

Dogs Visit Doctor More Than People

A new poll shows people take their pets to the veterinarian more often than humans visit their doctors.

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About 96 percent of pet owners take their pet to the veterinarian for routine care at least once a year, according to a poll of 4,000 Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI) policyholders and website visitors. Forty-three percent make multiple visits during the year.

In comparison, 83 percent of adults in the United States had contact with a healthcare professional within the year, according to a 2005 survey by the Center for Disease Control.

“The data further reinforces the fact that pets are becoming integral family members,” said Dr. Carol McConnell, vice president and chief veterinary medical officer for VPI. “More people are becoming attuned to the medical needs of their pets, which include everything from emergency care to preventive procedures such as vaccinations and physical exams.”

In 2006, “wellcare” visits and physical exams were the most common preventive care claims the insurance company received. Wellcare visits consist of discussing the pet’s overall health, including nutrition, behavior, weight assessment, activity levels, and the pet’s general appearance.

“In the past, many pet owners viewed a veterinarian’s primary role as healing sick pets,” McConnell said. “Today, more pet owners are taking advantage of the veterinarian’s ability to keep their pets healthy with regular physical examinations, vaccinations and other wellcare procedures.”