



NEWS RELEASE

Bayer Corporation
P.O. Box 390
Shawnee, KS 66201-0390
Phone: 913-268-2000

For more information:

Bob Walker
Director of Communications and Public Policy
Bayer Animal Health
913.268.2577

bob.walker.b@bayer.com

Leading Veterinarian Offers Advice to Keep Your Pet Healthy in an Unhealthy Economy

How to Budget for Dogs and Cats without Scaling Back on What's Important

SHAWNEE, Kan. (February 16, 2009) – In this challenging economy, pet owners are welcomed at the door by difficult decisions and financial concerns about their pet's health and wellness. In fact, many pet owners have scaled back on regular veterinary visits and preventive care measures – and that's of great concern to a pet's current and future health.

“It's easy and understandable to react quickly to what's happening, however, these immediate decisions should take into account the future. Pet owners should prioritize without sacrificing the quality of their pet's health and without putting them at risk,” said leading veterinarian and pet expert, Dr. Marty Becker. “Most importantly, spending money isn't the way to your pet's heart; spending quality time and attention makes both of you happy and healthy.”

As part of the Help Your Pet, Get to the Vet Campaign by Advantage[®] Topical Solution from Bayer Animal Health, Dr. Becker offers his top tips and advice to take care of your pets—and save money.

- **Know your pet's real age:** Cats and dogs age much faster than we do, so knowing their age in human years can help you understand some of the possible health issues and complications. For instance, a six-year-old Great Dane is already 48 years of age in human years, so its dietary needs and activity levels should reflect this. Because pets age so quickly, it also means their health issues and concerns change quickly.

- **Prevention is the best medicine:** Nearly all veterinarians agree that preventive pet care is the best way to keep pets healthy. Keep up with essential proactive preventive care like parasite control, dental care and vaccinations. Scaling back on monthly flea and tick treatment and prevention could easily become a major financial burden of hundreds and possibly thousands of dollars and could cause discomfort or even a serious health condition for your pet.
- **Don't skip exams:** Pet owners and veterinarians make great team players – keep routine veterinary visits scheduled on your calendar so that you have the opportunity to share any concerns with your veterinarian, ask questions and flag any potential health issues early on. One year of missed veterinary visits is a missed opportunity to identify potential symptoms early on and complications as your pet ages. And, veterinarians can often identify symptoms of larger problems before they become full-blown health issues.
- **Watch the scales:** Extra pounds can be the sign of bigger health problems in pets. Pet obesity is on the rise, so be sure to always feed your pet the correct amount of food and track your pet's weight regularly at home. Two easy ways to monitor your pet's weight include: check that your pet's ribs are not visually noticeable but are easily felt and check your pet for a trim abdomen.
- **Enjoy healthy freebies:** Exercise benefits cats, dogs AND owners too! Physical activities give your pet much-needed stimulation and also help curb pets packing on the extra pounds. Set aside playtime every day whether you have an outdoor or indoor pet and rotate activities to keep things fresh.
- **Get a daily dose of quality time:** That “special bonding time” with your cat or dog provides the love and nurturing that your pet needs, and it benefits their emotional well-being. Additionally, according to many research studies, the benefits of pet ownership and quality bonding are mutually beneficial – showing signs of affection reduces stress and has a multitude of positive effects on people as well as pets.

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- **Do-it-yourself pet care:** Take on some of the basic pet grooming at home or space out the amount of time between professional grooming. Check the library for grooming guides and look for breed-specific tips on the Internet.
- **Become a savvy shopper:** Buy food or kitty litter in bulk and skip the urge to dress your pet in designer duds and fancy accessories. Also, for some of your larger items, such as crates, cat posts, houses and more, check out places like Craigslist where you can get great prices for gently used necessities, or where you can post a free ad for what you need.

For more pet care information and helpful tools, from treatment e-alerts to interactive health assessments and quizzes, visit www.gettothetvet.com or www.petparents.com.

About Bayer Animal Health

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