clip and save

cutting spay and
tenuter myths
down to size

plus:

+ pet health tips:
  the dirt on
declawing + more!

+ behind the paw
  with grooming guru
  john paul dejoria

+ cornering elbow
dysplasia with
morris animal
foundation

beyond the blade

surgical advancements
in veterinary medicine
with dr. ernie ward

under the knife

when emergencies
go to the dogs
(and cats)
Upcoming Portrait Sessions:

Greenwich, CT | March 2 - 3, 2013
Los Angeles, CA | March 30 - 31, 2013
San Francisco, CA | April 20 - 21, 2013
Boston, MA | May 3 - 4, 2013
Chicago, IL | May 18 - 19, 2013
New York City | June 8 - 9, 2013
Marthas Vineyard, MA | June 15, 2013
Nantucket, MA | June 16, 2013
North Adams, MA | July 13 - 14, 2013
Portland, OR | July 20 - 21, 2013
Bend, OR | July 23 - 24, 2013
Seattle, WA | July 28 - 29, 2013
North Adams, MA | August 10 - 11, 2013
Denver, CO | August 22 - 23, 2013
Vail, CO | August 24, 2013
Dallas, TX | September 28 - 29, 2013

Amanda Jones is now accepting appointments for dog portrait sessions across the country:
www.amandajones.com/calendar
ajphoto@amandajones.com
413/664-7444

Text “info” to 413-664-7444 for detailed information about our sessions.
Facebook: amandajonesphoto
Twitter: amandajonesfoto

Sign up for our Dog of the Month email newsletter:
www.amandajones.com/domc
ruff
guide

tackling cruciate ligament tears

24

mission critical
slices of life from the emergency vet

48

on the cover:
our newest petplan family member, frankenstein (frankie) harris, a 9-week-old giant schnauzer, on the set (photographed by peter olson in the petplan offices)

barks features

“Measure a thousand times, cut once.”
-Turkish proverb

fetch! (ISSN 1944-3854) Volume 6, Issue 15, February 2013. Subscription rate for 4 issues is $10 in the U.S. A subscription to fetch! magazine is included in the price of all Petplan policies in the United States and is provided to select veterinary clinics across the nation. Application to mail at Periodicals Postage Prices is pending at Philadelphia, PA, and additional mailing offices. Copyright 2013 ©Fetch, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Brought to you quarterly by Petplan pet insurance. See the magazine online at www.gopetplan.com/fetchmagazine.

SUBSCRIBERS: For customer service, please call 866.467.3875, send email to fetchfeedback@gopetplan.com, or write to us at fetch! magazine, 1 International Plaza, Suite 140, Philadelphia, PA 19113-1529. ADVERTISERS: For advertising inquiries, please email us at adsales@fetch-magazine. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to fetch!, 1 International Plaza, Suite 140, Philadelphia, PA 19113-1529.
in this issue
2013 | no. 1 | issue 15 | the snip/tuck issue

40 snipped in the bud
the facts on spaying and neutering

on the cutting edge
spearheading surgical advancements with dr. ernie ward

56 close to the bone
cornering elbow dysplasia and arthritis

64 paws for reflection
petplan helps a pup grazed by trouble

wag expert advice
12 health tips
keen clips from dr. kim smyth

28 breed health profile
styling the standard poodle

38 chow down
naturally healing nutrition

46 ask our experts
dr. nina mantione answers your piercing pet health questions

sniff interviews & numbers
22 what’s up, doc?
 snippets on specialty care from dr. robert orsher

54 pet stats
pointed pet facts

60 pet people
in the chair with grooming guru john paul dejoria

fetch! the snip/tuck issue
dr. kim smyth, dvm, is a 2004 graduate of the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Smyth first began practicing veterinary medicine in a small animal clinic close to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Possessing a knack for giving great pet health advice, Dr. Smyth has authored hundreds of pet health essays and is a contributing expert on Petplan’s “Vets for Pets” blog. Dr. Smyth and her husband, Matt, have one dog, Katie, two crazy cats, Joe and Charlie, and two sons, Wyatt and Cooper.

Dr. Rebecca Jackson, DVM, is a staff veterinarian at Petplan. The daughter of a veterinarian, she received her Bachelor of Science degree from Purdue University in 2002, and attended the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine. After graduation, Dr. Jackson practiced in Tacoma, WA, and Richmond, VA, where she served as a civilian veterinarian at the Fort Lee Veterinary Treatment Facility. When she’s not busy helping pets at Petplan, Dr. Jackson works as a relief vet for hospitals in the Philadelphia area. She and her husband live in Philadelphia with their daughter, their 9-year-old Golden Retriever and their 8-year-old domestic medium hair.

dr. rebecca jackson, dvm, is a staff veterinarian at Petplan. The daughter of a veterinarian, she received her Bachelor of Science degree from Purdue University in 2002, and attended the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine. After graduation, Dr. Jackson practiced in Tacoma, WA, and Richmond, VA, where she served as a civilian veterinarian at the Fort Lee Veterinary Treatment Facility. When she’s not busy helping pets at Petplan, Dr. Jackson works as a relief vet for hospitals in the Philadelphia area. She and her husband live in Philadelphia with their daughter, their 9-year-old Golden Retriever and their 8-year-old domestic medium hair.

dr. nina mantione, vmd, is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. After working in Philadelphia for several years, she is now in private practice in central Pennsylvania. An art major as an undergraduate, Dr. Mantione fills her creative needs by writing, painting and gardening, while being supervised by four helpful kids, three lively dogs and three arrogant cats. She spends her down time (what’s that?) riding her horses and hanging out with her (very patient) husband, John.

dr. ernie ward, dvm, is a 1992 graduate of the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine. He is the owner and chief-of-staff of Seaside Animal Care in Calabash, NC, which received the prestigious National Practice of Excellence award. Dr. Ward is a frequent author and lecturer and is a member of the Veterinary Economics’ Editorial Advisory Board. In addition to publishing three veterinary books, two training videos and a dog obesity and nutrition book, Dr. Ward has been featured on Animal Planet, and numerous television and radio newscasts around the country.

dr. jules benson, bvsc, mrcvs, is a graduate of the University of Liverpool Vet School. Since arriving in the U.S. eight years ago, Dr. Benson has worked in a small animal practice near Philadelphia and is currently on the Board of Trustees for the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association and the Board of Directors for Second Chance Rescue. Now serving as Petplan’s Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Benson continues to practice veterinary medicine part time — both in the clinic where he once spent all of his days, and at home, where he is both dad and vet to four cats, two rats, one rabbit and a leopard gecko.

Dr. Jules Benson, BVSc, MRCVS, is a graduate of the University of Liverpool Vet School. Since arriving in the U.S. eight years ago, Dr. Benson has worked in a small animal practice near Philadelphia and is currently on the Board of Trustees for the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association and the Board of Directors for Second Chance Rescue. Now serving as Petplan’s Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Benson continues to practice veterinary medicine part time — both in the clinic where he once spent all of his days, and at home, where he is both dad and vet to four cats, two rats, one rabbit and a leopard gecko.

Heidi Jeter has been a reporter, writer and editor since 1995. Her lifelong passion for animals led her to Morris Animal Foundation nine years ago. As the foundation’s Director of Communications, Jeter feels fortunate to create content that strives to advance animal health and well-being. She lives in Denver with her husband, their 4-year-old daughter and their sweet-natured tabby cat, Pandora, who at 17 years of age still manages to act like a kitten.

Dr. Nina Mantione, VMD, is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. After working in Philadelphia for several years, she is now in private practice in central Pennsylvania. An art major as an undergraduate, Dr. Mantione fills her creative needs by writing, painting and gardening, while being supervised by four helpful kids, three lively dogs and three arrogant cats. She spends her down time (what’s that?) riding her horses and hanging out with her (very patient) husband, John.

Dr. Wegward, DVM, is a 1992 graduate of the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine. He is the owner and chief-of-staff of Seaside Animal Care in Calabash, NC, which received the prestigious National Practice of Excellence award. Dr. Ward is a frequent author and lecturer and is a member of the Veterinary Economics’ Editorial Advisory Board. In addition to publishing three veterinary books, two training videos and a dog obesity and nutrition book, Dr. Ward has been featured on Animal Planet, and numerous television and radio newscasts around the country.

Dr. Jules Benson, BVSc, MRCVS, is a graduate of the University of Liverpool Vet School. Since arriving in the U.S. eight years ago, Dr. Benson has worked in a small animal practice near Philadelphia and is currently on the Board of Trustees for the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association and the Board of Directors for Second Chance Rescue. Now serving as Petplan’s Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Benson continues to practice veterinary medicine part time — both in the clinic where he once spent all of his days, and at home, where he is both dad and vet to four cats, two rats, one rabbit and a leopard gecko.
Petplan is proud to congratulate the more than 2,200 veterinary professionals from across the nation who were nominated for our 2013 Petplan Veterinary Excellence Awards!

It’s an honor to be nominated. The winning Veterinarian, Vet Tech and Practice Manager were announced in February.

To learn more about this year’s winners, go to www.GoPetplan.com/2013-vet-awards.

For more information about Petplan and how we support and celebrate our veterinary community, please visit www.GoPetplan.com.
SNIP/TUCK (snip/tuhk) v.: to make small adjustments to the body to improve health or modify physical appearance

We’ve all done it from time to time; looked in the mirror and imagined what a little snip here and a tiny tuck there would do to improve our appearance. But when it comes to our pets, most of us tend to think they look just perfect — and they do! After all, what’s more comical than a wide-eyed Pug? More endearing than the droopy-eared Basset Hound?

Accepting “imperfections” in our pets comes much easier than forgiving our own flaws. But beautiful breed characteristics aside, there are times when our pets need to go under the knife to help preserve their health.

Thanks to continually evolving techniques and sophisticated technologies, veterinary surgeries are keeping pace with human medicine (“On the Cutting Edge,” page 30), and giving pets more chances than ever to live their best lives (“Close to the Bone,” page 56).

When pets at home need a helping hand in a hurry, it pays for pet parents to recognize — and react to — signs of stress and strain. We take a look at some common critical conditions that can cut our furry friends down quickly if pet parents don’t take immediate action (“Mission Critical,” page 48).

And of course, our “Snip/Tuck” issue wouldn’t be complete without talking about the “Big Snip” — spay and neuter surgery. Despite the prevalence of the procedure, certain myths still mystify pet parents when it comes to altering their four-legged family members. We cut through the clutter to separate fact from fiction (“Snipped in the Bud,” page 40).

To stitch things up, we take a look at the aesthetics of snipping — fur, that is! We chatted with John Paul DeJoria, co-founder of the Paul Mitchell line of human hair products and the more-recently launched John Paul Pet suite of pet grooming goodies (Pet People, page 60).

We hope you enjoy taking the time to tuck into everything this issue has to offer, and that it helps you keep your pets’ health sharp!

‘Til next time,

Chris, Natasha, Wellington & Montgomery
The Gift of Fitness for You and Your Dog

Getting your dogs the exercise they need couldn’t be easier, thanks to the Springer Dog Exerciser.

Simple to use, the Springer absorbs up to 90% of the force of a dog’s unexpected tugs. So you keep your balance and your dog stays safe. Fits most bikes, works with most dogs.

“Simply the best money we’ve ever spent for our pet’s health.”

“Wow! Until today, I could never satisfy my Huskies’ need to run FAST.”

Check out the Springer Xtra Arm, our newest product that lets you ride with dogs on both sides of your bike!


Before starting any new workout routine for your dog, consult your vet.
heartbroken hound

My dog is grieving. Ever since my husband passed away, my 5-year-old yellow Labrador Retriever, Hamilton, barks for attention and jumps at people when they come over or leave. How do you help a dog through the grieving process and the changes that come with the passing of an owner?

deb b. – illinois

editors’ response: Deb, we are so very sorry for your loss. Pets do indeed grieve for loved ones, and we agree that it’s important to acknowledge and address that. Stay tuned to our “Vets for Pets” blog (GoPetplan.com/blog) for an upcoming article on pets and grief, and in the meantime, please give our love to Hamilton.

cutting-edge approach

We recently confirmed a liver shunt in our dog, Pippa. We’re going to attempt a catheter placement of coil instead of invasive surgery. Purdue University is the only place doing this, and they are impressed that you cover congenital issues.

todd l. – illinois

editors’ response: Our paws are crossed for Pippa! Flip to page 30 for more cutting-edge advancements in veterinary medicine!

fetch! tweets

@DaniDodge One of the best things I did in 2012? @Petplan insurance. When my dog got pneumonia, health, not cost, was the concern.

