

Pet Insurance Guide

Helping you choose the
most effective cover for
you and your pet



Pet Insurance Checklist



- What is the amount of veterinary fees cover?
- Are there any time limits when claiming for a particular condition?
- Once my cover has started, will you ever place exclusions on my policy?
- Will you increase my premium if I have to make a claim?
- What is the policy excess?
- What are the main exclusions on the policy?
- Is it clear what exactly will be covered and what will not be covered if my pet has had treatment or suffered problems before I take out the policy?
- What other benefits does the policy provide other than vets fees?
- Will I have to pay an additional charge for the extra benefits?
- What happens to the cover and the premium when my pet gets older?



Why you should insure your pet

Advances in veterinary science mean that your vet can do more and more to keep your pet healthy. But unexpected veterinary bills can put a strain on your finances. With 4 in 10 pet owners unable to easily afford their vets' bills*, the need to include insurance as a routine part of caring for your pet is becoming a necessity.

However, with so many pet insurance plans available the question is not whether to insure but 'Who should I insure with?'

This pet insurance guide has been designed to explain the different types of policies available so that you can choose the right insurance plan for you, your pet and your budget.

*Mintel 2003

Understanding the different types of cover

The most important part of a pet insurance plan and the main reason people insure their pets is to cover veterinary fees; therefore it is essential that you fully understand the level and basis of veterinary fees cover you are buying. Policies will generally cover the cost of illnesses or accidents up to a set limit and you can choose the level of benefit that suits your particular circumstances. When making your decision, it is important to consider how you will be affected should your pet develop a long-term condition that requires on-going treatment as the type of policy you choose can determine how much and how often you can claim.

There are three main types of cover to choose from

Plan A – Lifetime cover:

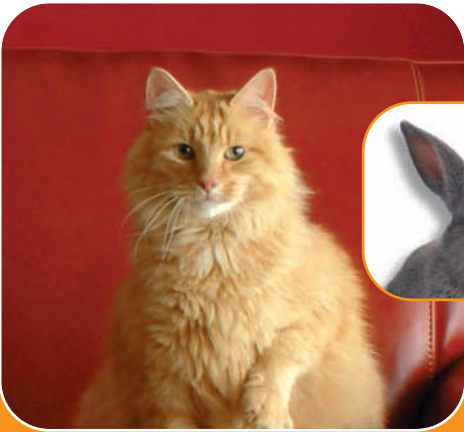
Once you have insured your pet, this type of policy will continue to pay each year for any on-going illnesses or injury that your pet develops for as long as you keep paying your premium. You will have an amount of money you can spend on veterinary fees each year and the total amount will be reinstated annually at policy renewal regardless of any claims you may have made during the course of the previous policy year.

Plan B - Per Condition cover:

Per condition cover gives you a maximum amount that you can claim for a particular illness or injury over the lifetime of your policy. There are no time restrictions on how long you can claim but once you have claimed the full benefit amount, an exclusion is placed on your policy meaning you will not be able to claim for this particular condition in the future.

Plan C - Per Condition cover 12-month only:

This level of cover also gives you a maximum amount that you can claim for a particular illness or injury. However, the amount of time that you claim for each particular condition is limited to 12-months. The condition will be excluded from the policy when you have claimed for 12 months or when you have reached your maximum limit – whichever you reach first.



To show how the different plans
take a look at the potential

Veterinary Fees Benefit

Year 1 Paid

Plan A

Lifetime cover

£5,000

£2,300

You can claim up to a maximum of £5,000

Plan B

Per Condition cover

£5,000

£2,300

You can claim up to £5,000 per condition

you will not be able to claim for this condition

Plan C

Per Condition cover

£5,000

£2,300

12-month only

You can claim up to £5,000 per condition

or 12 months has passed, you will not be able to

For further information call
0845 055 1020

ent plans work in practice,
tial claim for a pet with diabetes:

Year 2 Paid	Year 3 Paid	Year 4 Paid	Year 5 Paid
£1,800	£760	£1250	£688

0 in total each year for the duration of your policy

£1,800	£760	£140	£0
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. There are no time restrictions but once you have reached your limit,
dition in the future

0	0	0	0
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for a maximum of 12 months. Once you have reached your limit
e able to claim for this condition in the future.

Your premium

The type of cover selected will usually determine how much you pay for your pet insurance plan. Plan A is likely to be the most expensive plan and Plan C the cheapest. By restricting how much and how long you can claim for, companies can provide lower levels of cover at a reduced premium.

Your premium may also be affected by your pet's breed or where you live. For example, it is generally more expensive to insure a large pedigree dog in London than a small crossbreed in a more rural location.

The age of your pet can also impact your premium. Like us, as our pets get older, they are more likely to suffer from ill health and as a result older animals are generally more expensive to insure. If you are insuring your pet from a young age, it is important to clarify how your premium will be affected as your pet grows older. Some companies will increase your premium by a small amount each year to reflect the gradual ageing process while others will wait until your pet reaches a certain age before imposing a more substantial increase.

Exclusions

Different insurers place different exclusions. Make sure you read the terms and conditions carefully to ensure the policy provides the level of cover you are expecting.

Some common exclusions are:

- Pre-existing conditions – any illness you were aware of or your pet has suffered from before the start date of the insurance is usually excluded
- Illnesses showing signs or needing treatment in the period immediately after taking out cover – depending on the policy, typically the first 10, 14, 28 or 30 days of cover
- Preventative or elective treatment, for example vaccinations, spaying or castration, cosmetic dentistry
- Pregnancy or giving birth
- Dental treatment
- Prescription diet food
- Hereditary and congenital conditions such as hip dysplasia
- Alternative and complementary treatments
- Behavioural referral

Other things to consider

Some additional benefits

While the veterinary fees benefit is generally considered to be the most important factor when choosing pet insurance, many policies offer a range of additional benefits such as third party liability for dogs, help with finding a lost pet, extension of cover for pets travelling abroad and much more. In general, these benefits are included as part of the main policy but some companies may charge an additional fee for this extra cover.

Excesses

Whichever insurance policy you choose, you are likely to have to pay an excess when you make a claim. Most companies charge one excess per condition per year. This means that if you make two claims for the same condition within 12 months you will only have to pay one excess. However, if you claim for two separate conditions you will have to pay an excess per condition.

When selecting your policy it is useful to think about the type of excess you will be paying. Some companies will charge a set amount regardless of the size of claim while others will charge a percentage of the claim value.

Older pets

Most companies set an age limit above which they will not insure your pet for the first time but once insured (and providing you keep renewing your policy), most will cover your pet for its lifetime. However, there are some companies which will discontinue cover at a certain age regardless of how long they have been insuring your pet while others will restrict the level of cover available for older animals.

Additionally, as with a premium, you may find the amount of excess you are expected to pay will increase for an older pet.

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