temperament,
- Have I carried out weight, training, veterinary care, and health care to know if a pig is right for me?
- Can I afford to financially take good care of my pig?
- Do I have time to properly train and groom my pig?
- Will a pig fit into the family and become part of my world?
- **Does my community or town council have restrictions on pets; will my landlord allow it? (Very Important)**

Of course, one can only think so much about it, and every pet or new addition to a family will always come at a price. If you are getting the pig for one of your children, then from experience, I can tell you, it could be the best decision you ever made.

## **What Size will my Pig be?**

One thing is for certain, they will not be the same size as Farm pigs, but they will grow much bigger than your cat. A full grown Vietnamese potbellied pig can be anywhere from 100 to 250 pounds and not be overweight, and is still considered a miniature potbellied pig. On average, one will have a pig that weight between 100 and 170 pounds, exactly like humans. This all depends of course, on how you fed and exercise your pig. Overfeeding is the main reason pigs develop health problems and die younger, so try to take care of this much earlier on. Pigs will ask for food all the time and if you are inexperienced, you will think they are hungry all the time. Remember who is Boss! On the flip side, underfeeding them can lead to just as many health problems, so be aware and feed them right.

## **How tall will my Piglet be?**

The average full grown pot bellied pig is anywhere from 17-28 inches tall at their shoulders. Usually, they will be around knee level to most adults, maybe a little bit over.



## **How long will my Pig Live for?**

The usual lifespan of a pot bellied pig will be between 9-14 years. They are so new as domestic pets that there is not a lot known about them when compared to Cats and Dogs. If you take care of them properly, you can be virtually guarantee they will live well past a decade. Some have lived to 20 years old.

## **How are They with Children?**

In general, Pot Bellied pigs do get along with children, once they realize their role in the big scheme of things. Pigs are a herd animal and need to either establish dominance or be dominated. They usually figure out who is feeding them and who is the authority in the house. This is true for most animals, including cats and dogs. Make sure your kids never hit the pig as they have excellent memories and will be very wary of it for the rest of their

lives. Bring your child when feeding time comes, and allow your child to feed your piggy. More than likely, if your child is very small, the pig will feel superior to it in the pecking order. Never leave small children alone with your pig. In general pigs and children get on fairly well, but always be wary.

## **How are they with other animals?**

Many pig owners will tell you that their pig and dog get on very well, but others will warn you against it. It really depends on the personalities of both animals. As far as other pets are concerned, there is a variety of factors to consider. The first meet-up of the new house pets will be very important. If you are bringing a piglet back to the house, make sure you are holding him in your arms. Allow the dog to come close to it, smell it and get comfortable with it. As they grow, they will form their own system of doing things, but remember, never leave them alone together.

A pig is usually no match for a dog, especially if there is more than one of them. I know that some dogs and pigs get along very well, whilst others have a harder time. For some reason, cats and pigs get along very well and seem to have quite a good relationship. Again, there are exceptions to the rules, but this is generally the case. Remember, if your pig does seem to get aggressive, do not hit your piglet.

The system of rewarding them when they do something that you approve of is the only system that will work. Pigs are really stubborn and have excellent memories.

## **Checking Zoning Laws Before Purchase**

This is a pretty simple suggestion, but it should be one of the first actions you undertake when thinking of getting a potbellied pig.

- **Check local council, office and community organization.**
- **Call your housing or project manager.**
- **Ask your Neighbors have they any problems with it(seriously)**

If you live in the country, this isn't going to prove a huge problem, but you should still make a few phone calls and find out if its against the zoning laws. It can (seriously) time in court, fights with neighbours and fines from your local zoning authority. Also, if you or your children get attached to the pig (you will), it will be extremely heartbreaking to say goodbye.

## Buying Your Potbellied Pig

In order to buy a potbellied pig, one has to simply put it into the Google search Engine "Potbellied Pig Breeders (Location)". You can also try Oodle.com and Craigslist. There is also the North American Potbellied Pig Association, or NAPPA, for pigs. Their website is a good place to find breeders who have signed the "NAPPA Breeder Code of Ethics." This will ensure good breeds, healthy pigs and sound owners. I would **find a registered breeder**, but this is purely a personal choice.

If you buy off a good breeder, you can always seek advice and support afterwards. This could be invaluable if something unexpected crops up, such as sickness or bad habits. You should also inquire about the family tree of your pig to make sure it is not inbred. An inbred pig is likely to experience costly health problems throughout its life, and this is not a good idea. If the breeder seems too busy to answer your questions, or if he or she is not very knowledgeable, it is best to set your sights on a different breeder. A narky breeder is usually only in it for the money. **Breeders should ask you questions** like:

- Where do you intend to keep the Pig?
- How much do you know about Pigs?
- Do you have a Vet for the Pigs?

You should get a fully vaccinated piglet not younger than about two months of age. Males should already be Neutering. If it's a female pig, then your first visit to the vets should be within a week of bringing her back home. If not, look for a different vet. Breeders should provide you with proper documentation regarding any veterinary care your potbelly received while it was in the care of the breeder. You can check with your vet to make sure the piglet has received all necessary vaccinations, worm shots and health checks. If not, be sure to have your veterinarian surgeon do it ASAP.

## How to Weigh Your Pet Pig Without a Scale

Most of us find it difficult to get our pigs to stand on a scale, so I have used the old Girth Measurement for a long time. This is used in farms to weigh pigs that are to be sold. Of course, if you are not at all mathematically minded, then you can use other methods to get your piggy on a scale. I find the simplest way is to feed them a few threats and bring him to the scale that way. You only need him there for a few seconds. If that fails, you can use the old Girth formula:

**1. Girth Measurement:** Take the heart-girth measurement. Your measuring tape needs to go around the body just behind the front legs and over the shoulder area. As an example for you I will use the measurements of Flower. Her girth measurement is 43 inches.

**2. Square the result:** (Multiply the measurement by itself). Example: The measurement was 43 inches.  $43 \times 43 = 1,849$ .

**3. Length Measurement:** Measure the length of your pig. Start at the top of his or her head right in between the ears and measure down to the start, or base, of the tail (not the end of the tail). Flower's length is 39 inches.