@itsjustjill @Petplan SHOUT OUT to Petplan insurance. Quick service, great payment - you saved the day with my dogs ER treatment. Thank you! Recommend!

@spcaoftexas @Petplan Thank you for the helpful information for #petowners! #petcare #winter

Got pet health questions, advice or comments to share? Write to us at: petplantails@gopetplan.com

If fetch! prints your letter, you’ll get a free $25 Amex gift card.

dear fetch!,

It’s awesome how fetch! shares testimonials on how pet insurance helps pet parents with the costs of caring (“Tails of the Unexpected”). When my 7-year-old Chihuahua, Pico, had 11 teeth and a growth on his paw removed, Petplan reimbursed us a large portion of the bill. Not having to stress over the cost was definitely a lifesaver!

james, holly, pico & paris – pennsylvania

editors’ response: So glad we could lend a paw! See how Petplan helped four more best friends cut their vet bills on page 17!

write to us

find us on facebook facebook.com/petplan
follow us on twitter twitter.com/petplan
follow us on pinterest pinterest.com/petplan
Is Your Pet Ready for Thunderstorm Season?

The Natural Solution to Pet Anxiety!

- Works in Under 30 Minutes
- Convenient to Use Anytime Stressful Events Occur
- Safe & Natural Ingredients
- Accurate Dosing with Measured Pump
- Taste Pets Love
- Made in a U.S. Pharmaceutical Facility

Like Us on Facebook to Receive a FREE Calming Sample!

TrueDosePets.com
This past November, a 12-year-old Maine Coon named Harry underwent cutting-edge neurosurgery at the Royal Veterinary College’s Queen Mother Hospital for Animals in Britain to remove a tumor that was causing his pituitary gland to produce far more hormone than it should (a condition known as acromegaly). Although common in cats, acromegaly is rare in humans, so researchers will culture Harry’s tumor cells in hopes of understanding how the operation could one day help humans get back on their feet — just like Harry. Paws up for science!

**medical muscles**

Six months after an injury disabled Bella, a 6-month-old Border Collie, she’s walking again, thanks to a first-of-its-kind muscle transplant surgery performed at the Angell Animal Medical Center in Jamaica Plain, MA. During the surgery, muscle tissue from Bella’s back was transferred to her front leg in order to train the transplanted muscle to perform as the injured muscle had done in the past. While Bella has a long road to recovery, she’s now able to walk and participate in doggy activities once again!
petplan is top dog

It’s official — America’s #1 rated pet insurance provider continues to lead the pack! Not only was our headquarters named the dog-friendliest workplace in Philadelphia at the beginning of the year, in early February, Forbes magazine selected Petplan as one of the 100 Most Promising Companies in the nation. Petplan rose to #34 among thousands of privately held companies competing for the accolade. The team at Forbes selected the list based on quality of management team, key partnerships and growth — both in terms of new customers and hiring. Of course, since everyone who works at Petplan can bring their pets with them to work — our rapidly growing team is truly exponential!

soak it in

Let's face it: dogs like to get dirty. Unfortunately, your cream-colored chaise lounge doesn’t. That’s why we’re giving five dirt-plagued pet parents the chance to win a 16 oz. bottle of Dogtails dog shampoo, perfect for keeping your best friends sparkling clean after spring showers. Dogtails’ natural clarifying shampoo contains soothing essential oils like aloe vera for itchy skin and chamomile for calming. For a chance to win, visit GoPetplan.com/dogtails and tell us your dirt-loving dog’s grimiest tale. Winners will be selected on May 24 and announced in June!

+ groomed for success

Want to save money and strengthen your bond with your pet? Skip the groomer and do the work at home! To help make the cut, we’re giving five fur-frenzied pet parents the chance to win a simple, silent home pet grooming kit from Scaredy Cut®, which replaces the noise of electric clippers with silent scissors guarded by guide combs to make your pet’s next clipping safe, easy and a little less scary. For a chance to win, visit GoPetplan.com/scaredycut and tell us how you keep your pet looking her best. Winners will be selected on May 24 and announced in June.
When it comes to trouble, our furry family members always seem to find a slice of the action. This issue’s Health Tips is packed with advice for keeping pets sharp and in shape, from caring for cuts (whether from surgery or just a prickly thicket) to dissuading declawing and giving best friends a leg up with physical and alternative therapies.

by dr. kim smyth

incision instruction

After a surgical procedure, four-legged friends need plenty of TLC. But while cuddles and kisses will certainly go a long way, the primary way to ensure your pet’s recuperation is comfortable and safe is by caring for his surgical incision. Most incisions will heal within seven to 14 days after surgery, but they do need a little extra attention.

know what’s normal: Some bruising around the incision is normal, as is mild clear or pinkish discharge from the incision for the first 24 hours. If new or extensive bruising emerges, if drainage continues, or if discharge is bright red, yellow or foul-smelling, call your veterinarian immediately.

keep the incision clean and dry: If it gets dirty, clean it gently with saline and pat it dry.

observe the incision: Check twice a day for swelling, redness, heat and odor. Make sure to look for loose or missing sutures, too.

outlaw licking: Do not allow your pet to lick the incision. It could lead to infection, and your pet may take the opportunity to remove his stitches before they are ready. Keep the incision lightly bandaged, if possible.

If a bandage won’t stay put, as might be the case with spay and neuter incisions, your pet may need the dreaded “cone of shame.” Elizabethan or E-collars are rigid, lamp shade-like plastic collars that fit around your pet’s neck and physically prevent them from reaching their incisions so they can’t lick or chew at them. They do require a slight learning curve, but most pets adjust to wearing them quickly. Inflatable donut collars or soft cones made of cloth are alternatives for pets who can’t or won’t tolerate an E-collar.
rub it in: Veterinary massage is slightly different from your own luxury spa experience. Used to loosen tight muscles, increase range of motion and decrease pain, therapeutic massage also increases blood circulation, which allows more oxygen and nutrients to flow through the body, helping pets heal faster.

home sweet homeopathic: Homeopathic medicine is based on the idea that “like cures like,” meaning symptoms can be cured by giving the substance that caused them in small, diluted amounts. Homeopathic remedies can include plant or mineral extracts, and are often given post-operatively to manage pain.

on pins and needles: As with people, veterinary acupuncture uses tiny needles to stimulate points where bundles of nerves run close to our pets’ skin. The needles activate neurons that stimulate the release of neurotransmitters, which inhibit the transmission of pain. In short, a little painless prick can help relieve pets’ pain — particularly from surgery or musculoskeletal conditions — and help them heal.

simple cut care

Seeing your pet hurt is upsetting, so mastering basic first aid for your furry friends’ cuts and scrapes may help you feel more at ease when injuries happen. Before you begin, the first rule in dealing with pet injuries is to avoid injury yourself. Even normally placid pets can scratch or snap at you when they’re frightened or in pain, so take precautions to keep both of you protected. Ask for a helping hand if you need it.

seeing red: If a cut is bleeding, address that first. Apply direct, firm pressure using a clean, dry cloth to help stop the bleeding and encourage clot formation. If the bleeding soaks through the cloth, place more clean cloths on top of the soiled cloth, so as not to disturb any clots that may have formed.

assess next: Once the bleeding has stopped, gently remove the cloths and check to see how deep the cut is. If it looks deep, protect the wound from contamination with a clean cloth and head to your regular veterinarian or emergency clinic.

clean and clear: If the cut is superficial and your pet won’t need stitches, clean the wound before bandaging. Use a mild soap and plenty of warm water or saline to flush the cut. If possible, clip the surrounding fur so that it does not get into the wound. Apply antibiotic ointment to the cut before bandaging.

wrap it up: Use a non-stick, absorbent pad to cover the wound before wrapping the area snugly (not tightly) with 3- or 4-inch gauze. Then cover the gauze wrap with an elastic tape bandage, applied just tightly enough to cling to the affected area (err on the side of loose — you don’t want to cut off circulation!).

keep a close eye: Change the bandage daily and check the bandage site at least twice a day. If you see swelling or extensive redness, take your pet to the vet to get a better look.
check out rehab (therapy!)

If you’ve had orthopedic surgery, you know how important post-operative rehabilitation is. But did you know that the same goes for our canine and feline friends? In addition to shortening recovery times, physical therapy can help decrease pain while increasing muscle strength, mobility and flexibility.

who benefits?

Like pet parents, physical therapy can help pets who have undergone orthopedic surgeries — from procedures to correct ruptured cranial cruciate ligaments, to total hip replacements, and any surgical bone fracture repair. But physical therapy isn’t just for surgical cases — pets with neurologic conditions like intervertebral disc disease or vestibular disease can also benefit from regular physical therapy, as will patients suffering from arthritis or those who are overweight. Rehab therapy can also benefit elderly pets.

Veterinary physical therapy has taken a cue from human medicine, where physical therapy has been used to benefit our health for centuries. What started out as simple range-of-motion exercises and massage has evolved to include modern treatments like hydrotherapy and therapeutic lasers. Here’s a closer look at a few other methods:

- **air apparent:** If your pet has been referred to a facility for physical therapy, the first thing you might see when you enter are balance balls. These large, inflatable balls (often seen in human gyms and health clubs) are used to increase your pet’s balance and coordination, encourage weight bearing, and strengthen weak muscles. You may also see balance boards that are used for the same reasons.

- **dive right in:** Just as it does for humans, swimming allows your pet to use several muscle groups in a low-impact setting, thereby minimizing the stress on joints. Many veterinary physical therapy facilities have warm water pools or underwater treadmills that allow your pet to exercise with some resistance.

- **see the light:** Therapeutic lasers are a relatively new modality for decreasing pain and inflammation. They operate at specific frequencies, using light to accelerate the body’s natural healing process. Therapeutic lasers have a direct effect at the cellular level, where they stimulate tissue repair while decreasing inflammation and swelling. They can be used for a wide range of conditions, from post-operative pain to alleviating discomfort associated with arthritis.

- **aid accessories:** In the period immediately following surgery, your pet may need help standing up, and carts and slings can lend a hand. Consult your pet’s physical therapist to get a good fit and for help learning to use these and other rehabilitative aids properly.

- **do your homework:** The most important part of physical therapy will probably happen when you leave the doctor’s office. Your pet’s physical therapist will instruct you on things you will need to do at home. Passive range-of-motion exercises, as well as hot- or cold-packing sore areas, will likely be prescribed to help your pet through her recovery. Following doctor’s orders will give your pet the best “leg up” to get back on her feet.
For cats, scratching is an instinctual activity. It helps them sharpen and condition their claws, as well as mark their territory. But when your purring pet chooses to mark your carpet and furniture, the resulting frustration may interfere with your bond. To remedy the situation, some pet parents choose to have their cats declawed.

The procedure known as “declawing” is technically a partial digital amputation, during which the first joint of each toe is amputated. It is a painful procedure with significant recovery periods and the potential for post-operative complications.

Declawing is a controversial subject, and the procedure is illegal in most of Europe, parts of Asia and in several U.S. cities, including San Francisco, Los Angeles and Santa Monica. The American Veterinary Medical Association discourages declawing unless all other options to discourage scratching have been exhausted.

Throughout the United States, declawing is often performed along with spay or neuter procedures, when cats are between four and six months old, before proper training to discourage scratching has taken place. Declawed cats should remain hospitalized for several days after surgery to receive appropriate pain medications and have the surgery sites monitored. Once the cat is ready to go home, she will need additional pain medications, special litter that won’t stick to the surgical sites, and days or weeks of restricted activity.

Luckily, you can avoid putting your cat through a painful procedure but still nix his itch to scratch:

- **clip kitty’s claws:** The easiest (and most inexpensive) option is to keep your cat’s claws short. Trimming every week or two won’t prevent scratching behaviors, but it will minimize the damage done to your home.

