

Sick As a Dog (or Cat)

Pet insurer names the top medical conditions that cats and dogs were seen for in 2008.

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Lower urinary tract disease was the most common reason for cats to visit a veterinarian in 2008, according to Veterinary Pet Insurance. A trip to the veterinarian for something other than a routine examination most likely means a lower urinary tract disease for a cat or an ear infection for a dog, according to a recent analysis by Veterinary Pet Insurance of medical claims received in 2008.

The most common pet maladies found in cats and dogs include skin allergies, eye inflammation and diarrhea. The results show that pets are taken to the vet for many of the same reasons that humans go to the doctor.

The top 10 conditions accounted for nearly 340,000, or close to 25 percent, of all cat and dog medical claims received in 2008, according to the pet health insurance provider. The number of claims received for these conditions attests to their repetitive or chronic nature, said Dr. Carol McConnell, vice president and chief veterinary medical officer for VPI.

"A dog with allergies, for example, will most likely require continuing care and a cat with diabetes will be no stranger to the veterinarian's office," McConnell said. "Pet owners have a tendency to fear major accidents and illnesses – car crash injuries, or cancer – but a chronic condition can be just as detrimental to a pet's quality of life and financially burdensome to treat."

The most expensive of the feline conditions was renal failure, with an average submitted claim fee of \$267; the most expensive canine condition was benign skin tumor, with an average submitted claim fee of \$340, according to VPI.

Top Cat Claims: Lower Urinary Tract Disease Gastritis/Stomach Upsets Chronic Renal Failure Enteritis/Diarrhea Diabetes Mellitus Skin Allergies Hyperthyroidism Ear Infections Upper Respiratory Virus Eye Inflammation

Top Dog Claims: Ear Infections Skin Allergies Pyoderma/Hot Spots Gastritis/Vomiting Enteritis/Diarrhea Urinary Tract Infections Benign Skin Tumors Osteoarthritis Eye Inflammation Hypothyroidism