**4. Girth Result X Length:** Take the girth measurement result (in the example above this was 1,849) and multiply that times the length of your pig. In our example this would be:  $1,849 \times 39 = 72,111$ .

**5. Weight Calculation:** Divide this result by 400, and you'll have a weight accurate to within about three percent. In our example:  $72,111$  divided by  $400 = 180$  pounds. Factoring in the 3% variance (5.4 pounds), this means Flower weighs between 174.6 and 185.4 pounds.

Remember, they are not called 'Potbellied' for nothing. Your pet is meant to look like a middle-aged office executive that is fond of the trifle. If your pig looks skinny or too good, then you need to have him checked out. Worms could be a possible cause, or bad feeding habits is another.

## **Preparations for your New Friend**

The following is a list of what you will need for your pet pig:

- Food
- A pet carrier to bring him home. A Cat box can work for Piglets
- A prepared outdoor shelter with hay/straw and good ventilation
- An exercise area.
- A crate inside the house.
- Small water pool.
- Bed- blankets, sleeping bag and other other bedding/blankets you have.
- Grooming Brush and First Aid Box.
- Pet booklets.
- Spray bottle with glycerin/water mixture for skin.

## **How do I pick up my Piglet**

When picking up your pig, it is important to already have a crate or a transport box, especially if the pig is an adult. Call the breeder or animal shelter that you are getting the pig from and ask their advice. If its a piglet, use a small crate and put some clothes and teddy bears. This also applies to adults. Give them something to occupy their minds. Some pigs are very good at traveling and it terrifies others. Make sure there is ventilation and some light, and that there is plenty of room, though not too much room. Make sure it is very sturdy and clean.

## Basic Care Instructions

When your piglet arrives home, he or she may not seem to want to be cuddled or touched and may squeal a lot, especially if they were taken from a breeder that didn't handle his animals. Let them relax and find their way around the house. Keep dogs, cats, children and strangers away from them as much as possible. Within a few days, start working on training them in, getting them used to the bedding. Also, get them to the vets for a health check. I have found that giving them little treats when they do something good is best. Do not slap them, as they will simply hate you. The term 'Pig-Headed' was made for a reason.

Once the piglet has realized this will be home for the rest of their lives, you can start cuddling them, giving them treats and scratching them on the back and underneath the chin. Do not over-feed it, especially when it is young. Introduce the Piglet to your Cat or Dogs and be very careful, especially where dogs are concerned.

## How much do I feed them?

From the very first day you bring your pig home, make sure its dietary habits and needs are well looked after. An overweight pig is an unhealthy pig, leading to expensive vets bills and a shorter life span. Pigs are quite intelligent and can learn to manipulate and even steal food from the cupboards and fridge. Feeding the proper diet, limiting treats and developing a feeding routine can help prevent problems.

The ideal situation is to find foods specifically made for potbellied pigs. Here are some Trade Names and Companies to shop Online.

Check feeding instructions for your individual feed. I normally give them max 200g/day of specialist feed when they are 2/3 months old, but again, check the instructions. Get some proper pig grower for piglets and make sure you mix it in with their feed. **DO NOT OVER FEED THEM.**

At first the rations will seem really small, but trust me, years of research have gone into the feeding habits of potbellied pigs. Always make plenty of water available, no matter what age the pig is. Pigs need plenty of water, especially as they get older.



**Some Pigs have no table manners!**

## **Popular Places to buy Food for your Piglet**

- Mazuri
- Ross Mill Farms
- Heartland Pet Pig Products
- Your local Veterinary surgery may have foods
- You can also use commercial food that pig farmers use

## **How often should I feed my pig?**

Feed your Pigs twice a day. Give them small treats in between. If the pig is fat or is already showing signs of obesity, then scale it back a little at a time. Try to weight the pig as often as possible to find out if it is losing or gaining weight. Give the pig a nice share of veg during the day. Green veg, potatoes and apples are just some of the treats. Apples are also great for their teeth. If you are feeding the pig apples, then make sure you keep Grapes just as a treat. This way you can use it to train the pig.

## **Adding Nutrients in the Pig Diet**

Add a small bit of Bran to the diet. I find this good way to solve for long-term digestion problems. Obviously, take advice from your veterinarian on these issues. As much as possible, allow your pig to root in the grass and soil. This will help them habitually, and it will also supply them with various forms of minerals that they need, including selenium

## **Access to Specialist Potbelly Food**

There is also a very good chance that if you live in a large town or city, you will be able to get Potbelly food from a large Pet Food Supply Chain, or even from your Veterinarian, who can most likely order it especially for you. If you are forced to feed a commercial food meant for farmed pigs, make sure you choose a maintenance ration - especially avoid the grower and finisher type foods which are meant for optimum growth and are too rich for pot bellied pigs.

## Getting rid of those Extra Pounds

In order for a pig to lose weight, you need to do one simple thing: Feed your pig less. Also, it might be the case that your kids or neighbour are feeding the pig when you are not around. Make some investigations and find out if this is the case. If it is, put a stop to it. After you weigh the pig, start reducing the pigs feed ever so slowly over a period of a few weeks. Keep tabs on its weight until it is down to a healthy size. This is one of the most important facts to know in order to keep your pig healthy. An overweight pig will get sick more often and die much younger than a healthy pig.



## Feeding – Key Points

- Do not overfeed your Pig.
- Make sure there is plenty of fresh water available all the time.
- Avoid Fatty foods at all times.
- No sweets, chocolate or crisps.
- Do not feed from Kitchen cupboard or fridge, as you pig will learn his own tricks to open them.
- Give them plenty of fresh veg.

## **How do I housebreak my Pig?**

By their nature, pigs are very clean animals and will go to the toilet away from their bedding and living area. As an owner of the pig you need to decide, do you want to keep it inside and have it go to the bathroom inside, or arrange for it to go outside.

Remember, they are going to grow much, much bigger than they are at 2 months old, so for most folk, outside is the best alternative. Use pine shavings not kitty litter or straw. Pigs tend to root around in their box and most kitty litter is less than healthy to inhale or eat. Keep it well away from where the pig sleeps. You can also have it go indoors as a piglet and slowly train it to go outdoors. Remember, pigs are very intelligent and pick up training tips easily and swift. The waste of pigs is normally not smelly, solid and easy to clean. Until your piglet is properly potty trained, watch it and make sure the right habits are forming.