- **consider covers:** Soft Paws® are plastic nail caps that are designed to fit over each nail, covering their sharp points and preventing damage. They will need to be reapplied every four to six weeks. They can be put on at home, but many pet parents choose to have their veterinarian apply them.

- **tricks for training:** Teach your cat to distinguish “good” scratch surfaces from the family furniture. Provide vertical and horizontal surfaces like scratching posts and corrugated cardboard scratchers, then entice your cat with catnip. Reward appropriate scratching behaviors with treats. Use Sticky Paws® or double-sided tape to cover inappropriate items.

If your cat can’t seem to stop scratching, talk to your vet. You may find trimming and training are the right solutions, rather than surgery.
things to consider when choosing pet insurance

Every six seconds a U.S. pet parent is faced with a $1,000 vet bill.¹

No matter how much we love and pamper them, each year one in three pets will fall ill or have an accident that requires an unexpected trip to the veterinarian.² That’s why Petplan encourages you to plan ahead with comprehensive pet insurance coverage. For help choosing a policy that will protect your pet for life, ask these questions:

Does the policy cover hereditary conditions?

Hip dysplasia. Luxating patellas. Cataracts. Heart disease. Epilepsy. These are just a few of the hundreds of hereditary conditions to which our pets’ genes can leave them vulnerable. Petplan covers them all, as standard.³

Will my policy offer coverage for the rest of my pet’s life?

Did you know that 40% of all pet insurance claims received are for chronic conditions which last beyond 12 months?⁴ Once your pet is insured with Petplan, we’ll cover chronic conditions for life,⁵ as long as you continue to renew your policy each year without any break in coverage.

Are there per-condition limits?

Just as it is important to ensure that chronic diseases will be covered for your pet’s life, make sure your pet insurance policy does not limit reimbursement based on your pet’s specific condition. Petplan policies do not have any condition-specific dollar limits. Our plans have simple annual limits that replenish each year at renewal.

Is there a choice of co-pay?

Choose a company that can be flexible to change with your budget. Petplan offers you a choice of 80%, 90% and even 100% reimbursement.⁶

How well-established is the company? Is it rated?

Make sure that the company you select is well-established with a rated underwriter and a solid track record of covering pets and paying claims. Petplan has been protecting pets in the UK and around the world for more than 35 years, and is proud to be America’s #1 rated pet insurance provider!⁷

References: 1. According to Petplan claims data, 2011  2. According to Datamonitor, 2008  ³ As long as the condition was not showing clinical signs prior to the effective date of the policy or during the policy waiting period. Lifetime coverage is contingent on the policy being renewed each year without any break in coverage. Subject to annual policy limits, limits are replenished in full on renewal. Pre-existing conditions are excluded from coverage. ⁴ #1 rated pet insurance provider of those providers receiving more than 1,000 lifetime reviews, on the independent review site, www.petinsurancereview.com (January 2, 2013). For additional information, please visit petinsurancereview.com or write to: 1268 Longs Peak, Longmont, Colorado 80501. Coverage under any pet insurance policy is expressly subject to the conditions, restrictions, limitations, exclusions and terms of the policy documentation issued by the insurer. Availability of this program is subject to each state’s approval and coverage may vary by state. Pet insurance policies are issued by AGCS Marine Insurance Company and administered by Fetch Insurance Services, LLC (Fetch Insurance Agency, LLC in Michigan), d/b/a Petplan (Petplan Insurance Agency, LLC in California). AGCS Marine Insurance Company, a member of the Allianz Group, is rated A+ by A.M. Best (2011). ©Fetch Inc 02/13 PPADVFM0213

America’s #1 rated pet insurance.† 1.866.467.3875 www.GoPetplan.com

$7,230

Paid to the family of “Kaila Rose,” an American Bulldog pup who in just two years endured urinary tract and skin infections, vulvoplasty surgery, an ACL tear and two severe allergic reactions. And oh yeah, she ate the Christmas tree lights too. Good thing she’s insured.

Kaila Rose,
American Bulldog
Petplan protected

Paid to the family of “Kaila Rose,” an American Bulldog pup who in just two years endured urinary tract and skin infections, vulvoplasty surgery, an ACL tear and two severe allergic reactions. And oh yeah, she ate the Christmas tree lights too. Good thing she’s insured.
When it comes to the health of our pets, it doesn’t pay to cut corners. Just ask the pet parents of the four furry family members on the following pages who let their best friends go under the knife in an attempt to give them a better quality of life. Whether it’s a Wheaten Terrier with a nose for health problems, a collegial kitty with a congenital health condition, a normally spry Rat Terrier with a bum knee or a Jack Russell Terrier with a bad back, Petplan helped these pets see a slice of the action — but only a fraction of the bill.
Best friends often have a spring in their step, but Chompers can bounce around the house like a pogo stick. So when this normally spry Rat Terrier suddenly started limping, her mom thought it was just a sprain. A trip to the vet revealed Chompers had a luxating patella, causing her kneecap to move out of its normal location. For a super active dog whose favorite game is Frisbee, it was a debilitating blow, so Jacqueline scheduled her best friend for surgery right away. “Luckily, we had Petplan pet insurance,” notes Jacqueline.

Just like an elite athlete, Chompers recovered from her knee surgery quickly, thanks to TLC and some time spent snuggling with her best friend, a cat named Sprout. “The doctors said she would recover 80 or 90 percent, but she’s recovered 110 percent,” beams Jacqueline proudly. “She’s like a new dog, and she can jump higher than she could before the surgery. Seeing her face light up outside, running circles, gives me pure joy.”
Looking through Brett Kaplan’s family photo album, it’s hard to find a picture that doesn’t include Bentley, a 40-lb. Wheaten Terrier whose personality fills the room.

“You can’t ever say he’s just a dog,” insists Brett passionately. “Bentley’s a member of our family. I wouldn’t think of taking a family portrait without him.”

In 2009, Bentley’s veterinarian diagnosed a bump on his snout as a nerve sheath sarcoma, an aggressive tumor. After 19 radiation treatments, Bentley was cancer-free, but during a blood test, a problem with his kidneys was discovered. He was referred to Red Bank Veterinary Hospital in New Jersey and set up with a team of specialists, the costs of which were greatly allayed by Bentley’s Petplan pet insurance.

“Pet insurance gives me the security of knowing I can do what needs to be done for Bentley, and it will be covered,” says Brett.

“At this point, it’s about providing him with the best care and quality of life that we can,” reflects Brett. “But that just makes me appreciate our time together exponentially more.”
Every dog has his day, but the nights are reserved for the cats — like Charlie, the self-purr-claimed leader of the Trojansky household. But before he became king of the house, Charlie got his start where many dignitaries first get their paws wet: college!

As a kitten, Charlie was adopted from the SPCA near Penn State University by some cat-loving co-eds. Because of the university’s strict no-pet policy, he (furtively) bounced from dorm to dorm before being brought home by Mike’s and Irena’s daughter, a Penn State student. Today, he presides like a prince over the family along with his two-legged sisters, Natali and Lia.

But even an educated cat like Charlie couldn’t outsmart cryptorchidism, a common birth defect in which the testicles fail to descend. To prevent torsion and reduce the risk of cancer, Charlie’s vet recommended surgery. The surgery was a success and today Charlie is back in charge doing what he does best; presiding over the Trojansky household.
“Once you go Jack, you never go back,” laughs Ann Fox, mom to Petey, a 13-year-old Jack Russell Terrier. Petey’s had his fair share of trouble, including being stung by wasps and sprayed by skunks — four times! (This year, Ann dressed Petey up as a skunk for Halloween. “If you can’t beat them, join them!” she smiles).

But Petey’s most recent health issues were nothing to laugh about. During a walk on New Year’s Eve, Petey became rigid, refusing to move. Ann rushed him to the emergency vet, where Petey was diagnosed with a ruptured disc in his spine. It took more than five hours of surgery to repair the disc, and Petey’s recovery was hampered by adverse reactions to medication. Weeks of laser therapy, hydrotherapy and acupuncture were needed to get Petey up to speed. “Thankfully I had Petplan, which covered it all. Without pet insurance I’m not sure what I would have done.”

While Petey’s back issues have slowed him down, Ann is thankful to have her best friend back. “He’s everything to me. I’m truly blessed.”

petey
13-year-old jacks russell terrier

pet parent
ann fox

unexpected tail
$2,477 for surgery to correct a ruptured disc, and ear infections

lives in
santa barbara, ca
When it comes to specialty veterinary care, Dr. Robert Orsher and his team are a cut above the rest. Just ask the furry clients at the 24-hour Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Center (VSEC) in Levittown, PA, opened by Orsher in 1994. As Owner, Co-Hospital Director and Chief of Surgery, Orsher, a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, has seen thousands of pets go under the knife since graduating from the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine (PennVet) in 1979. When he’s not in scrubs, he spends his time at home with his wife, Andrea (a fellow vet), and their rescued family: Willow, a one-eyed cat; Monty, a 16-year-old Border Collie; and Mesa, a feral dog from the Hopi Reservation in Arizona.

What's up, Doc?

**Up close and personal with the country’s leading veterinarians**

by keith guse

**DR. ORSHER’S TOP THREE POST-OP TIPS**

- Follow the post-operative instructions, like limiting exercise. It may not be easy, but it pays dividends down the road for your pet’s health.
- Pay attention to your pet’s diet and potty habits; they may be irregular for a few days. Make sure not to over feed your pet following surgery and be on the lookout for any changes in behavior. If in doubt contact your vet.
- Consider pet insurance. Bearing in mind it can cost $4,000 to repair a CCL injury, bills can really add up. Insurance is a valuable investment that opens the door for pet parents to afford better care.

**What led you to pursue veterinary medicine and open VSEC?**

While I was an undergrad at Colgate University, I would spend my weekends making rounds with an equine vet, which sparked my interest in veterinary medicine. At PennVet, I had the chance to work with my mentor, Eberhard Rosin, and that led me towards a surgical specialization.

In opening VSEC, I wanted to deliver a more personal level of specialty care for pet parents, as well as focus on continuing education and the training of vets and residents.

**What are some of the most common surgeries you perform?**

We’ve seen an explosion of cranial cruciate ligament problems in canine care; that is easily the most common surgery we perform. In terms of soft tissue problems, splenectomies and foreign body removal surgeries are also fairly common.

**What are some of the most common questions you get from pet patents whose pets undergo surgery?**

I find that pain management is a frequent topic we discuss, as is age. People want to be sure their pets are going to be comfortable, both during and after the surgery. People also wonder if their pet is too old for surgery. In general, age is not a defining factor, especially in cases where the surgery can benefit the pet’s quality of life.

**What do you enjoy the most about being a veterinarian?**

I really enjoy helping animals return to their families. A lot of my time is spent on hospital administration, but the best part of my day is when I can close the door to the surgical operating room and work with my technicians, residents and colleagues to help an animal get back on his feet and return home.

In terms of patient care, costs for certain procedures (such as minimally invasive surgeries) may go up at a more rapid pace, due to the lack of specialists in a particular area. In urban areas, competition keeps specialty costs more static, but in rural centers where there are fewer options, costs can rise more quickly.

**What are some of the most common questions you get from pet patents whose pets undergo surgery?**

I find that pain management is a frequent topic we discuss, as is age. People want to be sure their pets are going to be comfortable, both during and after the surgery. People also wonder if their pet is too old for surgery. In general, age is not a defining factor, especially in cases where the surgery can benefit the pet’s quality of life.

**What do you enjoy the most about being a veterinarian?**

I really enjoy helping animals return to their families. A lot of my time is spent on hospital administration, but the best part of my day is when I can close the door to the surgical operating room and work with my technicians, residents and colleagues to help an animal get back on his feet and return home.

VSEC recently cut the tape on a second location in Philadelphia, PA. Learn more on their website at vsecvet.com.
BE A PET'S HERO

A promise to guard the home front and a pledge to await your return. A promise to be not just a pet, but a companion. Pets for Patriots connects last-chance dogs and cats with military members and their families.
Open your heart and home to a shelter pet today. Petsforpatriots.org
cruciate ligament tears: weak in the knees

Cranial cruciate ligament (CCL) rupture is the most common knee injury in dogs, and the number one cause of sudden hind limb lameness. Because these types of injuries are so prevalent, knee (or stifle) surgeries top the list of most frequent procedures performed on our canine friends. The knee joint is the meeting place of the femur (or thigh bone), the tibia (or shin bone) and the knee cap. Cartilage cushions the areas between the femur and the tibia, and all of this is held together with ligaments — primarily the CCL, which keeps the tibia from slipping out from under the femur.

