

Taking Pets To The Vet For The First Time

(NAPSA)—Pets often seem to have limitless energy and robust constitutions, but don't let this fool you: They are susceptible to all sorts of maladies, ranging from mild to life threatening. That's why it pays to have a relationship with a veterinarian.

To find just the right veterinarian, ask pet-owning friends for recommendations. If you are new in town or don't know anyone who has a pet, don't worry. Most veterinarians belong to the American Veterinary Medical Association or the American Animal Hospital Association. You can contact one of these national organizations for a referral to a member veterinarian in your area. Once you get some recommendations, make an appointment for a first visit so the three of you can get to know each other.

In order for your veterinarian to maintain your pet's good health, it is important for you to schedule regular checkups and practice preventive care at home. At each appointment, be sure to communicate clearly your pet's behavior and habits. Since many signs of illness are subtle, even minor changes in your pet's behavior can give your doctor valuable information on what might become a serious health issue.

When bringing your pet to the vet, it can be helpful to take along a stool sample. Scoop a recent sample out of the litter box or



There are a number of things to consider when choosing a veterinarian for your pet.

yard and take it along in a little plastic bag. This will enable your veterinarian to immediately test your pet for internal parasites. All pets are at risk for parasites—not just those who live primarily outdoors. And when there are small children in the house, there is additional risk of children picking up parasitic disease from their pets. An easy, effective way to protect your pet is to use a monthly oral parasite preventive, available through veterinary clinics.

Remember that veterinarians care as much about you as an owner as they do about your pets. They are available to give you the information and resources you need to take the best possible care of your animals. By taking the time to select the veterinarian that you feel confident can provide for your needs as an owner and the medical needs of your pet, you will establish a rewarding partnership.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.growingupwithpets.com.