**TIP** – Use Child Locks for your Trash Can, Cupboards and Fridge. Otherwise they will get into bad habits very early on. Any child Locks will do (Unless you have a really, really stubborn Pig)

## **Be Patient with your Pig**

If you have an older pig or you adopted one from a sanctuary, be careful but be strict. If it gets aggressive, stand your ground, but always try to have someone else there for backup, just in case. Do not try to wean the aggression out of the pig until he begins to trust you a little

## **How to Care for your Pigs Teeth**

Some older pot-bellied pigs grow scary looking under bites that seem to scare people away. Pot-bellied pigs have two sets of baby teeth, and a final set of adult teeth. There's two kinds of adult teeth. Tusks and normal teeth. Males grow long scary tusks, females tusks stay short and look more like the canine in other animals. The tusks are actually ivory, the same as elephant, walrus, or rhinoceros tusks. Tusks have no blood veins or nerves, and continue to grow as long as the animal lives. If the normal teeth have grown especially large, then a trip to the vets could be in order. Otherwise, provide piggy with a rooting box where she can dig to her hearts content without damaging anything. Fill the box with rubber balls and drive her into it by spreading threats around it. You could also use hard soul or potting soil in the rooting box, although this will most probably lead to a bath time almost every day. Feed her plenty of apples.

## **Giving my Pig a Bath**

Pigs do not really need to be bathed or showered. But a regular bath for indoor pigs makes life easier for the people who live with the pig. Most people who do give their pigs full baths, do so between once a week and once a month. Other people bathe their pigs before taking them out to public places. And some people bathe them only when they've gotten extremely dirty or muddy. The younger the pig, the easier it is to teach them to take a bath. Older pigs can learn, but it will take more time and it's better to go slower

with them. Most people find that a sponge bath works best, but everyone is different. If you do have a bathing pool for your pigs, a good trick is to keep throwing grapes into it until the pig is clean. Piggie will always follow a healthy treat, no matter what the distance. At first, it will be reluctant to bath, but like every other action the pig has to learn it and you have to learn to have patience. Make sure the water isn't cold or hot, just a little lukewarm. It is suggested to apply a moisturizer to their skin right after they come out of the bath. Any human one will do, its just to keep the skin from flaking. Remember, this is an experience both piggy and owner should enjoy. I guarantee your children will love it!

## **Piggies Skin Care**

For all types of Hair Conditioners and Shampoos, go to [http://www.pigs4ever.com/PotBelliedPigProducts/skin\\_care.htm](http://www.pigs4ever.com/PotBelliedPigProducts/skin_care.htm)

I am not affiliated with them in any way, but I do know they have a wide range of great products specifically designed for Potbellied Pigs. They have everything from itching sprays to shampoos and they deliver Nationwide. If at all possible, stick with products that are designed especially for Pet Pigs. If this is not possible, then choose mils skin moisturizers and ask your Vet for advice.



## **Why does it Shed its Hair?**

Potbellied pigs raised in an outdoor environment will, at least once and often twice a year, “blow their coat.” All their hair will fall out, and they will shed a layer of skin. During the natural cycle of things, most Potbellie pigs will lose their hair. This can also be a sign that they are stressed out or sick, so if its happening on a regular basis, see your Vet. When a pig starts to shed its hair, it is normal for them to shed all their hair in a short period of

time. Most become completely hairless by the end of the process. It takes months for their hair to completely grow back, but when it does it usually looks better than the hair they lost.

## **Climbing Stairs**

For dogs and cats, climbing stairs is a basic skill that needs no training – they will learn by themselves. For pigs, their stubby legs and large stomach makes climbing stairs extremely difficult. Combine this with a pigs natural fear of heights and most people just end up carrying piggy upstairs themselves.

If your stairs are slippery, you may need to carpet the treads before your piglet can even start learning to climb stairs. Stair training should start at around 3 months old. Start by baiting the first step with some of your pigs favourite food – cheese is usually a good choice. After he climbs up the first step, get him to turn around and go back down. Verbal encouragement – saying “good pig” while doing this will reinforce the training. After he has the first step mastered, gradually increase the number of steps and only give the treat at the very top and very bottom of the stair climb.

Ramps may need to be used to get heavy pigs into cars and up very steep steps. The ramp should be sturdy enough to hold the weight of the pig and then some and it should be carpeted or have wooden slats every 6-8 inches.

To train your pig to walk up the ramp, use a similar method to stair training, but he should be able to negotiate the length of the ramp if you start it at a low angle. Dispense treats along the ramp and then give a nice, favourite one at the end. Once he’s happy walking the length of the ramp, only give him a treat when he’s finished and then turn him around to walk down again. Gradually increase the angle of the ramp until he’s happy walking up at the angle you need.

## **Introducing a Second Pig**

It is always a great idea to buy two piglets at the one time and let them grow together. If this has not been the case, and you still want to introduce your current pig to a new mate, then there are some guidelines to follow.

- Introduce them slowly and over the space of a few weeks.
- Introduce them through a fence. Let them "fence" fight and get used to each other.
- After two weeks, introduce them for a few moments at a time.
- If they fight, use a timber board to separate them from each other.
- Be prepared, they will fight and may get minor scratches on their ears.
- Make sure they are the same size and age.

## **Bedding and Housing for your Pig**

Usually, blankets are probably the ideal bedding if the pig is being kept indoors. As nesting animals, pigs will rip and tear the blankets. Replace them as necessary. Sheets

and heavy rugs can also be used for bedding. In cold weather the pig will disappear under the pile of blankets. If it is too warm, the pig will sleep on top of his nest. (We do not advocate using sleeping bags for pigs. For pigs being kept in an outside area such as a barn or shed, straw or hay can be used for bedding. If the bedding gets wet, replace it immediately with dry material. Straw and hay can create dust, so dust the area as needed and sweep out the old bedding once it has broken down completely. If the shed is a three-sided shed, placing an igloo inside will provide extra protection from the elements for the pig.

