

Sick as a Dog (or Cat)

Veterinary Pet Insurance reveals most common dog medical conditions of 2008.

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A trip to the veterinarian for something other than a routine examination most likely means an ear infection for a dog or lower urinary tract disease for a cat, according to a recent analysis by Veterinary Pet Insurance of medical claims received in 2008.

The most common maladies found in dogs and cats include skin allergies, eye inflammation, and diarrhea. The results show that pets are taken to the vet for many of the same reasons humans go to the doctor.

The top 10 conditions accounted for nearly 340,000, or close to 25 percent, of all dog and cat medical claims received in 2008, according to the pet health insurance provider. The number of claims received for these conditions attests to their repetitive or chronic nature, said Dr. Carol McConnell, vice president and chief veterinary medical officer for VPI.

“A dog with allergies, for example, will most likely require continuing care and a cat with diabetes will be no stranger to the veterinarian’s office,” McConnell said. “Pet owners have a tendency to fear major accidents and illnesses – car crash injuries, or cancer – but a chronic condition can be just as detrimental to a pet’s quality of life and financially burdensome to treat.”

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| Top Dog Claims | Top Cat Claims |
| 1. Ear infections | 1. Lower urinary tract disease |
| 2. Skin allergies | 2. Gastritis/Stomach upsets |
| 3. Pyoderma/Hot spots | 3. Chronic renal failure |
| 4. Gastritis/Vomiting | 4. Enteritis/Diarrhea |
| 5. Enteritis/Diarrhea | 5. Diabetes mellitus |
| 6. Urinary tract infections | 6. Skin allergies |
| 7. Benign skin tumors | 7. Hyperthyroidism |
| 8. Osteoarthritis | 8. Ear infections |
| 9. Eye inflammation | 9. Upper respiratory virus |
| 10. Hypothyroidism | 10. Eye inflammation |

Pet owners can ensure that they spot an illness quickly by regularly observing a pet’s daily routine and inspecting a pet’s eyes, ears, and skin. Lumps, sores, unusual odors, or drastic changes in behavior indicate that a pet should be examined by a veterinarian as soon as possible.

In 2008, the most expensive of the canine conditions was benign skin tumors, with an average submitted claim fee of \$340. For cats, the most expensive condition was renal failure, with an average submitted claim fee of \$267, according to VPI.