



Highlights: Veterinarians

It's only the best for your pet, right? But it shouldn't cost a fortune when your furry companion is sick or injured. **Chicago Consumers' CHECKBOOK** magazine and www.checkbook.org reveal that in the Chicago area, it is possible to find a veterinarian who can provide the care and service you want at a reasonable price.

CHECKBOOK researchers found big price differences among the 194 local veterinary practices included in the ratings. For example—

- To neuter a 6-month-old, 30-pound dog, prices ranged from \$70 to \$529, with an average price of \$272.
- To spay a 6-month-old cat, prices ranged from \$89 to \$501, with an average price of \$256.
- To clean the teeth of a 5-year-old, 65-pound dog, prices ranged from \$95 to \$474, with an average price of \$272.
- Some vets received "superior" ratings on many aspects of care from at least 95 percent of their surveyed customers, while others received "superior" ratings from fewer than 60 percent.
- Fortunately, because many of the lowest-priced vets received very high ratings from their surveyed customers, you can save money without sacrificing the quality of your critter's care.

In addition to its ratings of local veterinary clinics, CHECKBOOK gives extensive advice on dealing with a vet, including—

- Using a facility that charges low fees is just one way to keep down veterinary costs. Getting good advice on prevention and how to care for your pet on your own also minimizes medical expenses.
- Avoid vets who push unnecessary services that provide increased income for them, but little benefit for your pet.
- Seek out a vet who will let you inspect the entire hospital—including treatment areas, cages, and runs—at any time during regular office hours.
- Choose a veterinarian who is easy to talk with. He or she should freely discuss treatment alternatives, the need for specialists, and costs, and should let you make decisions based on your finances, your devotion to your pet, and your informed understanding of the prognosis.
- Look for an office where you can get prompt advice by phone. That can save you money and time.
- Be sure there are arrangements for emergency care outside of regular office hours.

The media may cite selected examples of top-rated veterinarians, as shown in Chicago Consumers' CHECKBOOK, and CHECKBOOK's editors are available for interviews. Please call Jamie Lettis at 202-454-3006 to schedule.