



General Questions

What is the exam fee?

Office Visit Type	Price	What is included
General Practice Visit	\$70	A scheduled examination with a veterinarian, where they will perform a nose to tail exam, discuss your pet's diet, exercise, behaviors, and any medical concerns you have. If the doctor recommends diagnostics, treatments, or medications, those services will carry an additional cost.
Emergency Office Visit	\$105	During an emergency exam, a veterinarian will see you and your pet any time of the day or night. The doctor will examine your pet and work with you on a treatment plan to address the urgent or emergency condition that your pet is facing. Diagnostics, treatments, or medications will carry an additional cost.
Other types of visits	Varies	Other types of office visits, such as medical progress examinations, technician appointments, or specialist consultations would be scheduled at the request of your doctor and the doctor can inform you of the cost for whichever visit type they are recommending.

I thought you were a nonprofit. Why is veterinary care so expensive?

We have highly-skilled, compassionate staff available to care for your pet 24/7 and we offer a full range of services including wellness care, emergency services, advanced diagnostics, surgery, dentistry and internal medicine and behavior specialties, so you can rest assured your pet is getting excellent care. While providing this comprehensive care for your pet, we aim to keep our prices consistent with other practices in the Bay Area, however, what would be profit at other veterinary hospitals goes directly toward helping animals in need. Every year, your visits allow us to help thousands of animals who would otherwise go without care.

How much will it cost though?

Our veterinarians will always review their treatment plan verbally with you. For hospitalization and procedures, the doctor will always provide you with a written treatment plan. You may always request a written treatment plan with associated costs from your veterinarian for any type of care they are recommending.

Is payment required up front?

Your veterinarian will work with you to develop a treatment plan that addresses your pet's needs and is within your financial means. We do require payment at the time of service. If your pet is being hospitalized or is coming in for a procedure, we will ask for a deposit towards the cost of care at drop off

and collect any remaining balance when your pet is discharged. Extended hospitalization may require additional deposits.

What if I cannot afford the care?

We do accept CareCredit, a credit card through which we can offer deferred interest or extended low-interest financing plans. We are proud to be able to offer extensive financial assistance programs to help San Francisco pet guardians with unexpected veterinary expenses in urgent or emergency situations. Please visit our Financial Assistance Programs page to learn about our payment plan and grant options.

Should I get pet insurance?

Many pet guardians are enrolling in pet insurance plans. With pet insurance, you can rest a little easier knowing that it will sometimes help to cover all or a portion of the costs for your veterinarian to run tests, diagnose, and treat your pet correctly, so you can ensure your pet is getting access to the care he needs.

Pet Insurance Plan Differences

Most pet insurance plans have a few basics in common. You will typically pay a monthly premium and select an annual or per-incident deductible amount. You can go to the veterinarian of your choice and you will pay them for services and then file a claim to get reimbursed. Wellness care, pre-existing conditions and related treatments are not usually covered.

Please be aware that there are some substantial differences between companies. These differences can determine whether your claim is covered or how much you will get reimbursed after a visit to your vet.

When looking at pet insurance, consider the following:

-  **Coverage.** Look closely at coverage and exclusions. Congenital and hereditary conditions that can be very expensive to treat are often excluded from coverage.
-  **Deductibles.** Annual deductibles typically reimburse you more during a policy year than per-incident deductibles. You just have to meet one annual deductible, not a deductible for every incident.
-  **Reimbursement Method.** Not all pet insurance companies pay the actual veterinary bill. Beware of benefit schedules or "usual and customary" policy language, as it may lower your reimbursement amounts.
-  **Claim Limits.** Make sure you understand whether claim limits are applied per incident, per year, or over the pet's lifetime.
-  **Customer Service.** It's all about service once the policy is purchased. What are pet parents saying about their care and claims experience with a company?

Helpful Resources:

When enrolling in pet insurance, you are choosing to give your pet the best veterinary care available.

Below are links to give you additional information and help to make sure you choose the right plan for you and your pet.

[Pet Insurance Review](#) – Read what customers are saying about customer service and claims processing for all pet insurance companies.

[Consumers Advocacy Group](#) – Find out how pet insurance companies rank based on price, customer service, and reputation.