## **HARNESS AND LEAD TRAINING TIPS**

Get a proper harness that is designed for Potbellied pigs. They are available online and on Ebay. Do not tie a rope on it, use a dog lead or any type of harness that is not designed especially for pigs.



- Never rush the process.
- Make sure the measurements are exact.
- Never tie your pig up with the harness.
- Give it time. Pigs connect being tied up with being trapped. Do not scare it.
- At first do it indoors, away from other pets and children.
- Give your piggie plenty of treats when it accepts the harness.

## **Should I Spay my Pet Pig?**

Unless you are 100% sure you are going to breed your pigs, definitely get them spayed. Spaying (Medical term is orchectomy) has similarities to neutering other animals, particularly dogs, yet it is not the same thing as a dog or cat neuter.

Normally, on the day of surgery you need to bring your pet in the hospital early in the morning. Please take away all food and water when you go to bed the evening before surgery, and do not give your pig anything to eat or drink the morning of surgery. Your pig will go home in the late afternoon the day of surgery.

### **Anesthesia**

Pre-anesthetic preparation is important in every surgery performed. This is to ensure there will be no danger of allergic reactions etc. When everything is in order your pig will be given a sedative before the actual anesthetic is administered. Once a Potbellie is anesthetized, prepared for surgery, and had its monitoring equipment hooked up and reading accurately, the surgery can begin. Pigs need to be monitored carefully for overheating during anesthesia, which is the opposite of most anesthetized animals. They produce more body heat relative to other animals because of their large muscle mass. Pigs do not sweat or pant, they need to be in contact with something cool to rid of excess body heat.

### **Postoperative Care**

Once they arrive home, they will obviously be very groggy for a while, but this fades in about 12-16 hours. For a few hours, take good care of your pig and keep noise, contact with children and other pets to a minimum. Try not to let your pig go outside until healing is complete, as it increases the risk of infections

# **Piggy Tricks**

## **Training Basics**

Training pigs is unlike training dogs. Pigs are more intelligent than dogs and inherently more lazy and are prone to ask themselves “what’s in it for me?”. A dog is usually more than happy to do something just to play. Dogs are also very energetic and although piglets start out that way, by their first birthday they’re happy to take things slow.

Each pig is unique and may need a slightly different approach when training to take into account their personality. Pigs are motivated primarily by food, which should be no surprise. They want to spend the least amount of energy possible and are certainly not above cheating to do so. Never lower your standards or let your guard down. Once a pig has mastered a trick, it doesn’t mean he will perform the trick perfectly every time especially when he knows he can get away with it.

Pigs get bored easily as they have the attention span of a toddler. Pigs also don’t like to fail, so each challenge must be just that little bit of a stretch for your piggy, but not beyond his capabilities. Use the smallest steps possible so the pig can see that he is making progress and will then be encouraged. Never intimidate or threaten – only use positive reinforcement. If your pig gets aggressive while training, then use a ‘time out’ for half an hour and try again later.

Train your pig without distractions and a few hours after he has been fed. Don’t train too close to meal times as he may confuse training with having his meal. Pigs should only be trained for a few minutes at first. Gradually increase this to 20 minutes when his attention span is longer.

Because pigs have the attention span and basic problem solving ability of a 2 year old human toddler, the best way to train them is to essentially treat them like one. Using voice commands mixed with a few hand signals is very effective.

## **Voice Commands**

You need to be firm with your commands and “say it like you mean it”. You are telling your pig to do something, not asking. If you’re not commanding in your voice, your pig won’t take you seriously. Speaking in a lower tone of voice works well to sound more commanding.

When you associate a voice command with a trick or action, you need to keep the commands as short as possible – eg “Sit”, “Fetch”, etc. You will cause confusion by speaking in longer sentences. Say it once and once only, don’t continually repeat the command this may also cause confusion.

## **Praise**

You need to select a phrase that you can use once your pig has completed the task to praise him and more importantly let him know that he can stop what he was asked to do. The easiest phrase is “Good pig”, but you can use “Good <name>” – eg “Good porky” or something similar.

When first starting out, use this phrase the very nanosecond he has completed the task you’re asking him to do. Eventually he will understand what’s required of him and so long as you don’t vary the phrase, over time it will become easier to teach your pig new tricks.

You can also use a clicker as a ‘praise phrase’ if you have one, but you need to be consistent with it’s use.

It’s also important to use the same praise phrase each time. Do not tailor the phase for each trick – eg. “good sitting”, “good fetching” as it will dilute the power of the original voice command. Only use the voice command word when you want your pig to do something.

## **The Payoff**

Praising your pig is great but what he really wants is the reward. Have your treat ready and give it to him as quickly as you can to reinforce his good behaviour. It’s also a good idea to have another phrase you can say when you have finish rewarding him, so he knows no more treats are coming (until he performs another action). You can use the words “treat” or “no more”. Say this as you’re giving him his treat.

Rewards that you can use are popcorn kernels or dog treats. If your pig is overweight, popped corn or low-fat dog foods can use used. Cheese is usually a favourite but should be used sparingly as a ‘special reward’. Do not simply drop the treat on the floor, you need to hand it to the pig and feed him directly. This reinforces your position as the leader – showing him that the treats came from you and didn’t just fall out of the sky.



## **Basic Tricks**

### **Sit**

Sitting is probably the easiest of all actions to learn and can even be performed by a piglet. Start with your pigs back to a wall so he can't back up.

Say "sit" and take the treat in your hand, holding it over his head but just out of reach. As he raises his snout to smell the treat, move it backwards over his head but keep it in his vision so he lifts his head up. As soon as his rump hits the ground, say "good pig" and give him a reward.

### **Bow / Curtsy**

Kneeling comes naturally to a pig. When pigs nurse from their mother, they generally do it kneeling with their front legs folded. To train your pig to do this, stand in front of him and place some food on the ground. As he is eating, fold his front legs down under him with your hands and say "bow", then quickly give him a treat – although it needs to be a treat different from the food you just gave him of course!

Your pig can also be taught to curtsy. Using the same method, only bend one front leg and use the "curtsey" verbal command.

