Pet Guide to Pet Insurance

CRICKMOREVETS
The unexpected can happen, so be prepared with an insurance policy that is suited to your pets needs.

PET INSURANCE
(Financial assistance for your pet)

More than half of UK households have a pet in residence. Cats seem to be the most popular pets at 8 million with dogs not far behind in number at 6 million. There are about 3500 veterinary practices that specialise in treating every type of animal from horses and cows to ferrets and hamsters.

We as a small animal Practice do not differentiate in the treatment options for insured or uninsured animals and suggest that it is individual choice similar to that of humans who may consider taking out private medical insurance. Some Insurance policies might have a relatively low monthly premium but have a high excess, some may exclude certain animals or conditions, only allow a certain amount to be claimed for particular conditions or in a certain length of time, others may have age restrictions, others may offer policies for life of your pet. Always read the whole policy and the small print. If you have purchased a puppy or kitten then it may be worth considering insuring it for the first year - this is when they are often more adventurous and get up to all sorts of mischief and often is when there may be indications of growth development issues or similar considerations. Most policies are renewable on an annual basis so you can always consider stopping it then. The choice is yours.

Some of our clients have taken the decision not to Insure their pet but to have a Bank Account or similar. The bonus with this is that if you don’t use the money to pay for treatment it accumulates and could help with costs towards vaccinations, kennel bills etc whereas if you pay monthly premiums and don’t claim that money is in theory lost. Another option is to purchase premium bonds - which knows your pet could win make you a millionaire and win you a million!!!

When To Take Out A Policy

The same rules apply to buying a pet policy as your own health insurance policy - buy it when young and healthy and there are no existing conditions to report. Read the small print carefully and take particular notice of the terms and conditions that will explain what is
and what is not covered together with any excess payments that may be required.

What Do You Get For Your Money?

In general, diagnosis and treatment for any accident, injury, or illness, will be covered by the policy. However pre-existing and chronic conditions will almost certainly be excluded or subject to excess. Understandably any insurance policy with high claim likelihood has to maintain a careful balance between premium level, excess charges and exclusions for the insurer to remain in business.

As in human medicine a very large number of sophisticated diagnostic tests are available. Some will require the services of a laboratory, for example blood and urine samples to test for the presence of infection, diabetes or metabolic disturbances. X-rays and ultrasound scanning are other commonly used diagnostic procedures. Rapid diagnosis is vitally important in the treatment of any illness and diagnostic tests may have to be carried out at intervals to monitor the success of the treatment or antibiotics being prescribed for an infection.

Cats and dogs stray on to roadways and frequently have to undergo hospitalisation following an accident. X-rays, transfusions and major surgery involving the placement of metal implants, screws and plates to restore the function of shattered bones all require expensive resources. An insurance policy in these circumstances will bring peace of mind.

Rare and unusual conditions such as leukemia or cancer may have to be referred to a University establishment or specialists for treatment. Advanced cancer diagnosis and treatment can be given, for instance at Cambridge University and the Animal Health Trust at Newmarket.

Third Party Liability

This is an important benefit to protect pet owners against being sued if their pet causes damage or injury. This can be either a dog biting a child or a cat causing a road accident.

Premium Levels

As with most types of insurance premiums will vary according to risk. A valuable pedigree will command a much higher premium than farmyard breeds! Post Codes will also be taken into account and proximity to built up areas of towns and cities.

Exclusions

Routine and preventive care will be excluded together with anything classed as “cosmetic” for example surgery to correct a bite abnormality in a dog. All pre-existing conditions.

Summary

Veterinary insurance has become much more popular in recent years and there are a variety of plans to choose from. The national British Small Animal Veterinary Association endorses the concept of Pet Health Insurance and almost all veterinary practices display Pet Insurance leaflets and actively recommend it. The ongoing progress of veterinary medicine means that costs will continue to rise. An insurance policy is a sensible way in which to begin planning for unforeseen bills that could be very significant.