

Dog Ear Infections Top Cause of Vet Visits

Pet insurance company releases a list of the 10 most common causes of vet visits in 2009.

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If your dog visited the vet with an ear infection in 2009, he's not alone. Veterinary Pet Insurance, a provider of pet health insurance based in Brea, Calif., recently revealed the top 10 most common causes of veterinary visits in 2009. Topping the list for dogs was ear infection, and topping the list for cats was lower urinary tract disease.

VPI said it receives more than a million claims annually for treatment of cats and dogs. Despite a pet owner's best efforts to keep their animals healthy, data shows that pets are still at risk for ailments that may require repeated trips to a veterinarian's office, according to Carol McConnell, D.V.M., vice president and chief veterinary medical officer for VPI.

The company received nearly 68,000 canine claims for ear infections in 2009 – with an average claim fee of \$100 per office visit. For cats, VPI said it received 3,700 medical claims for lower urinary tract disease. Lower urinary tract disease cost cat owners an average of \$260 per office visit.

For dogs, the 10 most common conditions were: ear infectionskin allergyskin infection/hot spotsgastritis/vomitingenteritis/diarrheabladder infectionarthritissoft tissue traumanon-cancerous tumoreye infection

The most expensive canine condition on the list (non-cancerous tumor) cost an average of \$335 per visit, while for cats, the most expensive condition (periodontitis/dental disease) cost an average of \$360 per visit.

Regular physical exams can help prevent and identify certain conditions before they become serious or costly, VPI said.