### **Lie / Play Dead**

Pigs do not easily lie down on command at first as this puts them in a vulnerable position out in the wild. They like to be on their feet in case they need to make a quick exit if they sense trouble. If you tickle or scratch his belly, he will flop over and as he does this say "lie". After he has held the position for a while (short time when starting and gradually increase) say "good pig" and keep rewarding him the longer he holds position. Increase the length of time between rewards until he is only rewarded at the end.

### **Stay**

Because a pig has a short attention span and loves food, teaching a pig to stay can be challenging. The greedy piggie wants to keep running back to you for his reward. This is where you can use hand signals as well as voice commands to be effective.

Get your pig to sit, then give him the "stay" command. Slowly walk backwards while repeating "stay" and pushing your hand out with your palm flat and facing outward. After a few seconds, say "treat" and reward him.

Gradually increase the amount of time it takes to push your hand out and back while walking backwards at the same pace. If your pig breaks the stay, start again. Gradually increase the distance. When you reward the pig, make sure that you walk back over to him once the time is up and feed him while he's still seated. He will quickly get the message that he won't get his treat if he stands up and approaches you.

## **Spinning and the Figure Eight**

Most pigs will learn to spin by themselves, although you can train him to learn it faster. This trick is simple to teach as you just need to bait your pig with food, moving the food in a circular direction while giving him a voice command (“left” or “right”). After he gets the idea, use an empty hand and give him his treat at the end of the spin. Make sure to teach both directions.

Eventually you will be able to use the voice command and get him to start spinning by himself, although it may take some time. You will have to lead him with an empty hand for a while before he gets the idea.

The figure eight can be taught through your legs. Lead him with more food in a figure eight around your legs – they will need to be spread at least a meter (3 feet) apart for him to fit. After he gets it, lead again with an empty hand and give him a treat at the end of the trick. Include the voice command when you do this (“Figure Eight” or simply “Eight”) and teach him to go around a few times, not just once as he will stop each time, waiting for his treat.

## **Playing a Bicycle Horn**

Playing a horn is another relatively simple trick as pigs love to use their mouth. Place the bulb part of the horn into your pig's mouth and give the voice command “play”. The very microsecond the horn makes any sort of sound, praise the pig and give him a treat. If after a while no noise is made, pay him anyway and he will get the idea that having the bulb in his mouth is a good idea. He will soon get the idea that noise equals food.

In a similar vein, you can teach your pig to play low piano by placing popcorn on the keys and giving a voice command (“piano”). As soon as a noise is made, give him praise and a treat. You can keep practicing until he gets it with the popcorn, then slowly remove the popcorn but still give the voice command and give him his treat at the end.

## **Shaking and Waving**

Get in front of your pig and gently pick up his front leg and give him a treat. Once he's comfortable with you lifting his leg, you can give the voice command “shake” while shaking his leg while it's in the air. Once he has mastered shaking ‘hands’ (or legs from your pig's perspective) and can perform it on command without your assistance, you can change the command to “wave” while waving your hand at him. As soon as he moves his hoof while it's in the air, praise him and give him a treat. Eventually he will get the idea that waving means food and you will catch him doing it by himself to you at odd moments, trying to get a treat!

## **Fetch**

Fetching can be a long process as the pig can't see the point in holding an object in its mouth that isn't food. You can break the trick down into segments in order to better convey to the pig what we're asking him to do.

Start with a plastic dog bone. Put it in his mouth and as he holds it, give him praise and a treat. Wait until he's comfortable holding the bone in his mouth before putting it next to him and showing it to him. Hopefully, he will pick it up by himself (if he doesn't go back to putting it in his mouth for him).

When he does pick it up, immediately give praise and quickly grab it from his mouth. After it's out of his mouth, you can give him a treat. It's crucial that you grab it yourself as he may learn to drop the bone too early. Increase the amount of time the bone is in his mouth before giving him a treat. During this time, you also increase the distance that the bone starts away from him. He will learn to pick it up and bring it to you before getting rewarded. As you place the bone, start giving the "fetch" voice command.

Note that due to your pigs naturally blurry eyesight, it will probably limit the distance that your pig can fetch to around 20 feet (6 meters) in most cases. Your pig can learn to fetch most items that can fit into his mouth with this method and training each additional item shouldn't take too much time once the first has been taught.

### **Rolling out the red carpet**

Teaching your pig to roll out a long narrow carpet is relatively easy. Roll up the carpet and put popcorn kernels spaced evenly inside the carpet. Show the pig the first kernel in the carpet, use a voice command and it will be rolled out in no time because he will smell the rest of the popcorn. Praise and reward when he gets to the end of the carpet. Gradually reduce and then eliminate the popcorn in the carpet and only reward him at the end, when the carpet has been unrolled.

## **Intermediate and Advanced Tricks**

### **Golf**

Putting a golf ball using a golfers practise ring can be taught, as always, by breaking the trick down into steps. The first step is to teach your pig to push a ball with his snout. You do this as always by using food. Place a piece of popcorn under a ball and immediately after he moves the ball, say "good pig" and give him a treat. You can also say "push" as a voice command so that he associates the word with pushing the ball. Make him push the ball farther and farther each session until he can push the ball the length of a room before getting his treat.

Next, put down the golfers putting ring. At the start, put the ring next to the ball and as the ball is pushed in the direction of the ring, say "good pig" and give him a treat. Eventually, the pig will get the ball into the cup - probably by accident at first. Immediately praise and give him a special treat. Show real enthusiasm when he does this. You can lengthen the distance the ball starts from the cup and it will take some practice but eventually he'll learn that he must get the ball in the cup before he gets paid.

### **Soccer and Bowling**

One your pig has mastered the concept of pushing balls with his snout, as taught by playing golf, you can introduce additional items for him to interact with. You can put

bowling pins or a child's set of soccer goals on the floor, initially placed so that the pig, the ball and the pins or goals form a line with the ball in the middle. Start with the distance between the ball and the goal very small (30cm or 1 foot). Reinforce your pig for pushing the ball towards the net or pins and when he does so give him his treat over the net or through the pins. By doing this, you will show him that he will get his treat from the net or pins and not from you as you don't want to train him to move towards you. Once he can do this for a short distance, gradually increase the distance. You can of course associate a voice command with doing each of these tricks - eg. "bowling" or "soccer".