When the CCL is either partially or completely torn, the knee joint becomes unstable, and movement and weight-bearing become painful. Arthritis can flare up in as little as one to three weeks after the original injury, which is why knee injuries should be treated as soon as you first notice symptoms.

risk factors

Cranial cruciate ligament ruptures occur either as a result of trauma or degeneration of the ligament. In dogs, the injury is often due to deterioration from aging, genetics or obesity. If a degenerative condition is to blame for ligament rupture, there is a 30% to 40% chance that a rupture will also occur in the other leg, usually within a year of the first rupture.

Certain breeds are genetically at higher risk for developing CCL ruptures. A breed predilection has been found in the Newfoundland, and is highly suspected in many others, including the Labrador Retriever, Golden Retriever, Rottweiler, Bichon Frisé and St. Bernard.

In cats, CCL ruptures more commonly occur secondary to trauma, although there is suspicion that ligament degeneration may precede the rupture, as it does with dogs. When trauma causes CCL rupture, about 40% of cases sustain tears of additional stifle ligaments as well, requiring even more extensive surgical repair.
case study

6-year-old female Golden Retriever

condition: torn cruciate ligament
treatment: TPLO (tibial plateau leveling osteotomy) surgery
amount reimbursed: $2,564
petplan protected: since June 27, 2007

Halie was an energetic 3-year-old pup when her mom Lyllian noticed her struggling to stand up. Having experienced a cruciate tear herself, she suspected Halie had the same injury, and an orthopedic veterinarian soon confirmed her suspicion. They discussed several treatment options, and because Halie was young and active, surgery seemed like the best choice. “It was more expensive, but because we have Petplan, money didn’t have to be a concern,” Lyllian said.

Keeping Halie still during the 8-week recovery process was tough, but it paid off, and now she is pain-free. Lyllian’s advice: “Do your research. Surgery might not be for everyone, but it was the right decision for Halie.”

signs + symptoms

• Sudden-onset lameness: Affected pets may display physical behaviors indicating their discomfort, ranging from toe-touching to refusing to put weight on the injured leg.

• Vocalization of pain: If the injury occurs in your presence, you may hear your pet whimper or yelp when the tear occurs.

• Swelling: If gone unnoticed, the affected knee will become swollen over time. Without treatment, active degenerative joint disease can persist.

diagnosis

Sudden-onset hind leg lameness in a large dog is generally considered a cranial cruciate ligament rupture until proven otherwise. Your veterinarian will check the stability of your pet’s knee by manipulating the joint. The ability to slide the tibia forward under the femur confirms rupture of the cranial cruciate ligament (this is called a “drawer” sign). Radiographs of the knee will confirm the diagnosis, as well as reveal any other potential problems.
treatment
Repair of ruptured CCLs in medium and large dogs requires surgery. Cats and small dogs can often be managed conservatively with cage rest, but some cases may require surgery, too. Currently, there are three procedures for cats and dogs, and your veterinarian will determine which surgery will benefit your pet the most.

- **Extracapsular repair:** This surgery can be performed without specialized equipment. Heavy sutures are used to stabilize the stifle joint by mimicking the cranial cruciate ligament. Patients are generally back to weight-bearing condition within two weeks and require restricted activity for about eight weeks.

- **Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy (TPLO) and Tibial Tuberosity Advancement (TTA):** In both of these procedures, the tibial bone is cut and rearranged to a more favorable position and held in place with a metal plate. Because these surgeries are more complex, longer recovery periods are needed to allow for bone healing.

prognosis
With corrective surgery, the prognosis of your pet returning to normal function is excellent; however, the post-operative recovery period can be challenging and stressful, for pet and pet parent alike. Depending on which surgery is performed, strict exercise restrictions will be in place for weeks to months. This can be especially difficult for active, energetic dogs and their owners.

Your veterinarian should thoroughly review the post-op plans with you before you return home, including any pain medications that should be administered. Many veterinarians will also recommend physical therapy as part of your pet’s recovery, so you may need to adjust the family schedule in order to help your pet heal.

---

**case study**

8-year-old female St. Bernard mix
condition: torn cruciate ligament
treatment: TPLO (tibial plateau leveling osteotomy) surgery

amount reimbursed: $4,300

petplan protected: since July 6, 2010

One minute, Lilli was playing in the backyard; the next, she was yelping and couldn’t walk. A visit to the vet determined that Lilli — a 100-lb. Saint Bernard mix — would need surgery to repair a torn cruciate ligament. Thankfully, her mom, Jill, had her protected with Petplan, which covered all of Lilli’s expenses, including surgery, blood tests and pain medication.

Jill reports that Lilli’s road to recovery has been long. “She needed to be on restricted movement for four months, which was an adjustment for the whole family!” But with the caring treatment of her vets, Drs. Brown and Beeder, and the rest of the staff at Pet Vet Animal Health Care Group in Canoga Park, CA, Lilli is back on all four paws again.
Although he is the national dog of France, the Standard Poodle was actually first bred in Germany, as a water retriever. The breed’s signature coif was created to help the dog move through the water; hair puffs left on the body protected organs and joints from the cold.

The Standard Poodle is highly intelligent, second in the dog world only to the Border Collie. Because of this, he excels at obedience training, but needs to be kept mentally and physically occupied — or he tends to become a bit mischievous!

The largest of the three varieties of Poodle, this breed is particularly good with children, showing the patience and restraint needed to be a good playmate. He sheds minimally, making him a good choice for pet parents with allergies. Due to his constantly growing coat — which can range in color from blue, gray, silver, brown, tan or apricot, to white, black or cream — the Standard Poodle’s magnificent mane needs regular grooming and clipping to be manageable (it doesn’t have to be fancy).

The Petplan Healthometer measures how healthy a particular breed is in relation to other breeds.

- 1 = healthiest
- 10 = least healthy

For more details on these and other hereditary conditions, visit gopetplan.com/condition-check

**Cataracts**

As in humans, a cataract refers to a clouding of the lens of the eye. Many breeds have a genetic predisposition to juvenile cataracts, meaning they can occur in animals as young as six months of age. Cataracts can progress to complete loss of vision by two years old. The good news is that most affected pets can be successfully treated with surgery.

**Cost of treatment:**
$1,500 to $3,000 per lens

**Sebaceous Adenitis**

An inflammation of the sebaceous glands that leads to a brittle, patchy coat and scaling or crusting of the skin, sebaceous adenitis often occurs concurrently with skin infections. Treatment of this condition consists of lifelong management through oral and topical medications.

**Cost of lifelong treatment:**
$3,000 to $10,000
**Immune-Mediated Hemolytic Anemia (IMHA)**

This is a life-threatening condition wherein the body’s immune system attacks its own red blood cells, leading to anemia. Though IMHA can be secondary to other diseases, the majority of the cases occur with no known cause. Diagnosis and treatment are costly, and usually require a lengthy hospital stay.

Cost of treatment: $2,000 to $15,000

---

**Hypoadrenocorticism (Addison’s Disease)**

Corticosteroids are hormones that we all need to adapt to physiologic stress. Animals with hypoadrenocorticism have a deficiency in these hormones, and clinical signs can be life-threatening. Hypoadrenocorticism is diagnosed with blood tests and can be managed with lifelong oral or injectable medications.

Cost of lifelong treatment: $2,000 to $10,000

---

**Gastric Dilation-Volvulus (GDV)**

GDV (or bloat) describes a condition whereby a dog’s stomach becomes dilated with air and then, while dilated, twists over on itself, effectively sealing the stomach. The most common sign of bloat is a firm, distended stomach, especially if it seems to occur rapidly. GDV is one of the true life-threatening emergencies in dogs and many cases require emergency surgery.

Uncomplicated surgery: $1,500 to $6,000
on the
Jack watched his 8-year-old Golden Retriever struggle to climb into the car. A few years ago, Buddy would’ve bounded into the back with youthful vigor, eager to begin a new day of adventure. On the way to the veterinarian this morning, though, he needed help. Severe arthritis in his hips was causing him pain and restricting his movement, so Jack was bringing him to the vet to see what could be done. Jack could sense Buddy’s relief as he lifted his four-legged friend’s back legs and helped him onto the seat.

Four weeks later, Buddy’s crippling arthritic pain was gone. No longer did his hip hinder his daily activities; a high-tech artificial joint now eased his aches. His veterinary surgeon had used techniques originally developed for service dogs, later perfected on humans. Buddy was able to benefit from years of collaboration between technology, human surgery and veterinary medicine. Soon, Jack was told, Buddy would be able to resume swimming in his favorite pond, and would be hiking the hills within a month. Thanks to modern veterinary surgery and medicine, today, Buddy is as spry and pain free as a young pup.

Stories like Buddy’s have become increasingly commonplace over the past decade. Dogs and cats with once untreatable and even terminal conditions are healed using techniques and technologies that rival that of human medicine. As a practicing veterinarian for more than 20 years, I can say definitively that now is a great time to be a pet!

It’s also a great time to be a veterinarian. As the world of high-tech medicine intersects with space-age surgery, vets are able to provide better care and relieve pain more effectively than ever before.

Many of the latest advances in veterinary surgery have been dramatic, and it’s worth taking a closer look at some of the more exciting (and sometimes controversial) ones.

**artificial intelligence**

Dr. Steven Budsberg, a veterinary surgical specialist at the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine, says joint replacement procedures are one of the biggest leaps forward in veterinary surgery
Historically, the challenge for veterinarians has been that our patients are smaller than humans, and laparoscopic tools were too large. But just as our computers and phones have shrunk, the previous decade has heralded smaller surgical instruments and cameras. These miniature marvels now allow veterinarians to operate through tiny holes, reducing risk and decreasing recovery time. Chest surgeries, liver biopsies, intestinal procedures and even spaying are being performed laparoscopically by veterinarians all across the country. As exciting as that is, there’s an even newer frontier for veterinary surgeons. “We’re now talking about repairing broken bones with minimally invasive techniques,” says Dr. Phil Zeltzman, a veterinary surgeon in Allentown, PA. “Imagine being able to repair fractures without damaging surrounding support tissues. This helps the body’s natural healing abilities work optimally while we stabilize the fracture. The less we disturb healthy tissues around an injury, the faster and more complete recovery can be. That prospect really excites veterinary surgeons.”

If your dog or cat suffers from debilitating arthritis, you may want to ask your veterinarian if joint replacement surgery is an option. While it doesn’t come cheap, the price tag for these procedures is declining as more specialized materials become available. Costs vary based on the size of the pet, the joint and potential risk factors.

**scoping it out**

In my opinion, the area of laparoscopic surgery is where the majority of veterinary surgical advances will be made over the next decade. Minimally invasive procedures have become popular in human surgery, and are used to correct a wide variety of conditions, from appendicitis to blood clots. Historically, the first artificial hips were placed in dogs about 40 years ago. At the time, that was cutting-edge for human surgery. Today we routinely replace hips, knees and elbows in dogs, restoring them to nearly normal physical abilities while reducing or completely eliminating pain.”

Dr. Budsberg credits the current collaboration between doctors and veterinarians in developing new surgical methods. “In the past, many surgical tools and techniques were developed for humans and later exported to pets. That’s not the case in 2013. In fact, we’re often working alongside our human counterparts to innovate and create solutions for animal problems that are then translated to people.”
Surgical techniques traditionally used in humans to boost beauty can provide life-saving benefits to a dog or cat. Here are some of the most common “cosmetic” surgeries for pets.

**nose jobs** Breeds such as Pugs, Boston Terriers, Shih Tzus, Boxers and Bulldogs often have narrowed nasal openings known as stenotic nares. This causes breathing problems and, in some cases, can lead to serious complications. Veterinarians can surgically remove extra nose tissue and pull open the nose openings to make breathing easier.

**facelifts** Wrinkly breeds such as Shar-Peis, Bulldogs and Bloodhounds are cute. The trouble with all those adorable skin folds is that the deep crevasses can create chronic skin infections. To treat this condition, veterinarians can pull the loose skin back and surgically remove the extra tissue, similar to a Hollywood facelift. (Some pets have the opposite condition, ectropion, which requires surgery to correct droopy eyes.)

