

Published based on [How to choose a vet](#)

How to choose a vet



Image via [Wikipedia](#)

Your vet is a pretty significant figure in your dog's life – and thus, in yours. Hopefully, you'll only ever **need him or her for routine checkups and preventative procedures**; but just in case, it's worth taking the time to **develop a good relationship with a suitable vet**, before you need their services.

WHERE TO LOOK

Sure, you could just pick a vet at random from the Yellow Pages or from an Internet search; but **having the right vet is crucial to your dog's health and happiness** (and, presumably, this plays at least some part in your own happiness and peace of mind as an owner, right?)

Think about it this way: if you were trying to choose a doctor for yourself, would you be happy to just select one at random from an impersonal list?

Probably not. You'd want somebody who comes highly recommended – somebody you feel like you can trust. **Your vet isn't just your dog's doctor; he or she is also the dentist, manicurist, psychologist, and – hopefully! – a friend.** When you roll all these things up into one, you can see why it's necessary to spend some time confirming that you've made the right choice.

The **best place to start looking for a vet is by word of mouth.** If you have any friends or relatives who take **good care of their dogs**, then that's a great place to start: ask them who they'd recommend, and why. This last one is particularly important, because **everyone has different priorities**: for example, **perhaps they like their own vet because he/she is a specialist in their own particular breed**; or they don't charge very much; or the clinic is only five minutes' drive ... **their priorities are not necessarily yours**, so it's a good idea to **make sure that your values coincide** with the person giving the recommendations.

Another **great place to find a vet is through local training clubs (Schutzhund, agility, herding classes, police K-9 academies, etc.)** These organizations are almost guaranteed to place a great deal of importance on **high-quality veterinary care**, because the **health and well-being of their dogs is such a priority.**

Once you've got a list of vets that you're interested in pursuing further, all you have to do is call up the clinic and explain that you're **looking to find a regular vet for your dog(s)**: can you come in for a **quick chat, introduce your dog, and have a look at the premises?**

HAVE A LOOK BEFORE YOU NEED TO

Before you decide to align yourself and your dog with a particular clinic, test the waters first. Ideally, you **want a chance to talk to the vet**, and **discuss his or her philosophies and approach to pet care**.

This is really important. If **your dog ever really needs vet-care** (if **there's an emergency**, or if she **needs an urgent short-term appointment**), you want to be sure that you've made the **best possible choice** as far as her health and comfort levels are concerned. Neither of you should be subjected to any unnecessary extra stress at a time like that – and you can **avoid a lot of grief by spending a bit of time in preparation**.

This photo is currently unavailable

Image by [Sean94112](#) via Flickr



THINGS TO ASK THE VET

While you're at the clinic, you'll want to be assessing your potential vet's overall attitude and approach to health care and animals; and you'll also probably **want answers to some specific questions**.

Here's a list of useful questions to help you on your way:

- **How many vets are there on staff?** If you need to make an urgent appointment, you don't want to be waiting around while precious minutes tick past. **Ideally, there'll be at least two qualified veterinarians on hand** (not just technicians or assistants.)
- **What kind of testing and analysis capabilities does the clinic have?** If they have to send away to a lab for this kind of stuff, it means that the results are going to be delayed. If your dog is very sick, time is an important factor: **it's best if the clinic has at least blood-analysis testing on hand**.
- **What after-hours services are available?** A lot of clinics close the doors in the evenings and on weekends, which means that if there's an emergency, you'll have to go somewhere else – and subject your dog (and yourself) to an unfamiliar vet. **(If you don't mind this, then that's fine; but be aware that in a high-stress situation when emotions are running high, it's reassuring for your dog and yourself to deal with someone familiar.)**
- **What's their price range? How are payments made? Is there a facility for payment plans in case of unexpected vet bills?** The payment-plan option is particularly important. Even with **pet insurance, vet bills can sometimes be astronomical** – and not everyone has the resources to deal with large vet bills straight away. Ask

the clinic how they cater for situations like that.

- **How up-to-date is the staff with advances in the industry? Do the vet, the technicians, and the assistants attend seminars and workshops regularly?** The field of medical care is always moving forward – **responsible vets make the effort to keep up with the times**, and see that their staff do, too.



Image by [Champi NL](#) via Flickr

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

When you choose a vet, you're balancing convenience and quality. There's no **right or wrong vet for you and your dog** – which is partly why making the choice can be so confusing. **There are lots of vets to choose from, and they're all different!**

Even though **it's tempting to go for the one right around the corner with the rock-bottom prices**, it really is worthwhile taking the time to shop around. **Your dog is utterly dependent on you for her healthcare** – and if you take her seriously as a companion and member of the family, you'll want to do the best thing by her.

A good vet knows how to take care of you as well as your dog. The **relationship that you have with your vet** will hopefully be one that's based around a **healthy mutual respect and positive synergy** - there should be very little scope for misunderstanding. **When the two of you see eye to eye, it makes caring for your dog that much easier.**

FURTHER READING

For a **complete survival guide on stress-free dog care**, including detailed information on **when your dog needs to see the vet, how to respond to pet emergencies, dog First Aid, and all common health problems**, check out **The Ultimate Guide to Dog Health**. It's a complete **handbook on dog health care**, and teaches you how to take a **proactive and prepared approach to knowledgeable dog ownership**.

You can visit **The Ultimate Guide to Dog Health** by clicking on the link below:

[How To Choose A Vet](#)

Related articles by Zemanta

- [Who Can Be The Right Doctor for Your Pet Bird](#) (animaltopics.com)
- [Suspect in wreck was rushing dog to vet, papers say](#) (theolympian.com)
- [Tuesday Top Ten: Ways to Show Your Dog You Care](#) (doggies.com)

You can also find this article published on [How to choose a vet](#), and on the tag pages [animals vet](#), [ask the vet](#), [dog vet](#), [dog vets](#), [find a veterinarian](#), [find veterinarian](#), [health vet](#), [how to choose a good vet](#), [how to choose a vet](#), [how to choose a veterinarian](#), [pet vet](#), [pet vets](#), [vet dogs](#), [Veterinarian](#), [whats wrong with my dog](#).