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**Five Vital Questions To Ask Your Vet**

**By Kurt Schmitt**

Choosing a "vital 5" out of my list of questions to ask your vet about your cat was no easy task. As the list gets longer, it becomes even more difficult.

My hope, of course, is that cat owners and vets everywhere will use this technique to form a better pet health care team. With some creativity, you can adapt the concept, if not the questions themselves, to fit just about any pet.

As you may already know, I began collecting my list of questions based on reader feedback. By the types of questions that I was being asked by website visitors, two major truths became painfully obvious...

1. Many people just do not seem to have a good working relationship with their vet.

By that I mean that for some reason, they don't seem to get the information that they need. Honestly, I have been shocked by the questions coming my way on cat health and behavior. Hadn't these people spoken to their vet? Surely their vet could have helped them with this topic.

Sadly, in some cases, the answer was no. Even worse, though, was the sad reality of the second truth...

2. They had asked one or more veterinarians about the issue, but never got a clear direction on what the problem was or what to do about it!

In some cases, these people had asked for help over long periods of time, with no results. For them, my standard answer of "here is what I know, now go ask your vet about the particulars" didn't really work for them.

The quick answer of "get another vet" didn't always apply either. It was either not feasible, or had already been tried. The obvious follow up to that would be to continue looking for a veterinarian who would help. But that probably isn't necessary most of the time.

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I didn't have a specific answer for these people at the time, but I knew two things. First, these people needed to get to a place where they could work as a team with their vet to help their cat. Second, they needed to learn exactly what to ask in order to get their vet to talk to them.

One of our goals as cat owners should be to develop and encourage an information flow with our vet. Yet, this seems to be something that most of us put little thought into.

So, how do you do that? Two ways...

1. Ask good questions that lead to a two way information exchange.

My firm belief is that the quality of information that we receive is directly related to the questions that we ask. Based on that notion, I decided to try to help you, the cat owner, and put together a list of

"questions to ask your vet."

2. Arrive at your vet visit prepared, with questions in hand.

Show up at your vet visit with written questions, and write down the responses. While you're there, jot down any new questions, along with their answers, that come to mind. If you don't, you will either forget to ask, not ask in the right way, or worse, forget the answer! Your pet will thank you.

Of my entire list of questions to ask your vet, I've selected 5 that are vital. Here they are...

1. Should my cat be indoor or outdoor? This decision impacts how you and your cat interact. More importantly, it determines to a significant degree how long your cat may live. As a rule, indoor cats live many times longer than outdoor cats.

2. What are the most common diseases and conditions that I should know about? You and your vet should briefly discuss the most common conditions that develop in cats. This discussion can expand to include breed, and may vary based on geography.

3. What are the most common signs of disease that I should look for? In addition to knowing which diseases are common, you should know what to look for. Getting a good idea of the common signs of disease will help you detect trouble early. Some common signs of a number of diseases are excessive thirst and urination, excessive vomiting, weight loss, and lethargy.

4. What do you recommend for cat litter? This can be somewhat controversial, but you should get your vet's opinion. There are many options, probably too many, on brand and type. Using the "wrong" cat litter can have a profound effect on the well being of your cat.

Some cats will refuse to use the litter box if you even change brands. Expand this into a discussion on litter box type, number and placement as well.

5. Is there a particular diet or brand of pet food that you recommend? Why? This again is

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controversial, but all important. The AAFCO sets certain guidelines on pet food ingredients, but that does not mean that commercial pet foods are all the same. In addition, a number of well meaning cat lovers, including some breeders, are recommending home made cat food, or raw meat diets.

Watch out, as these can be dangerous, especially if not done correctly. Find out what your vet is feeding her own animals, and why.

Again, I'll stress the value of the dialogue that begins based on these questions. If you're a good conversationalist, you'll be able to rewrite these questions in your own words. If you are like most, however, you should write them down as is, and let the conversation flow from there.

Are there more questions to ask your vet than just these? Of course there are. Are there others that are also vital to you and your cat? Absolutely, and some of them only you may know. The above list, however, should get you started on a great dialogue, and give you some solid information that a surprising number of pet owners simply do not have.

Kurt Schmitt is an experienced cat owner and founder of

<http://www.cat-lovers-only.com>

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answers to your cat care questions, be sure to read "7 Questions to Ask Your Vet... A Guide for Cat Lovers" on the site.

## **Dog Health Checkups Are Essential For The Health Of Your Pit Bull Terrier**

**By Tim Amherst**

All responsible dog owners know that when your pet shows signs of feeling ill or gets injured that it's time for a visit to the veterinarian.

Naturally, it is important to take your pet to the vet when there is a problem, but many people forget the importance of taking their pets to the doctor when they are healthy! Taking your Pit Bull to the vet for routine well check-ups and vaccinations can prevent many serious medical conditions, and treat others early on before they have a chance to progress and endanger your Pit Bull's health.

No matter how good the care you provide for your Pit Bull is, you may miss early signs of disease that the vet would be able to spot at a routine visit. Catching many diseases early can help prevent them from becoming major health issues. Animals often try to hide any sign of illness, because it can be a sign of weakness to other animals. Your Pit Bull's ability to hide symptoms makes them that much harder to catch early on.

Taking your Pit Bull for preventative care can often save you quite a bit of money. Diseases left

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untreated can be very costly to treat, amassing tremendous bills along the way. By early diagnosis and treatment, you can prevent it from ever getting to that level, therefore saving yourself a lot of money.

By having routine visits with your Pit Bull, your veterinarian will learn what is normal for your dog, as no two animals are quite the same. In learning what is considered normal for your Pit Bull, your vet will be better able to tell when something isn't quite right, and provide prompt medical treatment. Your vet will keep records of every visit, so that he can refer back to them, which will help in treating old problems, and diagnosing new ones.

At your yearly well checkup, your vet will also check to see if your Pit Bull is getting the right diet he needs. The vet will suggest changes to help if your Pit Bull is overweight, or malnourished. This can be vital to your pet's health. Obesity is a major problem that can cause your pet to suffer from a variety of medical problems. It is also crucial that he get proper nutrition, and your vet can prescribe supplements as needed.

Providing routine veterinary care is a vital part of taking care of your Pit Bull. You are responsible for his well-being, and your vet can help you make sure everything is as it should be. Please don't take these yearly preventative check-ups for granted, your Pit Bull's health depends on them.

To learn all about owning, raising, and caring for American Pit Bull Terriers, visit

<http://www.PitBullsRevealed.com/>

today!



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