[Pet Insurance Quotes](#) – Get a comprehensive evaluation of pet insurance rates using a rigorous 20-point analysis.

Discounted Rates:

If you would like a free quote from Healthy Paws, San Francisco SPCA clients can access discounted rates [here](#).

How do I get my pet’s medication refilled?

For your convenience, we have three options to get your medication refilled:

1. If you’d like to get the medication delivered right to your home, you can request the medication through our [online pharmacy](#). Your doctor will review the request, and once approved, it will be shipped to you.
2. You can log in to your [pet portal](#), where your pet’s prescription history will be listed. You can click “Refill” next to the medication you’d like to have refilled. Your doctor will review the request and we’ll contact you when the medication is available to pick up at your primary SF SPCA Veterinary Hospital (Mission or Pacific Heights).
3. Alternatively you can call our prescription refill lines: Pacific Heights 415-568-3016 or Mission 415-522-3554 and we will contact you when the medication is available for pick up at our pharmacy.

Emergency Care

How do I know if I should come for emergency service or wait for an appointment?

We are available 24/7 to provide your pets with emergency care. When in doubt, call us at 415-554-3030 to speak with a team member about whether you should bring your pet in to our emergency service. Often it can be impossible to assess the severity of a situation over the phone, so you may be advised to bring your pet in to have a technician assess in person whether they can wait for a scheduled appointment, or should be seen right away.

Potential emergencies include:

- Ingestion of a foreign object (toy, string, bone, etc.)
- Ingestion of poison (bring container or name of chemical ingested)
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy

- Difficulty breathing (gasping, noisy respiration, blue tongue, etc.)
- Difficulty urinating or defecating
- Difficulty standing
- Inability to deliver puppies or kittens
- Trauma (being hit by a car, falling out of a window, etc.)
- Seizure
- Animal bite

If your animal has an emergency:

- Do not try home remedies
- Be careful – animals in pain can bite or scratch
- Get help as quickly as possible

What should I do if my pet ate or was exposed to a potentially toxic substance?

It's critical that you seek help as quickly as possible. If you are worried your pet may have eaten something poisonous, we recommend you contact ASPCA Poison Control immediately at 1-888-426-4435 to have a toxicologist assess the danger to your pet, given the specific situation (your pet's size, species, and breed, what they consumed, how much of the substance they consumed, any underlying health concerns, etc.). There is a fee for these consultations, however, it may save you a trip to the emergency room, or confirm that you need to come in immediately. Our veterinarians will also likely consult these specialists for a fee if you present your pet for having consumed a potentially toxic substance.

How long is the wait time if I come in for an Emergency visit?

Although we cannot predict the your wait time, which depends on the number and severity of cases that seek care through our emergency service, our associates will provide you with updates about estimated wait times based on our caseload at any given point in time. To ensure we can get pets with the life-threatening conditions treated right away, the order in which patients are seen depends not only on arrival time, but also on severity of the patient's condition, based on triage by a technician.

If our wait becomes too long, we will provide you with information for other local emergency hospitals, where you may be able to be seen sooner.

Are emergency visits more expensive than appointments?

Although the Emergency Office Visit fee is \$105 (instead of \$70 for a general practice appointment), all of the other care your pet may receive during an emergency visit would cost the same as if it was provided during a general practice appointment. It is important to bring your pet in for an emergency visit if he or she has an urgent medical need rather than waiting for a general practice appointment. If care for an urgent issue is delayed, the condition could worsen; we want to get your pet on the road to recovery as soon as possible. *Additionally, the emergency doctor will have the time to work through your*

pet's condition with you, whereas general practice doctors have appointments scheduled throughout the day.

Hospitalization

What is included in "Hospitalization"?

Hospitalization includes 24-hour supervision of your pet by a registered veterinary technician. In addition, your pet will receive soft bedding, food, water, affection, a litterbox or regular walks. The care will be tailored to your pet and include regular monitoring of your pet's temperature, pulse, respiration, weight, and eliminations, as well as care and flushing of any catheters, incision care, and timing and administration of the doctor's treatment plan. Our technicians monitor your pet for signs of pain or discomfort, response to therapy, and psychological wellbeing. The technicians provide updates to the doctor, who will adjust their treatment plan accordingly.