### **Shaking head "yes" or "no"**

Similar to training your pig to turn in a circle and a figure eight, you can bait your pig with food to move his head up and down for yes. Reinforce this with a voice command as you perform the trick and make the practice sessions longer before giving him his treat.

To teach him to shake his head you can touch his ear. Use an associated voice command, but not "shake" (for shaking hands) or "no" – for obvious reasons. As soon as he moves his head, praise and give him a treat. You can also use the same method of baiting with food as above, but I've always found it easier using the ear method.

### **Playing Horns**

Once your pig has learned to play a single bicycle horn as described above, you can get him to play multiple horns by adding more horns onto a low stand. Start with two and get him to play both horns before giving him a treat. Keep adding more horns and always pay him once he plays each horn. You can try for right to left or left to right but if your pig is particularly well trained you can get him to play any sequence you can think up. Around 6 horns seems to be the limit.

### **Crawling**

Once your pig has learned to bow, you can get in front of him with a treat but just out of his reach. Hold it very low, just in front of his face and he will crawl a step or two to get to it. Reinforce with the "crawl" voice command and praise when he gets his treat. Gradually increase the crawling distance.

### **Playing Basketball**

You can get your pig to slam dunk a miniature basketball into a hoop once he has learned to fetch one. When the pig brings the basketball back to you, have a hoop ready and vocalise your command ("slam dunk" or more simply "hoop") and gently knock the ball out of his mouth into the hoop. Immediately praise and give him a treat. Repeated enough times, he will learn to slam dunk the ball when you ask.

### **Saving his pennies**

A similar trick to slam dunking the basketball, you can buy a piggy bank and cut a hole in the top that accommodates large plastic coins. Once your pig has fetched the coin, you can gently knock it into the piggy bank using the voice command "money" ("saving" sounds too close to "stay", but you can try it). Immediately praise and give him his treat.

### **Jumping through hoops**

You can teach your pig to jump through a hula hoop, a regular sized one will work fine but you can also use children's sized hoops if your piglet will easily fit. Start with the hoop on the ground and bait him to walk through it for his praise and treat. Use the "jump" voice command and slowly raise the hoop off the ground, praising and treating each time he goes through the hoop. If he hesitates or refuses, lower the hoop again until he's comfortable and then continue to slowly raise it. There will of course be a limit to how high he can jump, but he will be proving that pigs can fly in no time.

### **Pushing a shopping cart**

You can train your pig to push a shopping cart or toddlers pram. Your pig might not be able to do this trick, depending on how athletic he is. First bait him into standing on his hind legs with his front feet on the cart handle. After he's comfortable in this position, get in front of the cart and put a treat under his nose but just out of his reach. Vocalise the command ("pram" or "cart") and he should step forward, pushing the cart in the process. Immediately praise and reward him. Gradually increase the distance he needs to move the cart before he gets his treat.

If your pig has no chance of pushing the cart while on his hind legs, he can push it while on all fours. Touch the back of the cart or pram to his snout, then praise and reward him. He will want to touch the cart and will eventually move it forward accidentally. When he does praise enthusiastically and reward him immediately. He will soon get the idea that pushing the cart is an easy way of getting food.

## **Aggression**

Potbellied pigs usually have a laid back and predictable personality compared to other animals. In the wild especially, they demand very little except for the chance at a soft bed, food and the opportunity to sleep all day. But like all animals, they can show hostility if confused, frightened or threatened. They are not aggressive animals by nature but they do have the potential to act aggressively. In the wild, they are not predators – they are prey.

Since they are herd animals, they need to be confident in their position in the herd and it may be a threat to them if their position in the herd is not safe and well established. Every herd has a pecking order and if the pig is confused about what their place is in the order, he may become unfriendly to guests and owners alike. Of course, when a potbelly lives within a house, the family becomes his new herd and it's important to establish with your potbelly where their position is in the herd. It's up to every family member to commit to this process as if the potbelly feels that there is confusion over which slot he occupies, he may start to challenge other family members to prove that they deserve their status. In a way, the pig will attempt to move up the social ladder and the weakest in the herd – children and guests, will be challenged first.

This can obviously have consequences which can sometimes be challenging for an owner to correct. If your potbelly is an "only child", it can be even more difficult when they try to bite or 'charge' guests. Pigs that live outside or have other potbellies as companions rarely have aggression issues. Traditional discipline is often not successful against these problems and in any case physical punishment is not recommended. The root cause of the problem should be addressed and once this occurs, the hostility should go away fairly quickly.

## **Boss Hog**

As with every herd animal, potbellies have a pecking order. This order is maintained with body language and is earned by fighting, charging and posturing. Once a slot is earned, the pig must defend it forever as if he appears vulnerable to a pig in a lower slot, he will be challenged. If he gets weak or old, he will gravitate to the bottom of the social hierarchy.

When you first get your piglet, he will form an opinion of you and your family members about where he falls in the social ladder. But more importantly, he will form an opinion about where you fall in the same ladder. Are you the herd leader? Or are you simply a littermate? If he sees you as an equal, then you are someone to spar and play with. He may bite, charge or swing his head as that's what littermates do with each other.

If he sees you as a mother or a leader, he will show you respect and listen to you; he will allow you to set the rules. He won't challenge you as you are the leader and he is simply a herd member. He will be content as a member of the herd and will be willing to learn and take direction.

A demanding piglet will turn into a hostile pig when he grows up. Piglets weaned under 5 weeks, which is generally too early, are also prone to aggressive behaviour. They don't learn to act like pigs because they missed out on their mothers discipline. They are also very easy to spoil for the new owners because they are so cute! It's important that all challenging actions are addressed quickly when the piglet is young so he doesn't grow up to be a handful later in life. To do this you need to think like a pig to a certain extent.

## **The Terrible Twos**

Like a human toddler, piglets are very easy to spoil. They can be affectionate, intelligent, playful and sensitive. When a piglet is first brought into a house, he is humble and fearful as he doesn't yet know his position in the herd hierarchy. After he is socialised, it's very easy to give in to your new companions demands and like a toddler, it can sometimes be the two year old training the parents rather than the other way around.