**eye lifts** Some dogs and cats have a painful condition known as entropion that causes the eyelid to roll inward. Untreated, the hairy lid rubbing against the cornea eventually leads to vision loss. Surgery to roll the eyelid outward can be performed. (Some pets have the opposite condition, ectropion, which requires surgery to correct droopy eyes.)

**oral surgery** In addition to correcting over- and under-bites, malformed and injured jaws, and broken teeth, veterinarians often need to help dogs with throat problems. A common surgery involves correcting an elongated soft palate, caused by excess tissue hanging from the roof of the mouth that covers the windpipe, resulting in strained breathing and snoring. Bulldogs, Boston Terriers and other “smushed-face” breeds are typically affected. A high-tech CO₂ laser is the tool of choice for many veterinarians in these situations.

**cleft palates** Puppies and kittens born with a cleft palate need surgery to allow them to develop normally. Once surgery to close the defect is performed, these pets go on to live healthy lives. As a practicing veterinarian, I find these special patients become some of my favorites.

**prosthetic limbs** Prosthetics have been an area of active research and progress in veterinary medicine and an advancement that has garnered a considerable amount of media attention. Once a rarity in veterinary medicine, artificial limbs for animals are now viable options for many pets, helping them to live happier, fuller lives.
3D images of the brain that will transform the way we execute brain surgery and biopsies in pets over the next five years.”

stems the tide

Perhaps no other medical advancement has created more debate — and more confusion — than the use of stem cell infusion in humans and animals. Stem cell infusion involves obtaining cells from fat stores in the patient, sending them to a laboratory that uses special processing methods to activate or “turn on” the stem cells, and then injecting the activated stem cells into the injured area. The hope is that the stem cells will develop into whatever cells were injured: bone, ligament, organ, skin — even nerve cells — to provide pain relief, improved function or healing.

Although it sounds simple enough, specialists disagree about its effectiveness.

“There’s simply not much data to support stem cell usage at this time,” says Dr. Budsberg. “Maybe in five to 10 years we’ll be able to make a more informed conclusion on whether or not stem cells are a worthwhile option.”

On the other hand, Dr. Zeltzman promotes stem cell use. “I am definitely excited about continuing to use stem cells in my patients. So far, the results have been strikingly positive.”

I’ve personally witnessed both incredible success and complete lack of improvement with stem cell treatments in my practice. As our understanding of the types of cells that work, the numbers needed,
and improvements in handling and processing occur, I believe we’ll see widespread adoption of stem cell treatments over the next five years. For now, stem cell infusion remains an alternative (if costly) approach for pets that are not ideal candidates for surgery.

beam me up

While not a surgical technique per se (no incisions are made), Class IV laser (or cold laser) therapy is being used to treat an assortment of painful conditions, with mostly positive results. By using red and infrared laser light over the affected area, cold laser therapy can help promote soft tissue healing, provide relief of acute and chronic pain, resolve inflammation, help repair damaged neurological tissue, and even stimulate acupuncture points without the use of needles. Other benefits of cold laser therapy are that it carries little if any risk since it is non-invasive, and it is relatively inexpensive. While Class IV laser therapy isn’t for every pet and doesn’t help every condition, it may be an option for many.

Technological progress and advances in veterinary surgery are happening so rapidly that there will likely have been even more exciting new developments made by the time this article is published. Because human and veterinary scientists have joined forces to innovate, and because pet insurance has given pet parents greater freedom to seek out cutting-edge treatments for their pets, it truly is an exciting — and promising — time for pets, pet parents, and veterinarians alike.

Advances in veterinary surgery are happening so rapidly that there will likely have been even more exciting new developments made by the time this article is published.
fashion wrap
perk up a pet’s sprains and strains with these cute colored bandages
petflex printed cohesive compression tape, $2.50/ea., amazon.com

pet rx
laughter is the best medicine; this squee-worthy tee packs a hearty dose of haha
dog is good cone dog t-shirt, $14-$22, baxterboo.com

heaven scent
waterless canine cleaning aids keep fido fresh
fresh dog dry shampoo powder and waterless bath foam shampoo, $14.99 and $9.99, shop.freshdog.com

high-tech tool
infrared technology takes temps in seconds, without ever touching your pet
thermopet non-contact thermometer, $89.95, inthecompanyofdogs.com

air head
inflatable lifesaver is comfier than a cone, and saves stitches from licking
boobooloon® protective petwear collar, $18.99-$35.99, boobooloon.com

We like anything that helps keep your pet healthy. But these things we love.
**super soaker**
this nubby bathmat looks super luxe and soaks like a sponge
soggy doggy doormat, $39.99, doggyduds.com

**perfect paw-dicure**
fido will have toes like roses after a dip in this fabulous footbath
ginsey pet paw cleaner, $8.99, amazon.com

**under cover**
natural deterrents like cayenne pepper and clove oil protect pets’ hot spots from habitual licking
anti-lick strip prevent, $7.99-$9.99, petsmart.com

**swing state**
this sleek lounger helps relieve pressure points and achy joints
bambú hammock, $199.99, petloungestudios.com
Most pets will experience at least one or two surgical or anesthetic procedures during their lives. To aid in the recovery process, here are my top natural healing helpers. (Of course, before giving these or any human food or supplement, ask your vet if it is safe and appropriate for your pet’s medical condition.)

**tummy troubles**

Whenever a pet undergoes anesthesia, changes in the normal intestinal bacteria occur that can lead to cramping, decreased appetite, diarrhea or weight loss. To lessen these side effects, I routinely recommend administering a pet-specific probiotic 24 to 48 hours prior to surgery and continuing for three to seven days afterwards. Restoring bacterial balance may also speed healing and boost immune function.

**super supplements**

Omega-3s, particularly the essential fatty acids DHA and EPA, can help reduce pain and inflammation, boost immune function, and reduce post-operative complications in pets (and people!), so offer wild-caught salmon or tuna as a tasty treat.

While there’s no clear consensus on the benefits of using vitamin E post-operatively, I use it to treat large incision sites. Use liquid vitamin E or open a capsule and gently rub it along the incision, starting seven to 10 days after surgery. Pet mushroom extracts may also facilitate healing.

**recipe: salmon surgery special**

I like this recipe for post-op patients because it’s easy to prepare, inexpensive and loaded with healthful Omega-3 fatty acids and proteins.

Mix all ingredients together and feed twice daily for three to seven days after surgery. Ask your vet to calculate the exact number of calories to feed your pet based on age, medical condition and extent of surgery. The above recipe has 417 calories total.

- 1 can wild-caught salmon (3 oz.)
- ½ cup cooked brown rice
- 2 large Omega-3 eggs, scrambled
- ½ cup green beans, chopped

**eat this, not that**

Offering too many high-carb treats, cookies and chews along with a poor diet can slow down optimal healing. If you want to give your pets goodies to help ease the pain, why not offer wholesome nutritional support at the same time?

I advise my pet patients to begin eating additional lean protein three to seven days before major surgery, and then to continue for two to four weeks afterwards. Free-range, organic, hormone- and antibiotic-free chicken is an excellent choice, along with wild-caught salmon and tuna and organic eggs.

After surgery, offer orange veggies like carrots and sweet potatoes, which contain the restorative vitamins A and C. Red bell peppers are also rich in vitamin C and helpful antioxidants, and many dogs love the crunchy texture and vibrant flavor. Blueberries and broccoli can also supply your pet with much-needed nutritional ammo to combat infection and potential complications.
FIRE UP YOUR FURRY FOODY WITH CHIA

Sweet Little Butterpup™ and Treat Smart™ dog treats are powered by the superfood Chia Seed, packing a big nutritional punch—containing 8x more Omega-3 than Wild Salmon, more Antioxidants than Blueberries and 6x more Protein than Kidney Beans.

Our products are Made in the USA with human-grade ingredients that contain no wheat, corn or preservatives.

Join our network of animal lovers and see what everyone is talking about.
SNIPPED in the bud

cutting spay and neuter myths down to size

by dr. nina mantione
Have you ever wondered why your veterinarian — not to mention Bob Barker! — seems so intent on having you spay or neuter your pets? What about all of the conflicting information you might read on the Internet or hear from your friends? “He’ll gain a lot of weight,” or, “It’s best to have one litter first before being spayed.”

Spaying and neutering are two of the most common surgical procedures performed in small animal veterinary practice. The term “spay” is used to refer to the removal of the uterus and ovaries of a female cat or dog. Because the ovaries are the hormonal powerhouses, removing them also removes the influence of hormones like estrogen and progesterone. “Neutering” is the parallel term we use when discussing male cats and dogs. This procedure involves the removal of the testicles, which are the main source of testosterone and the location for sperm production. When we spay or neuter a pet, we take away their physical ability to reproduce.

But even though the process is one of removal, many things are also gained. Spaying and neutering provides several significant health benefits to our pets. Spaying a female pet prior to sexual maturity can nearly eliminate her risk of mammary cancer. It also removes her risk of ovarian and uterine cancer, as well as the risk of developing a pyometra, an often life-threatening uterine infection. Neutering a male pet eliminates his risk of testicular cancer and dramatically reduces his chance of prostatic enlargement and infections. In addition, of course, spaying and neutering pets is the most effective way to reduce cat and dog overpopulation.

Most veterinarians consider spaying or neutering to be one of the best preventative health measures you can take to protect your pet’s health, but as mentioned, not everyone is in agreement. By learning the truth behind some of the more common myths, you can make the best decision for your puppy or kitten when it’s time to consider these procedures.
MYTH #1

My pet’s behavior will change if he or she is altered.

This one is actually both true and false — for the vast majority of pets being spayed or neutered, there will be no negative change in their temperament or their behavior. The truth is, you may notice several positive changes in behavior. For example, unspayed female pets may be subject to behavior changes that coincide with their heat cycles. Female cats can become agitated and restless for weeks on end when they are in heat, while female dogs can experience a condition called “false pregnancy,” in which hormonal fluctuations tell their brain that they have had a litter of puppies when they haven’t. Dogs in the throes of false pregnancy may show signs of protective aggression and restlessness, as they guard babies they don’t really have. Spaying can reduce or eliminate these types of behaviors.

Neutering can also produce positive behaviors in male pets. Unneutered cats and dogs may be inspired to urine mark their territory (i.e. your house) on a wide variety of surfaces. Since they are also on a perpetual quest for a mate, they have a greater desire to roam, which can greatly increase their risk for traumatic injury — like being hit by a car — not to mention their chance of getting lost. Unneutered pets may also sometimes display unwanted aggression toward other animals, putting them at greater risk of fight-related injuries. By reducing these behaviors, some argue that neutering can help keep pets safer.

In general, pets who are altered tend to be less distracted by hormonal influences and more focused on their human families. But other than these slight behavior modifications, keep in mind that spaying or neutering should not directly cause any major change to your pet’s personality.

MYTH #2

My pet will gain weight if spayed or neutered.

This is a concern I often hear from pet owners when discussing whether to spay or neuter, and there is some truth to it. The hormones removed during a spay or neuter procedure help to drive metabolism and burn calories, which can help explain
why intact pets seem to have an easier time staying leaner than their altered counterparts. However, pets that are spayed and neutered are not doomed to obesity — it just means pet parents have to be aware of the change and manage their pet’s weight accordingly. Weight gain can be avoided by paying close attention to your pet’s caloric intake and level of activity. By increasing exercise and decreasing calories, you can minimize any weight your pet may gain. The physical and behavioral benefits of spaying and neutering far outweigh (no pun intended!) the risk of packing on a few pounds.

**MYTH #3**

*The surgery itself is dangerous.*

I would be lying if I said any surgical procedure was risk-free; there is always an inherent risk with any anesthesia or surgery. The important thing to remember is that the vast majority of pets who undergo these procedures are young and healthy. This puts them at a minimal risk for any anesthetic or surgical complications. Don’t forget, also, that spaying or neutering are usually elective procedures in young animals. This means that your veterinarian will want to make sure that your pet isn’t experiencing any other health problems prior to surgery. Issues such as respiratory infections or malnutrition should be resolved before any surgery is scheduled.

