

Who Should Treat Your Animal

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In the last few decades we have seen a real shift in the way people look at animals. Animals, even when in a service role, are being considered by more people to be companions. More value is now being placed on animal's health and well being and with that more options are now available for providing care for animals.

Traditionally your Veterinarian has been your primary caregiver, with support from professionals such as Farriers and Animal Trainers. Your Veterinarian is still your best choice for primary care. Your Veterinarian has a minimum of eight years training in basic areas such as biology, anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, pathology and surgery. Your Veterinarian is also extensively trained in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. Your Veterinarian has a broad base of knowledge in many areas of animal care and in a position to receive the latest information in advances in Veterinary medicine.

That being said, it is impossible for Veterinary Schools to train Veterinarians to a level of expertise in every possible area of animal care. Many Veterinarians choose to continue and expand their areas of expertise post graduation and become experts in areas such as animal dentistry, acupuncture, chiropractic, herbal medicine or hoof care. Other Veterinarians choose to focus on improving themselves in the basic Veterinary skills they learned in school. Advanced board certification exists for such skills as surgery, dentistry, dermatology and many others.

In some cases, a Veterinarian with expertise in a certain skill is not available and in this case an allied professional or lay consultant with expertise is needed. These individuals, such as a chiropractor trained primarily for people or a lay dentist, may have expertise in their profession but generally do not possess a wide base of knowledge in other areas of animal health. When ever possible it is best to keep your Veterinarian involved in decisions involving the health of your animal.

Your Veterinarian may have experts that he consults with on a regular basis that he can recommend to provide services for your animal. If not, here are some suggested questions for you to ask to determine the level of training and experience of a person you are considering to perform any services on your animal.

- 1. What is your education?**
- 2. Do you have references?**

3. Do you routinely consult with a Veterinarian?

4. How long have you been doing this modality?

5. Will you provide me with records of your treatments?

Most people choose their Veterinarians very carefully and hold them to a high standard of performance. You should expect no less of any person you have work on your animal.