A pig is very observant and will learn from the signals and reactions he gets from the people around him. When he screams for his meals in the morning or refuses to go outside to the toilet, it sends signals that he's the Boss Hog. When a piglet is allowed full run of the house without the owner restricting anything, he knows he has control over the household.

Piglets are easy to spoil, to give in and make excuses or ignore bad behaviour but every time you do this you are moving down in the social pecking order and your piglet is moving up. Once your piglets starts being demanding, the demands will never cease. He will be the lead pig and you will need to give in to his demands. If however, you take control and essentially show your pig who's boss your pig will become content and docile.

## **Discipline**

Pigs are not predatory animals – quite the contrary, they are usually the prey. Pigs have good memories and if you hurt him, he won't forget and he may never forgive either which means he won't like you – possibly forever. Your pig must always feel like he's in a safe environment where no one will hurt him as he does not have the physical power to fight back.

Like training a child, consistency is the key. You must apply the rules fairly and consistently and show that you're the boss in all circumstances. Shouting, squirting water and hitting are useless tactics in most cases. So what should you do? Well, like training a child who has been naughty, the piglet can be given a timeout where he is removed from the situation for half an hour – immediately after telling him "NO". This needs to be applied consistently and every time aggression is shown.

## **Ten Step Program to reduce aggressive behaviour**

To change your pigs aggression, you can't change the pig. You need to change yourself by putting yourself at the top of the social herd in your household. Because of

this change, the pig will react differently to you. You cannot change a pig's herd instinct – he is simply behaving naturally and taking responsibility for leading the family herd as nobody else seems to be doing so!

### **Step 1 – Stop Spoiling.**

Do not give in to your piglet. When you give in to him, your pig is training you – not the other way around. Analyse each situation – is piggy calling the shots? If so, change your behaviour.

### **Step 2 – Show him you're physically in control.**

Pigs discipline each other with body shoves. If your pig shows aggression, you can try shoving him backwards by pushing his shoulders with your hands or leg and simultaneously saying "NO". You can try this as a daily exercise, by physically dominating him by making him retreat, shoving him backwards with your leg. The aim is not to hurt or punish him, but show him that you have the bigger muscles. He will get the message that you're in physical control. Don't be overly aggressive, just calmly make him walk backwards. It's extremely important that you don't back down. Stand tall and look him in the eye, but don't say anything.

If he is large or you cannot push him, you can use a large wooden board in front of him – just hold it close in front of his nose and he should walk backwards. You could also use a trashcan lid. If he growls when you make him retreat, stop and try again later. Make him retreat a little more each time. Do not force him into a corner or make him feel helpless.

### **Step 3 – No Free Lunch**

Do not give in to your piglet waking you up for his morning feed. He will be fed when you're ready and not a moment sooner. Do not give in to begging and instruct every household member not to feed him snacks.

### **Step 4 – Teaching Tricks**

You can teach your pig tricks to get him into the mindset that you're in control. This will change his focus and show that good behaviour will get rewarded.

### **Step 5 – Get piglet outside**

A confined, bored and spoiled piglet is the most likely type of pig to show aggression in his small world. Take him outside and show him the world beyond the house and yard.

### **Step 6 – Consider a permanent move outside**

If this is an option, consider moving your piglet outside on a permanent basis. Absence makes the heart grow fonder and pigs tend to appreciate humans more when they don't live in the house with them. You will not have as close a bond with your piglet, but it

should immediately reduce aggression as you are no longer fighting over the same territory.

### **Step 7 – Exercise**

Like humans, a unfit overweight pig can easily become complacent and spoiled. Pigs need physical challenges and running up and down a few stairs or going for a morning or evening walk can make a significant difference.

### **Step 8 – Getting a companion**

An only child will become more spoiled as the entire focus of the family is on the one piglet. This is reduced when two pigs are in the household as it will give them a playmate and they can argue amongst themselves as to who is above who in the social order.

### **Step 9 – Establish Routines**

As the leader, you need to be firm and define where piglet can and can't go and ruthlessly enforce the rules. Like toddlers, pigs thrive on routine and structure so you should strive to do the same things at roughly the same time each day.

### **Step 10 – Act like a Leader**

You should be setting limits and being strong, consistent and firm. Never show that you fear your pig and never retreat. Your pig will observe and act accordingly. Remember that your piglet doesn't want to be the leader, but will do so if no one else will. Once you start acting like the leader, he will be relieved that he doesn't have to do it himself and will be content to follow your guidance.

## Other Common Problems

### Biting

Foot biting is a common problem amongst pot bellied pigs who are unsure about their position in the pecking order. As with aggression, in order to train your pig not to do it, push him away gently and say NO. He may get more aggressive, but be stern and if you have to follow the steps in the previous section on aggression. Everyone in the household must do this, if one person allows him to play with feet he will be confused and the problem will just get worse. Remember, to train pigs you need patience.

### Problem Rooters

If you think Mr Piggy is going to take any notice of your lovely garden, think again. The one thing pigs do better than any other animal is rooting the ground. You can try to confine the area where the pig is rooting which may save your garden. Spread corn kernels in that area so he has something to find. For the other areas, you can lay chicken wire over the surface of the grass so that your pig can't root in your nice lawn. If you mow it short before doing this, the grass will grow over the chicken wire and you won't even know it's there.

Some people put a ring in their piglets nose but I think this is inhumane and going a bit far. It will stop some rooting, but ultimately it may cause more problems than it solves when it causes him discomfort and pain.



## Medical Care

**IMPORTANT - THE ONLY PERSON YOU SHOULD CONSULT WHEN YOUR PIG IS SICK, IS YOUR VET.**

Find a Veterinarian Surgeon that has dealt with Potbellies. There is almost definitely one in your local area. Here are some things to consider when looking for your Vet:

- If you are buying your pig of a local Breeder, then ask for his Veterinary Surgeons Name.
- Ask your local pig club or other pet pig owners for a recommendation. Select a vet trained or at least interested in learning about the care of the potbellied pig.
- Visit your prospective vet with your pet pig prior to any emergency situation. This you will have to do anyway, to get its health checker and properly vaccinated.
- Make sure your Vet understands that this Piggy is different to commercial pig and needs to be treated like any other domestic pet he handles on a daily basis.