That being said, the most common complications that arise from spaying or neutering are problems with the incision, such as infection or dehiscence (when the incision pulls apart). Again, this is where you as the pet parent can help reduce complications with good post-operative care and attention. Diligence in minimizing licking and chewing on the incision and encouraging your furry patient to take it easy for a week or two are the best ways to help avoid any incision-related problems.

The caveat to the debunking of this myth occurs when a pet needs to be spayed or neutered later in life as part of treatment for a medical condition, such as prostate disease or a uterine infection. If this occurs, spaying and neutering are no longer considered elective, but are now an integral part of treatment for these conditions. These pets are typically already quite sick going into surgery and often have other age-related medical conditions that increase their anesthetic risk. Surgery for these pets is often scary, and I always find myself wishing that these pets had been spayed and neutered when they were young, healthy and more resilient.
Spaying and neutering can cause health problems down the road.

There is a lot of misinformation circulating about this issue, particularly on the Internet. The impact of spaying and neutering on long-term health has been studied many times, and there are a few health issues shown to have a slightly increased incidence in altered pets. In addition to the issue of weight gain, by far the most common health issue we see is incontinence in spayed female dogs. Called hormone-responsive incontinence, this condition is thought to occur in part due to lower levels of estrogen after spaying. Fortunately, it is relatively uncommon and can be easily controlled with medications. Despite these few drawbacks, the overwhelming consensus among veterinarians and veterinary oncologists is that the health benefits associated with spaying and neutering are far more important considerations when making the decision of whether to alter your pet than any rare health risks.

While myths and misinformation are common, it is important to understand that altering your puppy or kitten is generally seen as a positive — and responsible — step to take in his or her life. Not only does it prevent unwanted pregnancies, it’s also a key part of preventative health care for our dogs and cats. I don’t know any veterinarians — myself included — who would choose not to spay or neuter their own pets. Most of us have seen the negative health and behavior issues that occur with intact pets, and want to prevent those things from occurring in our clients’ pets as well as our own companions. Despite that fact, I know there are still some pet owners who are nervous about these (and any other) surgical procedures. If you fall into this category (and who among us isn’t sometimes a worrier about our furry friends?), then I encourage you to speak to your veterinarian about your concerns. Hopefully, with his or her reassurance and the information learned from this article, you can put your concerns to rest.
They may not have their own iPawds, but that doesn’t mean you can’t go mobile with your four-legged friends. Purr-use these paw-picked apps for the low-down on our favorite downloads.

**Pet Poison Help**
When in doubt — check it out!
Pet Poison Help is a searchable database of more than 250 plants, foods, medications and household items potentially toxic to your pet. The app instructs you on what to do if your dog or cat is exposed to something unsavory, and can dial the Pet Poison Helpline directly. If you’re not sure whether your pet has consumed a contaminant, descriptions of how specific poisons affect your pet and symptoms to watch for are also available.


**Dog Medical Agenda**
Need all of your pet’s paw-ticulars in the palm of your hand? Download the Dog Medical Agenda app, a pocket planner to help you keep track of your pup’s health stats. Swipe the screen and you’ve got access to vet visit history, vaccine schedules, prescription information, allergy logs, diagnostic test records and more. Perfect for pups whose health conditions need long-term management, this app will track the complete picture of your pet’s health to make sharing with your vet a snap.


**MapMyDogWalk**
This app uses GPS technology to record where you roam with Rover. Hit the road or trail, and this app will mark your path along an interactive map and log duration, distance, pace, speed and elevation. Once you finish your walk, your data uploads to MapMyWalk.com, where you can view your comprehensive workout history. MapMyDOGWalk makes sticking to fitness goals with your four-legged workout buddy a breeze! You can even geo-tag photos along your route.

FREE, search “MapMyDogWalk” in iTunes App Store.
Is there a medical reason or advantage behind some of these over-the-top haircuts called 'fancy clips,' or are they just for show?

Most of those fancy cuts are founded on tradition rather than medicine; however, traditional clips were often based on practicality. For example, the Poodle cut stemmed from a desire to keep the dog’s joints warm, yet still remove enough hair to allow them to move freely while swimming and hunting. Over time, it has evolved to be a more cosmetic endeavor. Today, most people have their dogs clipped to allow ease of grooming and cleaning. It is easier to keep breeds with longer coats from becoming matted or dirty if their coats are kept short. For dogs with heavy coats, a summer clip may help them tolerate the heat better, too. So, while there is no real medical reason, there are some practical reasons that inspire many pet parents to schedule a trip to the groomer.

My family has been telling me I should microchip my cat. Will it hurt? Is there any risk of infection, or side effects?

If it makes you feel any better, all of my pets are microchipped. Microchipping involves inserting a tiny microchip (slightly smaller than a grain of rice) under the skin. It does involve a fairly big needle, but it is virtually painless, and doesn’t require anesthesia. I routinely microchip animals with very few negative reactions; among the hundreds of microchips I have placed over the years, I have never seen one become infected. That said, anytime you use a needle to insert something, infection is a potential risk. There are some reports, particularly in cats, of tumors arising at the microchip site, but these reports are very unusual. The true benefit of microchipping — which I believe far outweighs the slight risk — is that your pet will have a permanent form of identification in the event he or she ever goes missing.

I have heard that certain dog breeds can only give birth by Caesarean section. Is that true?

There are breeds that almost always need C-sections in order to give birth, and this is primarily due to their physique. Breeds with large, round heads and wide shoulders, like English Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and English Mastiffs, are at the highest risk for a dystocia (difficult delivery). The birth canal of the dog is designed for a pointy, narrow muzzle, and puppies with round heads are more likely to get stuck during delivery.

A scheduled C-section is the safest way for these dogs to give birth and ensures the safety of both the mommy dog and her puppies.
Q: I’d like to trim my dog’s nails at home, but want to be sure I’m doing it safely. Any tips or suggestions?

First, I’m going to assume that your dog is fairly laid-back about the whole procedure! If you have a dog who absolutely hates to have his or her nails trimmed and requires an army of people to accomplish this task, you should probably leave it up to the professionals. If, however, you have an easygoing pooch, it really isn’t too difficult to do at home. First, make sure that you have a good, sharp pair of nail trimmers, and recruit another person to help hold your dog still. Until you get comfortable with it, I would advise being relatively conservative with how much nail you trim. If the toenails are white or clear, then you can see the blood vessel, which is the sensitive part that you want to avoid. If the toenails are dark, then it requires a little more guesswork! I would start by taking just a tiny bit of nail off at a time and stop if your dog flinches or if the nail bleeds. If it does bleed, it is NOT the end of the world! You can use a styptic stick to help stop the bleeding, but it will stop on its own. Use lots of treats, petting and praise to encourage full cooperation from your dog, and with practice, you’ll soon be a pro!

Q: My senior dog has had several benign masses develop on his back, and my vet suggested removing them. Is there a health benefit, or would it just be cosmetic?

In all honesty, it is impossible for me to comment on whether or not your pet’s masses should be removed without actually seeing them myself. A lot of variables come into play when deciding if we should remove a mass. I would want to know how rapidly they are growing, whether or not they had an ulcerated surface, and if they were causing any discomfort to your pet. Also, while I always perform a fine needle aspirate in my office so I can view cells from the mass under the microscope, I hesitate to call anything benign or malignant without a full biopsy read by a pathologist. Some skin tumors, particularly one called a mast cell tumor, can often look relatively innocent, while still posing a risk to your pet’s health. I suggest having a discussion with your veterinarian about why she thinks they should be removed. Finally, if they are removed, I highly recommend having them sent to a pathologist. I was told once by a great surgeon, “If it’s important enough to remove, then it’s important enough to biopsy.”

Q: My dog needs surgery, and my vet has mentioned laser surgery as an option. What’s the difference, and is it worth the extra cost?

Laser surgery is surgery that is performed using a laser for cutting, rather than the traditional scalpel. There are pros and cons to each, but the laser offers better control of bleeding since it cauterizes the tissues as it cuts them. This is why some surgeons prefer them for airway or oral surgeries. The main thing to consider is that all surgical procedures involve techniques that improve with practice. If your veterinarian is routinely performing laser surgery over the more traditional type, it’s likely that this is what she feels more comfortable with. The extra cost for laser surgery typically stems from the more expensive technology involved.

Do you have a question for a Petplan veterinarian?

Go to: GoPetplan.com/ask-an-expert

But note, please check with your regular veterinarian if the problem is persistent or requires immediate medical attention.
We do everything we can to protect our pets, but accidents can still occur. As pet parents, one of our greatest fears is that our beloved pet will find themselves in an emergency situation, and scarier yet, an emergency that requires surgery. Situations like these can be very difficult for everyone involved, as so many variables have to be considered: the circumstances, the best course of action, the potential risks and benefits of the decisions to be made, and the financial considerations that we all must take into account. And often, critical decisions must be made on the spot.

When the editors of *fetch!* asked me to reflect on my own experiences with emergency veterinary care, I recalled just how difficult and scary these situations can be for pet parents. Many of the emergency surgery cases I have seen were caused by common conditions, but that makes them no less stressful for pet parents when their little loves are sick or injured. Luckily, surgical advances are making complete recoveries more commonplace, which means more happy endings for pets and their families. One emergency I recall vividly concerned a cat named Gus. His pet parents, Lucy and Charlie, tell his “tail”:

**Gus is our 4-year-old male cat who lives to eat, so when he skipped breakfast and dinner one day, we suspected something was amiss. When we later found Gus going in and out of his litter box, crying, and only producing small drops of blood-tinged urine, we knew something was**
A urinary blockage, like the one Gus had, is one of the most common emergencies affecting our male feline friends, and a frequent cause for emergency surgery. The exact cause of most urinary blockages in cats is unknown (unless uroliths, or bladder stones, are found). Stress is considered one of the most important underlying contributors, and can cause spasms in the sphincters within the urethra. The end result: an inability to fully empty the bladder, or sometimes to urinate at all. This situation is an emergency because the kidneys continue to produce urine, and the bladder continues to fill up with urine that would normally be expelled. This results in an enlarged, painful bladder, possible kidney damage — and a very sick cat, as Lucy and Charlie found.

We discussed our options and decided to proceed with all of the veterinarian’s recommended procedures. After a couple of days in the hospital with a urinary catheter in place (and no evidence of bladder stones), Gus seemed to be on the road to recovery. The catheter was removed (and he urinated well!), and Gus was sent home. His recovery, however, was far from over. We had to monitor his bathroom habits closely, medicate him every morning and evening for about three weeks and transition him onto a special diet. A week later, a recheck at Gus’ regular vet revealed that he was doing very well, and we were all confident that Gus was going to make a full recovery.

**CANINE/FELINE 911**

The 411 on when to call for help:

- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Sudden weakness or severe lethargy
- Seizures or loss of consciousness (“passing out”)
- Sudden difficulty or inability to walk
- Excessive bleeding or bruising
- Severe vomiting or diarrhea

If your four-legged family member shows any of the above signs, get them to the vet immediately.
But just four weeks later, we returned home from work to find Gus in distress, cleaning his hind end excessively and crying. Worried that he could be blocked again, we rushed Gus back to the emergency room, where our fears were realized.

Although some cats recover from a urinary blockage and never look back, other cats can have recurrent episodes, even when their parents do everything they can to avoid them at home. One of the recommended treatments for recurring urinary blocking in cats is a surgery called a perineal urethrostomy (PU). This surgery leaves a wider opening in the urethra for urine to pass and can help prevent future episodes. Afterwards, at-home care and maintenance will be necessary (your vet will determine for how long), as well as routine vet rechecks, but many of these cats live long, healthy lives.

→ After much consideration, we decided to proceed with the PU surgery, and three years later, Gus continues to do well. We are diligent about keeping him on his special diet, and we make sure he is seen for all of his recommended follow-up care and examinations. Gus is priceless in our eyes, and when all was said and done, the nearly $4,000 for emergency care was well worth it.

Sudden illnesses like the one Gus experienced are only one reason pets may be rushed to the ER. Another frequently seen scenario is an accidental injury like a torn cruciate, which brings thousands of pets to the emergency vet every year. Whenever I think of this type of injury I am reminded of Ramona, a plucky Lab who endured a cruciate crusade of her own. Her pet parents, Jane and Garry, tell her tail...

