

Save Money on Pet Care

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Fido appreciates the good care and food he receives. These days, with high unemployment rates and many people losing their homes, it is more important than ever to save money whenever we can. While I certainly don't advocate skimping on pet care, there are many ways to save money on your pet supplies and even routine medical care if you just work a little at it.

Here are some money-saving tips: Use coupons on pet food, treats and toys. On our own websites, the big pet-supply stores occasionally offer discount coupons. You can clip coupons in the Sunday papers and go online to sites that offer coupons. Many manufacturers also offer coupons on their own websites, even on premium foods.

Many shelters and pet retailers have low-cost vaccination clinics. You can save a significant amount of money on routine vaccines, including rabies. Sometimes you have to wait in line, but spend the time talking to other pet owners about your favorite pets. My local shelter even offers a discount on microchipping.

My pet-sitting company offers current customers a \$10 credit for everyone they refer that uses our service. There is not a limit on the savings, so if you refer five people who use us, you can save \$50!

Some veterinarians also offer referrals or have coupons in the Pennysaver or other coupon books.

Attend pet fairs and pet shows. Many of the exhibitors at these shows will give you multiple coupons. At a recent event, I received three coupons for free 4-pound bags of food that saved me \$30.

If you need your pet spayed or neutered, most communities have at least one or two veterinarians that offer low-cost procedures. If you don't know of any in your area, contact your local humane society to see if they can recommend someone. Don't put off this important procedure just because of cost.

Yesterday in the newspaper I read about another local humane group that is offering free pet food to anyone who has lost their job. They stressed the fact that they will not turn anyone away. If you have lost your job, take advantage of the resources available to you. When you can, you can pay it back by making a donation to your local shelter.

If your pet is on regular medication, get the prescription from your vet and order medications online. When my cat was on subcutaneous fluids, I did this and was able to buy supplies at a fraction of the cost I had been paying at the vet.

Even in these tough times, please make sure your pet gets the care it needs. Schedule your regular veterinary exams but use the above ideas to offset some of the costs of caring for your best friend.

- Read more Confessions of a Dog Sitter -