



Top 10 Tips to save money at the Vets



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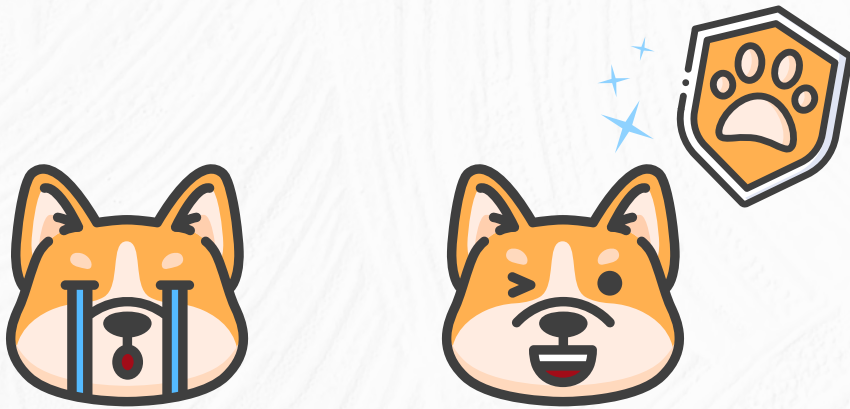


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One BIG reason you may hate going to the vets is because it cost £££. The reality is that pets do cost money, the question is how much? Below are Top 10 Tips to save money at your Vets. Your vets may even thank you for following them!



1. Let's see the Vet.... AGAIN! – The Usefulness of Regular Vet Visits



Regular visits to the vets can not only be cost saving but also life changing. Your pet's weight can be monitored to ensure it is appropriate. Early dental advice may be given. Growing lumps can be examined. I would recommend at least a visit every six months. If your pet is elderly (> 8 years for dog and >10 years for cat), I would recommend to see your vet every 3-4 months for a health visit.

Even if you choose not vaccinate your pet, regular vet visits are still relevant and advisable, not dissimilar to having regular dental check ups.

“Big problems become little problems. Little problems become no problem.” – Chinese saying

2. Other People's Money - Pet Insurance

It is not unusual for living things to fall ill, just like ourselves. It is not common knowledge how much veterinary bills can be. Whereas pet insurance does not buy health, it does buy a peace of mind that when your pet is ill, cost of treatment would not be a deciding factor for best treatment choice.

Usually, it is pet guardians who have used pet insurance in the past who find it invaluable. And for pet guardians who have not used it in the past, find it a waste of money. Unfortunately, when a pet falls ill, most guardians do not want to choose the treatment option based on affordability.

Be sure to choose your policy very carefully as many may be inappropriate. Your vet may help you with it.



3. Health is Wealth – The Rewards of Boring Maintenance

Proper husbandry can help reduce many health conditions. Feeding the right amount of a good quality food can ensure great health. Making sure your pet is of appropriate body condition, not overweight or underweight, can greatly reduce the risk of many conditions like diabetes, arthritis and malnourishment.

Brushing the teeth (not the easiest for some pets, especially cats!) may reduce the need for dental treatment at the vets. Your vet may be able to give you some tips for doing so.

Keeping the claws trimmed can prevent ingrown claws that are excessive long. If you are not able to trim your pet's claws yourself, it is always worth having regular visits to your vets to make sure they are short to prevent unwanted bills associated with inflammation and infection. Also, your pet will stay pain free and thank you for it!

It may sound simple or have no sex appeal to this tip but it works! It would be worth having a chat with your vet to find out things you can do to keep your pet healthy.



4. Stop-This-Train-I-Wanna-Get-Off Medicine

Preventative medicine can be controversial if seen as 'over-treatment' as treatment is administered without symptoms. This is not meant to be a debate regarding it is right or wrong. However, there are certain conditions that can easily be prevented. Flea infestations are fairly common in dogs and cats. Most pet guardians would prefer not to have extra pets! It may also lead to skin diseases due to the fleas feeding and/or the pets scratching. So, prevention of fleas is usually desirable. Tick-borne diseases can cause the pet to be quite ill. Hence, preventative treatment may be also considered reasonable.

Pyometras (infected wombs) and unwanted pregnancies are not uncommon and can be prevented by spaying dogs and cats. Veterinary intervention for pyometras and pregnancies (if a Caesarean-section or other medical conditions relating to pregnancies is needed) may result in unexpected veterinary bills which may be substantial.

There are certain conditions like distemper, parvo and hepatitis that can be life threatening and fatal. Vaccination can prevent or greatly reduce the chance of contracting these viruses.

Please do discuss with your vet what would be appropriate for your pet in terms of preventative medicine.

5. Know Your Pet, Know Thyself

Having the knowledge and understanding of your pet may help you to know when to call the vet and not leave it too late. Be familiar with your pet's daily habits like how much is the water and food intake, the normal behaviour, the habits, the quirks, the personality, the defecation habits, what is normal and abnormal.

The more you understand your pet, the more you will know when something is wrong. If you are very 'tuned in' with your pet, usually, you will be able to tell something is wrong even if your vet cannot see it. If you feel you know your pet well, trust your gut, you are usually correct.