Ramona is our 5-year-old Labrador Retriever who was enjoying a day at the dog park chasing a Frisbee® with her four-legged buddies. As she romped across the yard, Ramona turned sharply and let out a painful yelp. She limped on three legs back to us, and sadly put her head in our laps. Knowing that Ramona doesn’t give up on a Frisbee for anything, we decided to take her to our veterinarian right away. She quickly determined that Ramona had torn her cranial cruciate ligament (CCL) and was going to need surgery to get back on all four feet.
Many pet parents have heard of a torn CCL, or have even experienced it themselves with one of their pets — it’s an injury that has become more frequently recognized, diagnosed and treated in veterinary medicine. As in Ramona’s case, it can generally be presumed upon physical examination, but often X-rays are required for a full diagnosis.

Treatment can be a little tricky, as there is truly no “right” way to manage these cases. Depending on the size of the patient affected, her activity level and her vet’s preferences, there are various options for stabilizing the affected knee. If there is only partial damage to the cruciate, a veterinarian may recommend medical management prior to considering surgical intervention.

Ramona is a very active, large breed dog, and after much discussion, we decided to take her to a veterinary surgeon for a procedure called a TPLO (tibial plateau leveling osteotomy). Ramona was in the hospital overnight, and then came home for a few months — yes, months! — of TLC, rehabilitation and follow-up care. It was a long road, but we were diligent about following her post-surgery schedule and made sure she kept her recheck appointments. By the next spring (and $4,500 later), Ramona was back at the park chasing Frisbees.

Gus and Ramona are only two examples of the innumerable possible emergency situations that can bring a beloved pet to the veterinarian, but they highlight a few very important points.

First, when in doubt, call your veterinarian. It is always better to hear, “That’s nothing to be worried about,” rather than, “I wish we’d seen her sooner.”

Second, make sure you understand the costs associated with the recommendations your vet makes. It’s okay to take your finances into consideration when making these difficult decisions; the majority of pet parents have to carefully manage the cost of their pet’s care. Don’t be afraid to be honest with your vet about your budget, so he or she can take this into account when discussing your options.

Finally, emergency situations are scary for everyone. It is okay to ask questions (even if your vet already explained everything to you), seek clarification and take a moment to consider your options. We vets understand that your pet is a member of your family, and we want to do what is best for everyone — four-legged members included.
Has the idea of putting your pet “under” got you panicked about surgical procedures? Whether a surgery is elective (like spay/neuter) or a life-saving procedure in an emergency, anesthesia poses some risk to our pets. The good news is these risks are extremely low; only about 0.1% of pets undergoing anesthesia have problems. Understanding how anesthesia works can help put your mind at ease. Search “anesthesia use” on our Vets for Pets blog at GoPetplan.com for the particulars of anesthesia protocol, and take a deep breath!

**surgery nerves**

...saves nine — lives! Cats and cat-astrophes go hand in paw when curiosity gets the best of our best friends. Read all about Petplan’s fabulous felines, their hapless accidents and the health conditions they conquered on our Cat-astrophes Averted board on Pinterest. We’ve pinned our most memorable doggie dilemmas and canine close calls, too — check out the Tails of the Unexpected board at pinterest.com/petplan.

**a stitch in time**

Now you can take Petplan with you wherever you go; we’ve just launched our new mobile website! Grab your phone and go to GoPetplan.com to fetch a quote, buy a policy and get answers to your most pressing questions. If you’re already a policyholder, you can access pre-filled claim forms, check up on a claim’s status and more. You can even send forms to your vet, right from your device!

**clipping coupons**

Always striving for savings? Nip budget woes in the bud with discounts on Petplan pet insurance policies. From buying online to protecting multiple pets to military and veterinary professionals’ discounts, there are plenty of ways to pinch pennies. Check out Doggy Discounts and Kitty Discounts at GoPetplan.com to see how you can slash spending without cutting coverage.
pet stats

unusual measure-mutts and surprising cat-tistics

13,000
number of dollars spent by a British couple on a facelift for their Bloodhound, Junior, to help correct a genetic defect of the eyelids called entropion

1565
the year the first “Elizabethan collar” was made as a New Year’s gift for Queen Elizabeth I

1
number of dogs, in millions, who undergo surgery for torn ligaments in their knees each year
weight in pounds of the world’s largest dog fur ball (collected by groomers)
close to the bone

how advancements in elbow dysplasia surgeries are attempting to alleviate arthritis
Most pet parents realize that, as their pets age, they may experience some joint stiffness and even a bit of arthritis — just like we do. But most pet parents don’t expect a 1-year-old puppy to develop osteoarthritis so severe that he is unable to retrieve a tennis ball.

How can a seemingly healthy, very young dog develop such a catastrophic condition? The answer could lie in an orthopedic disorder called elbow dysplasia, a common developmental defect that leads to osteoarthritis. Caused by the abnormal growth of cells, tissue or bone, it’s one of the most frequent causes of pain in the forelimb and is particularly common in certain larger dog breeds. Here, we take a look at this often debilitating abnormality, and the latest surgical solutions designed to help manage the problem.
Elbow dysplasia comprises three inherited bone diseases: fragmented coronoid process (FCP), ununited anconeal process (UCP) and osteochondrosis. Dr. Greg Keller, DVM, chief of veterinary services for the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), says UCP is easy to diagnose, and because the surgery is simple, the condition is usually treated by a general practice veterinarian. Osteochondrosis is also relatively simple to diagnose and treat.

“Of the three, FCP is the hardest to make a diagnosis with just radiographs,” Dr. Keller says.

The main theory regarding FCP is that it occurs in the forelimbs when two of the three bones that form the elbow joint — the ulna and the radius — grow unevenly. As a result, the ulna, which isn’t meant to be a weight-bearing bone, takes on too much weight as the puppy grows. The result is a fracture that leads to increasingly severe arthritis.

Clinical signs of FCP, such as lameness, generally appear between four and 10 months of age, according to the OFA.

The abc’s of fcp

According to Dr. Keller, the gold standard for diagnosing FCP is surgical exploration. It can also be accurately diagnosed in puppies with lameness through a computed tomography scan. However, both diagnostic methods can be costly, and some pet parents may choose to delay diagnosis and treatment as a result.

Unfortunately, radiographs alone are often not enough for diagnosis, as the dog’s clinical signs and the X-ray results don’t always match up. For instance, a dog can have severe lameness and have relatively normal radiographs, or vice versa, says Dr. Ursula Krotscheck, DVM, DACVS, an assistant professor of small animal surgery at Cornell University. In some cases, a dog can barely move its elbows, but can run and chase balls just fine, she notes.

Dr. Krotscheck indicates that the major concern regarding FCP is that by the time the dog is definitively diagnosed, the arthritis has already become significant and will continue to progress. The goal of treatment is to inhibit that progression so the dog can lead as normal a life as possible.

Because FCP is fairly common, surgical treatment is readily available and generally costs between $2,000 and $5,000 (depending on the pet’s geographic location). Dogs often have surgery on both elbows at the same time, since it’s relatively common for affected dogs to develop the condition in both forelimbs.

Surgical treatment generally involves removing the abnormal portion of the joint through a minimally-invasive procedure called arthroscopy. Veterinarians often perform a secondary procedure that involves cutting the ulna so it can be moved out of the way. The theory is that moving the ulna reduces its need to bear weight and decreases arthritis.

making the cut?

To compare the effectiveness of adding the second procedure, Dr. Krotscheck began a clinical trial in 2009, funded by Morris Animal Foundation. The trial’s goal was to provide veterinarians with more accurate information for determining the best surgical intervention strategy, and to help them form long-term expectations for the affected dogs. The research team also hoped to gain insight into the rate and degree of arthritis development after FCP.

Sixteen dogs, representing 30 elbow joints, participated in the clinical trial. The dogs were divided into those who had the additional ulnar cut during their surgery, and those who had not. Within six months after surgery, all of the dogs were physically sound and back to normal, regardless of the treatment option they received. Surprisingly, the ulnar cut didn’t seem to affect the outcome in any way.

“We tested one method of removing a sliver of ulna, but it didn’t make a difference in arthritis development in the dogs in our study,” Dr. Krotscheck says.
Her data indicates that there’s no medical reason to add the secondary ulna-cutting procedure. Since the start of the study, however, other ulna-cutting procedures have been developed and need to be evaluated for effectiveness.

Regardless of the treatment given, the question remains: How long will surgery keep arthritis from elbow dysplasia in check? That depends on the dog, Dr. Krotscheck says, and unfortunately, it’s impossible to predict long-term outcomes.

**outwitting arthritis**

Even with surgery, arthritis can progress throughout a dog’s life. Still, there are ways to manage the condition, with a healthy lifestyle being the primary factor in maintaining a high quality of life. Admittedly, this becomes more challenging as the dog ages and becomes sedentary or gains weight.

“Obesity and inactivity make things worse,” says Dr. Krotscheck. “Dogs need to be kept slim and active in a non-concussive way — swimming and long walks are great, but hard runs are not.” She adds that formal physical therapy after surgery can help the dog maintain muscle mass.

Because FCP is a genetic disease, the best way to prevent it is through screening and responsible breeding practices; OFA’s database of nearly 68,000 puppies indicates that the likelihood of elbow dysplasia increases significantly when two dogs with dysplastic elbows are bred. OFA’s estimates show that only ten percent of puppies born to two healthy dogs are affected by elbow dysplasia, while those rates more than double if either parent has the condition and more than triples if both parents have it.

“It’s important for people who want to buy a puppy to talk to breeders about the elbow status of the parents,” recommends Dr. Krotscheck.

The good news is that a lot of research is taking place in the area of FCP treatment right now, and better surgical techniques may soon be on the horizon. New scientific discoveries may mean that one day, dogs with FCP will finally be able to wave goodbye to arthritis — with both elbows.

For more information on the studies funded by Morris Animal Foundation, visit MorrisAnimalFoundation.org.
Peruse the grooming section of your local pet store, and you might spot something familiar — the signature black-and-white packaging of Paul Mitchell hair care products.

But these are no copycats, nor are pet parents purchasing human shampoos for their four-legged family members. John Paul Pet was launched in 2005, largely thanks to John Paul Mitchell Systems co-founder and CEO John Paul DeJoria — who also happens to be a passionate animal advocate and pet parent.

John Paul Pet is only the most recent manifestation of DeJoria’s long history with pets. His love affair began with a white Husky named (appropriately) Whitey, whom DeJoria had when he was 11 years old. As an adult, in the midst of selling self-branded shampoos door to door on a $700 budget, he discovered he had the power to protect furry friends in a larger way.

“When we [DeJoria and co-founder Paul Mitchell, the late celebrity stylist] started John Paul Mitchell Systems, I realized the cruelty of testing human grooming products on pets. I felt we had to stop animal testing, and I did.” In 1980, Paul Mitchell became the first professional beauty company to announce that it would not conduct or endorse animal testing.

Several years later, “when my good friend John Capra approached me about starting a high-end grooming product line, I felt it was a perfect fit. And so the John Paul Pet line was created.”

John Paul Pet aims to provide pet grooming products held to the same standards as the for-human-hair Paul Mitchell line. Take John Paul Pet’s newest products, for example. Like all John Paul Mitchell Systems products, “Awapoochi” shampoos and conditioners are tested on humans, not animals, to ensure they are gentle enough for pets. They’re free of the additives and preservatives paraben and EDTA, and the Awapuhi extract used in it is produced on the company’s own sustainable, solar-powered farm in Hawaii.

This ethical and environmental responsibility is part of what John Paul Pet calls “Behind the Paw,” the pet version of Paul Mitchell’s “Behind the Bottle” philosophy.

“‘Behind the Paw’ is a culture that brings pets, people, passion and programs together in an effort to create a better world for animals,” DeJoria explains. “[For example], we are working with Petfinder.com and the Petfinder.com Foundation to help adopt an additional one million pets. We also support local shelters and rescues nationwide with grooming products, because we know that a groomed pet has a higher (and faster) chance of being adopted than a pet that has not been groomed.”

Animals may not have been used to test John Paul Pet products, but they did have a hand in designing them.

“We include our pets in the final scent and fragrance decisions. We watch which products they liked, and then work with them.”