## **Identifying a sick Piggie**

You should take your pig to the vet if he exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- runny eyes/nose
- excessive snorting/wheezing
- diarrhea
- repeated vomiting -swelling, sores, abrasions
- bloody stools
- lameness
- seizures
- emaciation/anorexia

## **Vaccinations and Worming for Pot Bellies**

Pigs should be wormed twice a Year. Some pig owners do it themselves, but it is best to get it done at the Vets. This is usually done with Ivomec or Dectomax. You can also give your Pig a little Aloe now and again. It helps its Immune system.

## **Suggested Vaccinations**

Many pig owners give little or no vaccinations to their Pigs, which is not a very good idea at all. Vaccinations should include Erysipelas, Bondatella, and Pasturella on a yearly basis after an initial double dose at 6 – 10 weeks and 12 – 14 weeks. Tetanus should be given on a yearly basis. Leptospirosis or Wheels Disease 5 way and Parvovirus are recommended for breeding females. Be careful, reactions to lepto vaccinations are common, so consult your vet if your piggy isn't eating or looks sickly after wards.

## **What to do if your Pet has been Poisoned?**

Don't panic. Rapid response is important, but panicking can interfere with the process of helping your pet.

Take 30 to 60 seconds to safely collect and have at hand any material involved. This may be of great benefit to your vet and/or APCC toxicologists, as they determine what poison or poisons are involved. In the event that you need to take your pet to a local veterinarian, be sure to take the product's container with you. Also, collect in a seal-able plastic bag any material your pet may have vomited or chewed.

If you witness your pet consuming material that you suspect might be toxic, do not hesitate to seek emergency assistance, even if you do not notice any adverse effects. Sometimes, even if poisoned, an animal may appear normal for several hours or for days after the incident. Call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center

The telephone number is (888) 426-4435. There is a \$60 consultation fee for this service.

Be ready with the following information:

- The species, breed, age, sex, weight and number of animals involved.
- The animal's symptoms.
- Information regarding the exposure, including the agent (if known), the amount of the agent involved and the time elapsed since the time of exposure.
- Have the product container/packaging available for reference.

### **IMPORTANT:**

Please note: If your animal is having seizures, losing consciousness, is unconscious or is having difficulty breathing, telephone ahead and bring your pet immediately to your local veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic. If necessary, he or she may call the APCC.

### **Be Prepared**

Keep the telephone number of the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center—(888) 426-4435—as well as that of your local veterinarian, in a prominent location.

Invest in an emergency first-aid kit for your pet. The kit should contain:

- A fresh bottle of hydrogen peroxide, 3 percent USP (to induce vomiting)
- A turkey baster, bulb syringe or large medicine syringe (to administer peroxide)
- Saline eye solution
- Artificial tear gel (to lubricate eyes after flushing)
- Mild grease-cutting dish washing liquid (for bathing an animal after skin contamination)
- Forceps (to remove stingers)
- A muzzle (to protect against fear- or excitement-induced biting)
- A can of your pet's favorite wet food
- A pet carrier

Always consult a veterinarian or the APCC for directions on how and when to use any emergency first-aid item. To Learn more about Toxic Plenty, you can also visit the ASPCA Toxic Plant list here - <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants/>

## Common Medical Conditions in Pigs and What to Do

**Salt Poisoning** - Salt Poisoning is really what its true name implies, Water Deprivation Sodium Ion Toxicosis. In other words NOT ENOUGH WATER TO DRINK. One more important reason to know that fresh water should be available to all animals at all times. Salt toxicity is directly related to water consumption.

### Symptoms

- If pigs are not eating, there is something up. Check and see is their water supply gone.
- The pig wanders around, and actually acts like its blind.
- Pigs show signs of meningitis.
- Nose twitching.
- The pig will appear severely Disillusioned and blank.
- Lack of coordination.

### What to do?

Supply plenty of water to the pig and get him to the veterinary Hospital



### Runny Eyes in Potbellies

Nearly all potbellies will experience runny eyes that produce sticky, brownish tears. You can wipe away the goo with a warm damp cloth and if you like, put some Aloe on it. You may even find their blankets, sheets, or whatever you give them to sleep in with wet spots from their eyes. Potbellies are known for this and it should be no cause for concern. A few pigs are prone to eye problems such as entropiana. This is when the eye lashes lay on the eye. This condition is correctable by minor surgery. Please consult your vet for more info.

**Dental Care Tip** – Like in Humans, Apples and Pears are very good for the Teeth. Once their Tusks aren't growing inwards, then Dental Care should not be a problem, especially if they are allowed to Root.

### Constipation

Because of lack of movement, many pigs will suffer from constipation during the winter months. There is very little you can do about this, except making sure they

have plenty of fluids and have access to water at all times. You can also put a spoon of olive oil on their food, some canned prunes or canned pumpkin, or anything that will help their digestive system to run smoother. If symptoms persists, call your Vet and ask his advice.

### **Dippity Pigs**

A symptom of oozing sores, that may or may not be bloody, appear on the pig's back, neck or rump at the level of the spinal column. It is thought "dippity pig" can be allergy related. Treatment of "dippity pig" is first aimed at controlling the pig's pain and relieving its stress. This can be done with anti-inflammatories, such as aspirin or cortisone. Aspirin, which is readily available, is usually adequate to relieve the pig's pain. More severe cases might need the more "potent" medications, Cortisone or Butorphanol. Cortisone and Butorphanol will usually need to be prescribed by your Veterinarian. Your pig will improve within 24 hours, and usually in less time than that, regardless of treatment.

If your Pig is stressed or looks stressed, get him plenty of water and grab some grapes. Pigs like to eat, no matter what time it is.

Like all animals, including Humans, Pigs can pick up thousands of different illnesses and sicknesses depending on environment, genetics and many other factors. I would HIGHLY Recommend consulting your veterinary surgeon even if you are quite sure that what your pig is suffering from. I know this can be a little more expensive, but it is better to be safe than sorry. Remember the golden rule:

**If your pig is not eating, there is something wrong.**

Thank you for reading my "Pot Belly Secrets" book. I hope you enjoyed it and it provided some useful information for you that will solve your problems. I wish you well and hope you enjoy many new adventures with your new friend.