6. Your Vet, Your Choice

Choosing your vet may be the most important thing you can do in terms of taking care of your pet's medical health and your own sanity. It can be easy to look for the cheapest vet around and usually, you will get what you pay for. Sometimes, the result may be more costly than what you pay for and I am not referring to money.

I would urge you to focus on the value you will receive rather than the cost of what you would pay. Value may not always involve money. A peace of mind, trust and faith cannot be measured by how much you pay but they are priceless. Look for a vet that provides you with those attributes and it may be money well spent. Find a vet you can trust that suit your expectations, "style" and budget. What you pay is cost and what you receive is value.

7. Savings in Black and White - Ask for Written Prescriptions

Medicines obtained via the internet pharmacies are usually considerably much more cost effective compared to getting them from your vets. It is usually due to the differences in overheads and economy of scale (they can buy medicine at bulk quantities that has a larger discount).

If your vet is willing, don't be afraid to request for a prescription that may allow you to make a saving.

Few points to note though, 1. The prescription will be written for the length of time that your vet determines is appropriate before the next medical check-up 2. There are no guarantees that the drug you receive will be authentic (there has been a lot of fake internet pharmacies providing medications of dubious origin and quality) 3. There would be an appropriate charge for your vet writing the prescription. Prescriptions are not free!

This may be more useful in long term medications.



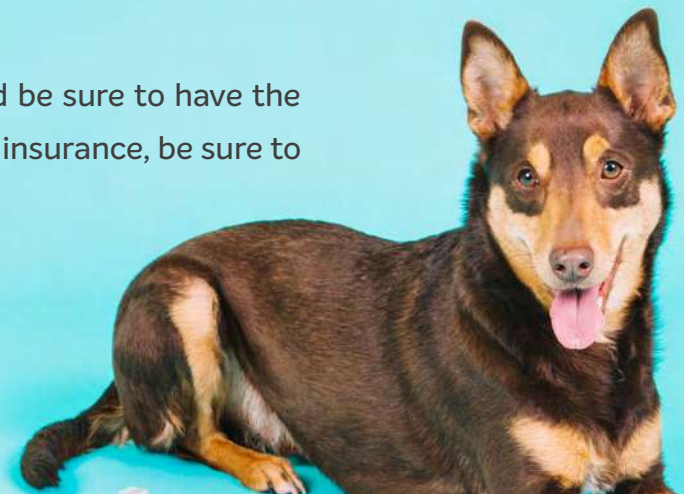
8. Help-I-have-NO-MONEY-at-all Treatment - PDSA

People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) is a UK based charity providing veterinary care for pet guardians who are on benefits and/or are in financial difficulties. It is usually extremely low cost or free in some circumstances. You will have to check your eligibility and find out where is your closest PDSA vet practice (you can do both online). As it is a budget practice, the quality of medicine may be compromised but at least your pet gets treated.

9. Let's Talk about MONEY, baby!

If you truly want to save money at the vets, it would make sense to speak to your vet about it. Discuss your financial expectations with him. Make it clear what you expect and what you can afford. With that knowledge, he can further advise you what to expect with that budget. If you went to buy a car from a garage, you would tell the salesman your budget so he would give you the appropriate selection of car. He would not be selling a Rolls Royce on a Ford budget. Similarly, help your vet to help you by providing him your expectations. Most people do not like to talk about money but money is all that is talked about at the end. Why not take the plunge and discuss it FIRST so it needs not to be discussed awkwardly later?

Also, remember that pets do cost money. Before you get a pet, factor that in and be sure to have the means to take care of her in health and in sickness. If you are not going to take out insurance, be sure to put aside a budget for her. Like the Scout motto, "Be Prepared!"



10. A Stitch in Time saves Nine – Practice Safety First!

While it is impossible to avoid accidents in life, it is possible to practice basic home and environment safety for your pet.

Be aware of where your pets have access to. Make sure there are no live wires or anything that can cause choking or a gastro-intestinal obstruction that they can chew or swallow. Be sure to keep all human medication or potential poisons out of reach.

If you live in a multi-storey house, make sure your kitten is safe from falling out of the window. Throwing sticks for dogs can cause them to be stuck in the mouth or throat. Trapping pets' tails in doors (especially conservatory doors!) and windows can be prevented.

Being aware of where your pets are around your (or your children's) feet and not stepping on them helps! Teaching young kids how to approach and play with your pet is invaluable, both in reducing injuries to both parties and maximising their relationship.



Summary



Money worries can be one of the greatest headaches when being your pet's guardian. It can also destroy great relationships. Taking a proactive lead in identifying and eliminating these worries can lead to a peace of mind, satisfaction and happiness to enable the most fulfilling relationship with your pet (and your vet!). Be Conscious, Be Aware and Take the Lead!

N.B. This list is not exhaustive and if you feel you have more to add, **please email friends@amityvets.co.uk**. We will be grateful any further contributions!





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<https://amityvets.co.uk>  01626 247 888  friends@amityvets.com

Amity Veterinary Care
Brunel Court, Brunel Road, Newton Abbot
TQ12 4PB