The result is a line of pet grooming products that includes shampoos, conditioners and wipes, all of which DeJoria says “use similar high-quality ingredients to those used in our human grooming products, although the formulas are especially balanced for the pH of pets.”

As pet “dad” to a family of four Golden Retrievers — Jack, Bella, Joe and Suzy-Q — DeJoria understands that good grooming isn’t just about keeping pets clean; it’s also about keeping them healthy.

“Proper grooming is an excellent opportunity for us, as pet owners, to identify any areas of concern, and it’s a wonderful time to bond with our pets.”

DeJoria’s own pets are bathed once a week and kept freshened up with John Paul Pet Wipes as necessary. When asked whether he prefers “grooming” people or pets, he says, “They are both great and fun, but it’s my responsibility to groom my pets, and it’s one that I love.”

That’s just one of DeJoria’s many responsibilities. Besides continuing to helm the billion-dollar John Paul Mitchell Systems, which includes products, styling tools and beauty schools, he is co-founder of the Patrón Spirits Company, which produces high-end tequila, and devotes a good portion of his time to philanthropic and humanitarian endeavors.

But at the end of the day, he says there’s still nothing like having a happy, healthy — and clean! — family of furry friends waiting for him at the door. “My favorite time is probably being greeted by them, seeing the love on their smiling faces. It is wonderful to come home to,” DeJoria says. “Pets give us 100% unconditional love and loyalty, so it is very easy to want to give them the best of everything in return.”
What would you choose, your pet or your pocketbook? With Petplan pet insurance, you never have to decide. Petplan can reimburse up to 100% of your vet bills when accidents and illnesses happen. We offer full coverage for hereditary and chronic conditions as standard, plus a Covered for Life guarantee. Think of us as your passport to peace of mind — wherever life takes you and your pet.

Scan the code at right to get a free, instant quote, visit us online, or call one of our friendly Pet Insurance Advisors to help you enroll.

By Nature® Natural and Organic Pet Food
Keep your pet feeling young and healthy!

By Nature® dog and cat foods are formulated to help support your pets’ natural defenses against the effects of aging, illness and physical and environmental stresses. Available in wet and dry formulas, our diets keep your pets feeling young with a powerful mix of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.

Experience why more and more pet parents are switching to the diet that rewards unconditional love with uncompromising nutrition.

Find the naturally nutritious diet for your pet and learn simple tips for better pet care by visiting bynaturepetfoods.com.

www.bynaturepetfoods.com

Glowdoggie
German-made LED collars

For those that want to keep their furry loved ones seen and safe on those dark evening and morning walks, the German-engineered Glowdoggie LED collar provides the ultimate, high-quality solution. It’s 100% waterproof, extremely durable and guaranteed for at least two years.

From $49.99 (with free shipping), at www.glowdoggie.com.

www.glowdoggie.com

fetching finds for discerning pet parents

Welcome to the fetch! marketplace, where you’ll find great products, services and innovations to help your furry family make the cut when it comes to looking sharp and staying safe. In this, our “Snip/Tuck” issue, we’ve got pet products perfect for giving your pets an edge, whether they’re cuddling on the couch or prancing around town. These products were hand- (or in the case of Wellington, paw-) picked by our editorial staff, which means we’ve used them ourselves, we loved the results and we think you will, too!

If you would like to know more about how your products can be featured in fetch! marketplace, please email us at adsales@fetch-magazine.com.
Thundershirt™ Keeps Dogs Calm and Relaxed

Thundershirt is the simplest way to ease dogs' fear or anxiety. If your dog suffers from fear, anxiety or over-excitement, Thundershirt is a must-have. Put a Thundershirt on your dog during stressful or difficult situations and it will help keep your canine calm and relaxed.

To use, just wrap Thundershirt around your dog and secure the simple fasteners. It's made of soft, breathable, washable fabric and is proven effective during stressful times such as storms, loud noises, separation, crate training or travel. Even scary vet visits are calmer and easier with Thundershirt.

Whether at home, visiting, or traveling in-between, Thundershirt makes life with your pet more enjoyable for the whole family. For only $39.95, with a risk-free, money-back guarantee, give Thundershirt a try. You and your pet will be glad you did.

tel 866.892.2078
service@thundershirt.com
www.thundershirt.com

No Tears with John Paul Pet’s Tearless Shampoo

John Paul Pet Tearless Puppy and Kitten Shampoo is perfect for your puppy or kitten (and dogs and cats of all ages). Our Tearless formula is made especially for gently cleaning your puppy's sensitive face and skin while leaving a fresh, deodorized scent. The adorable puppy featured here was groomed using John Paul Pet products before this photo shoot with Petfinder.com.

Adopting a puppy is a wonderful way to celebrate National Puppy Month, and Petfinder.com helps animals in need of adoption find wonderful homes nationwide. Please consider adoption when looking for your new puppy, and please provide them with the best in grooming and hygiene by using John Paul Pet products.

tel 888.588.1119
pr@johnpaulpet.com
www.johnpaulpet.com
www.facebook.com/JohnPaulPet

The Silent Home Pet Grooming Kit

Scaredy Cut® is the simple solution to eliminating grooming anxiety. Its unique, patented design replaces electric clippers with scissors, guarded by guide combs, to allow for silent, gentle grooming.

- Designed for use by you, the one your pet trusts most
- Seven comb lengths included
- Perfect for releasing tangled fur
- A serrated blade grips fine fur and prevents snagging or pulling

The only drug-free and silent grooming solution for anxious pets. For just $31.95, with a risk-free, money-back guarantee, you can start building a trusting relationship with a well-groomed pet today.

Watch our demo videos online to see the silent snipper in action.

tel 877.722.7339
info@scaredycut.com
www.scaredycut.com

Dogtails™

Great for your dog's fur, mentality and our Earth

You love clean. We do, too! At Dogtails we are obsessed with all things clean. Especially clean dogs. Luxurious and environmentally conscious, Dogtails fuses the best of all things pure — sustainable packaging, PET recyclable bottles, not a trace of SLS, dyes, artificial fragrances or parabens; just simple, transparent ingredients. Clarifying and soothing, thanks to its genetic makeup of Sunflower Seed Oil packed with Vitamin E & Fatty Acids, Rosemary Oil to stimulate and moisturize fur, Grapefruit Oil to uplift and invigorate and Lime Oil, a natural antiseptic and bacteria fighter, Dogtails simply takes care of dogs in the best possible way. Philanthropy is at the top of our list. For every purchase of “Dogtails Dog Shampoo,” a soft blanket is dropped off at a local animal shelter for dogs in need of warmth and comfort. And by treating your dog to this most delicious cocktail of clean, you're also doing good for the earth by reducing your dog's carbon paw print.

www.dogtailsshop.com

Dogtails™

Great for your dog’s fur, mentality and our Earth

You love clean. We do, too! At Dogtails we are obsessed with all things clean. Especially clean dogs. Luxurious and environmentally conscious, Dogtails fuses the best of all things pure — sustainable packaging, PET recyclable bottles, not a trace of SLS, dyes, artificial fragrances or parabens; just simple, transparent ingredients. Clarifying and soothing, thanks to its genetic makeup of Sunflower Seed Oil packed with Vitamin E & Fatty Acids, Rosemary Oil to stimulate and moisturize fur, Grapefruit Oil to uplift and invigorate and Lime Oil, a natural antiseptic and bacteria fighter, Dogtails simply takes care of dogs in the best possible way. Philanthropy is at the top of our list. For every purchase of “Dogtails Dog Shampoo,” a soft blanket is dropped off at a local animal shelter for dogs in need of warmth and comfort. And by treating your dog to this most delicious cocktail of clean, you're also doing good for the earth by reducing your dog's carbon paw print.

www.dogtailsshop.com

Thundershirt™ Keeps Dogs Calm and Relaxed

Thundershirt is the simplest way to ease dogs’ fear or anxiety. If your dog suffers from fear, anxiety or over-excitement, Thundershirt is a must-have. Put a Thundershirt on your dog during stressful or difficult situations and it will help keep your canine calm and relaxed.

To use, just wrap Thundershirt around your dog and secure the simple fasteners. It’s made of soft, breathable, washable fabric and is proven effective during stressful times such as storms, loud noises, separation, crate training. Even scary vet visits are calmer and easier with Thundershirt.

Whether at home, visiting, or traveling in-between, Thundershirt makes life with your pet more enjoyable for the whole family. For only $39.95, with a risk-free, money-back guarantee, give Thundershirt a try. You and your pet will be glad you did.

tel 866.892.2078
service@thundershirt.com
www.thundershirt.com
Best friends often have stories that are hard to swallow, but Chloe’s tail is a cut above the rest.

A typical 6-year-old Vizsla, Chloe plays hard and cuddles hard, too. The DePalma family’s first baby, she’s even great around their young daughters, whom Chloe thinks of as new little sisters. But the same can’t be said about Chloe when it comes to the DePalma daughters’ toys.

Two years ago, Chloe swallowed a squeaker toy, requiring surgery after it folded over in her small intestine. “It was a several day buildup,” remembers Jennifer DePalma. “She first started throwing up, then became lethargic. Chloe’s usually a high energy dog, so we knew something was up. Turns out, she had swallowed a squeaker toy without us ever knowing.” Chloe underwent an enterotomy to remove the toy and had to be restricted from going up the stairs and running while she recovered.

Despite the trouble the toy caused her, some habits are hard to break; two years later, Chloe ingested a plastic rubber ducky. After a sudden disinterest in food, Chloe began vomiting bits of plastic. A trip to NorthStar VETS® in New Jersey revealed two foreign bodies — one in the stomach and another in the intestine. “My biggest nightmare was they were going to have to open her up again,” says Jennifer. The entire body of the rubber duck had become lodged in the intestine, while the head was stuck in the stomach. The vets had no choice but to operate. Luckily, Chloe recovered well.

Not long after, Chloe managed to find another toy. “We’re not sure where it came from,” admits a baffled Jennifer. “We were out running the day before and the next day she was throwing up again.” An ultrasound at the vet’s office was inconclusive, and the doctor was unsure if Chloe had ingested another object or if her bowel had become necrotic due to the surgeries. Lo and behold, Chloe had swallowed another squeaker, requiring another surgery. Thankfully, she was protected by Petplan.

“Getting pet insurance was one of the best decisions we’ve ever made,” says Jennifer. “We would have done whatever was needed for our girl, but having pet insurance helps make it easier.” These days, the DePalmas supplement Chloe’s diet with pumpkin for added fiber, and are diligent about all of the toys that enter the house. “At this point, we have to protect Chloe from herself. But it’s the least we can do for her.”
SURE, AT FIRST I WAS A LITTLE TAKEN ABACK BY THE WHOLE PEEING STANDING UP THING. BUT I TAUGHT HIM TO THROW A STICK AND NOW HANGING OUT WITH HIM IS THE BEST PART OF MY DAY.

—EINSTEIN
adopted 12-09-10

A PERSON IS THE BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO A SHELTER PET

adopt
theshelterpetproject.org
saving Grace shouldn’t cost a fortune.

– Grace, 3-year-old Boston Terrier
Diagnosed with a mast cell tumor in April.
Cancer obliterated by Thanksgiving.
Budget intact throughout, thanks to Petplan.

America’s #1 rated pet insurance.®
1.866.467.3875 www.GoPetplan.com

Terms and conditions apply. Coverage under any pet insurance policy is expressly subject to the conditions, restrictions, limitations, exclusions and terms of the policy documentation issued by the insurer. Availability of this program is subject to each state’s approval and coverage may vary by state. Pet insurance policies are issued by AGCS Marine Insurance Company and administered by Fetch Insurance Services, LLC (Fetch Insurance Agency, LLC in Michigan), d/b/a Petplan (Petplan Insurance Agency, LLC in California). AGCS Marine Insurance Company, a member of the Allianz Group, is rated A+ by A.M. Best (2011). *Petplan is the #1 rated pet insurance provider, of those providers receiving more than 1,000 reviews, on the independent review site, www.petinsurancereview.com (January 2, 2013). For additional information, please visit petinsurancereview.com or write to: 1268 Longs Peak, Longmont, Colorado 80501. ©Fetch Inc 02/13 PPADFM0213