

Save Money on Vet Bills

Foundation offers tips on how to avoid costly veterinary visits for most common ailments.

Posted: June 26, 2009, 3 a.m. EDT

Cat health problems can cost cat owners a great deal of money in medical expenses. But, according to the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Foundation (CVMF), some ailments can be prevented or at least minimized.

In general, the ideal way to avoid cat health problems is through early detection and prevention. Arnold Goldman, DVM, president of the CVMF and director of the Connecticut State Animal Response Team, recommends twice-yearly physical exams after the age of 7.

“And always examine your pet regularly at home for lumps and other abnormalities,” he added. “Weigh your pet regularly. Any changes should be reported to your veterinarian.”

Below is a list compiled by the CVMF of the top reasons that send cats to the vet’s office. The Foundation also has provided tips on how to avoid making that costly trip.

1. **Motor vehicle trauma** Keep cats strictly indoors. Do not rely on the belief that the cat will never leave the house. According to the CVMF, it takes just one escape to lead to a serious injury, with trauma care costs potentially exceeding \$5,000.
2. **Arthritis** Keep cats lean as obesity can cause arthritis (as well as diabetes and other ailments). A glucosamine supplement from your veterinarian helps alleviate arthritis pain and is relatively inexpensive.
3. **Gastroenteritis** Feed cats two meals daily of a measured amount of cat food. Do not feed your cats “people food.”
4. **Skin Disease** Practice strict tick and flea control. When a cat has a history of skin disease, see a veterinarian early for preventive measures to avoid more costly interventions later. See a veterinarian early for ear discomfort as ear disease is most often linked to allergic disease, according to the CVMF.
5. **Periodontal Disease** Start brushing cats' teeth when they are kittens so they learn to accept the practice as normal. Brush teeth and gums. Allow for regular professional dental cleanings from age 2 and up. Bacteria from gum disease can travel into the blood stream and to vital organs, and can cause cats other serious diseases.

The Connecticut Veterinary Medical Foundation is associated with the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association. The Foundation is a nonprofit organization that aims to enhance the health and welfare of domestic animals.