

Finding a Good Veterinarian

CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, discusses what to look for in a feline health-care provider.

By Jeanne Adlon

Posted: October 2, 2009, 3 a.m. EDT

Q: How do I find a good vet?

A: One of my clients recently told me a funny story about her vet. Believe it or not, this vet is allergic to cats and his practice is exclusively for cats. Now how is that for picking a career? Meanwhile, he always needs to wear gloves when he sees any patients. For some reason his gloves completely freaked out my client's kitty Felix, who had been there before without incident. This time Felix ended up on top of the vets head — no joke — this is a true story which I am still laughing about. Both he and Felix lived to tell the tale without any bloodshed and Felix got a clean bill of health.

One of the best ways to find a good vet is to ask another cat owner. I struck up a conversation with someone recently and we shared stories about a wonderful vet who turned out to be someone we both use. As a cat sitter, I hear it all—the good, the bad and the ugly, so asking a local cat sitter for a referral is good idea. Also, your local shelters should have a list.

I usually refer a few vets, because the right choice for one person and kitty might not be the same for another. Just like your regular doctor, the chemistry needs to be right. Another important indicator is the staff. Are they friendly, warm and compassionate? Do they show concern for you and your cat and respond well on the phone? For me this is important. I need to feel the staff cares as much about my beloved pets as I do. Also, a practice with several vets is sometimes good — this way one will always be available and they can consult on problems.

If you have shy, nervous or senior cats, check to see which vets make house calls. It may cost more, but it will be less stressful for your cat. Above all, trust your judgment. As always, I invite you to comment and share your stories.