

Pet Owners Seeking More Specialized Veterinary Care

Seventy-three percent of clients seek referrals to specialists.

September 5, 2005 Seventy-three percent of veterinarians say their clients seek more referrals to veterinary specialists today than they did five years ago, according to a Companion Animal and Family Health Council survey.

Treatments and therapies once only available to humans are now accessible to pets via veterinary specialists. Pets with heart disease, cancer, neurological issues and other organ diseases now have the option of seeking specialized help.

The American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM) has specialists who perform such procedures as implanting pacemakers, administering chemotherapy and removing urinary stones without surgery. The ACVIM specialists, or diplomates, have three to six additional years of veterinary medical training, and specialize in small and large animal internal medicine, cardiology, neurology and oncology.

Owners interested in finding a specialist can ask their primary veterinarian for a referral or seek the care directly. However, the ACVIM advises animal owners to ask the following questions of their veterinarian before seeking a specialist: Would a second opinion be beneficial? Would the animal's chances of success or improvement be better if we saw a specialist? Have you seen this problem often and have you had successful outcomes? How much experience have you had with this particular procedure or treatment? Is my pet receiving the most advanced treatment possible? To find a specialist in your area, visit [The American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine](#) for listings and more information.