

Should Canines Crash In Your Bed? By Kate Eller

For a growing number of people, pets are considered family members. There are 78 million pet dogs in the United States, and 44 percent of North American households have a dog, according to data kept by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. And, according to the American Pet Products Association, total pet industry expenditures reached \$60.59 billion in 2015, up from \$58.04 billion in 2014.

Dogs have been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, which is why they are a popular choice for therapy animals. There are also specially-trained service animals that help bring independence to owners with a multitude of physical and mental health issues.

But dog ownership can come with a side of guilt – “Today, many pet owners are away from their pets for much of the day, so they want to maximize their time with them when they are home. Having them in the bedroom is an easy way to do that.” said Dr. Lois Krahn, who along with other colleagues from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, have studied how close humans should sleep to their four-legged companions.

In the study, 40 dog-owning adults, who had not been diagnosed with sleep disorders and were healthy, were followed for 5 months between August and December 2015. All dogs were older than 6 months. For seven nights, participants – both human and canine – wore activity-tracking devices called accelerometers. Over the course of the study, the researchers concluded that people tended to benefit from good sleep quality when their dog(s) slept in the bedroom, but those whose dog(s) actually slept in the bed with them tended to have poorer-quality sleep. “Most people assume having pets in the bedroom is a disruption,” said Dr. Krahn; however, she and her team “found that many people actually find comfort and a sense of security from sleeping with their pets.” She says that as long as dogs sleep in the bedroom, but not in the bed, pet owners can find comfort knowing it won’t negatively impact their sleep.

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Wishing you joy and good health,
Mary Bohlen RN
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Blood pressure readings have resumed. See us in the Infant & Toddler Room in the rear of church on the 1st and 3rd full weekends of every month September – May. The service is free of charge and currently is limited to those Masses that have a volunteer to perform readings. If you are trained in taking blood pressures and would like to offer your services, please contact Mary Bohlen using the e-mail address listed above we’d love to have you on the team!