



Finding the Right Vet

One of the most important decisions you'll make as a pet parent is finding a quality health care provider for your furry friend. Selecting the right veterinarian is a personal decision, but you'll want to choose a practice that offers the highest available standard of care.



When Should I Look for a Vet?

Guardians seek out new vets for a variety of reasons, including a recent adoption or move, concerns about a current vet's quality of care or treatment for a pet's specific health problem.

How Do I Find a Vet?

The American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) evaluates veterinary practices on the quality of their facilities, staff, equipment and patient care. Search the organization's website at www.healthypet.com for a list of accredited vets in your area.

It's also a good idea to ask for recommendations from friends, family and trusted neighbors—especially those who take a keen interest in their cats' health and well-being.

How Do I Decide Which Vet is Right for My Cat?

Here are some things to consider when selecting a vet:

- Arrange for a first appointment without your cat to speak with a veterinarian and get an overall feel of the facilities.
- During your appointment, look around and consider whether the space is clean, modern and well-organized.
- Inquire about the number of vets on staff. In many practices, vets may share responsibility for patients and cover for each other during vacations or other absences.
- Do you have good rapport with the vet? Effective communication is essential to any health care relationship.
- Ask questions! Don't be shy; most vets appreciate it when their clients take an interest in their pets' care.

What Questions Should I Ask When I'm Selecting a Vet?

Although your questions may vary depending on the reason for your visit, you can use the following list as a guide:

- Is the practice AAHA-accredited?
- How are overnight patients monitored?
- What sort of equipment does the practice use?
- Does the vet refer patients to specialists?
- How are patients evaluated before anesthesia and surgery?
- Does the practice have licensed veterinary technicians on staff?
- What is the protocol for pain management?

What If I Have Problems with My Vet? Can I Switch?

Don't worry about leaving your current vet if you have concerns about the quality of care. Most veterinary practices, like all businesses, expect clients to come and go. Before you leave, remember to ask for a complete copy of your cat's health records to be mailed or faxed to you or your new vet.

From: *Vet Confidential: An Insider's Guide to Protecting Your Pet's Health*

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