

# Veterinarians

*Dog person? Cat person? Either way, when your furry companion falls ill, it deserves superior care. We rate 182 area vets for both quality and price.*

We love our pets. We may talk to them like humans, plan vacations around them, spend many hours a week walking them, offer them more treats and toys than the kids get, clean up messes that we wouldn't go near in any other situation, sacrifice rugs and furniture to their bad habits, and negotiate gates and other obstructions to the normal human use of our homes.

It is not surprising, then, that at even the hint of a sickness or injury we worry about them. And we spend hundreds, sometimes thousands, of dollars on their medical care.

Naturally, we want to be sure that care is of the highest possible quality. And given all the other sacrifices we make for our pets, we would like not to have to put up with any more inconvenience, unpleasantness, and cost than necessary when getting that care.

This article will help you choose—and deal with—a veterinarian or veterinarians

who will provide the care, service, and reasonable costs you want. We can't tell you how to measure all aspects of the technical skills of veterinarians, but there is much that you can observe on your own. Much information is provided on Table 2, beginning on page 37, on 182 Chicago area veterinary practices to help you make a selection with which both you and your pet will be comfortable.

Table 2 gives information on vets' prices and gives extensive information from our survey of customers. We surveyed area consumers (primarily *Consumer Reports* subscribers, but also a sampling of other consumers) and asked them to rate vets they had used "inferior," "adequate," or "superior" on various aspects of care and service. Table 2 shows the percent of each practice's surveyed customers who rated it "superior"



ZIGGY © 1998 ZIGGY AND FRIENDS, INC. Reprinted with permission of UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. All rights reserved.

on each question. (It's important to note that most ratings that weren't "superior" were at least "adequate" and that these ratings relate to raters' experiences over a period of several years in which various aspects of a veterinary practice may have changed. See page 120 for further discussion of our customer survey.)

If you have a pet, or plan soon to get one and don't yet have a veterinarian, you should select one now. You won't want to be making the choice later while attending to a seriously injured or ill pet.

You can be reasonably sure that any veterinarian you might choose is intelligent and well trained. Almost all vets

## Checklist

You can easily judge the convenience and quality of service provided by a vet. But that's not all you can judge. Even as a layperson, you can check out many aspects of a vet's practice critical to the clinical quality of care. These aspects include how well the vet listens and communicates with you, how thorough the vet is, and whether the vet gives adequate advice on disease prevention and on treatments you can give on your own.

Table 2, beginning on page 37, gives you the judgments of other consumers about 182 Chicago area vets. There is substantial variation, with some vets rated "superior" by more than 90 percent of surveyed pet owners on many aspects of care and service while others received such favorable ratings from fewer than 60 percent on the same questions.

On average, the questions on which vets rated highest were "apparent competence/thoroughness" and "maintaining pleasant office and staff," and the questions on which they rated lowest were "helping keep pet's medical costs down" and "keeping down office waiting time."

There are big vet-to-vet price differences. For example, for spaying a six-month-old dog, charges we found at local vets ranged from \$90 to \$334. Many of the lowest priced vets rated very high on our customer survey. It is possible to save money and also get top-quality care for your pet.

There is more to keeping down costs than finding a vet with low charges. Advice on prevention and care at home for your pet can also help you keep down the pet's medical bills.



**“He is physically able to wag his tail—  
given sufficient cause.”**

© The New Yorker Collection and Edward Frascino from Cartoonbank.com.

have had at least four years of college and four years of veterinary school. Most also get several years of practical training working in a hospital or in another veterinarian's practice after veterinary school. In recent years, it has been more difficult to get into veterinary school than to get into medical school. And vet school graduates must pass an exam comparable in difficulty to the exam physicians must pass in order to qualify to practice. But the fact that a vet has the necessary degrees and training doesn't mean you'll be satisfied. As in choosing your family's physician, you'll want to check several other matters before deciding that a vet is right for you and your pet.

### **What They Treat**

Except for a few specialists, vets in this area generally care for both dogs and cats, and many will treat small mammals (rodents, rabbits, etc.), but many don't provide care for birds and reptiles and very few care for farm animals (see codes on Table 2). You'll want to check whether a vet not only is willing but also is experienced and interested in caring for your type of pet.

### **Convenience**

You'll want to consider hours. Most area vets have some evening or weekend hours for routine visits. That makes life easier for you.

Since there are many vets in the area, you'll probably want to start your selection process with those that are

reasonably close to your home. They'll be more accessible in an emergency and will be convenient for routine visits and for visits to your pet if it must be hospitalized.

For your convenience and your pet's comfort, you want a vet that allows you to conveniently schedule appointments and that keeps down office waiting time after you arrive—unless there's an intervening emergency. Table 2 shows how vets' practices were rated by surveyed customers on “keeping down office waiting time.” This was one of the areas in which vets scored lowest, but there was substantial variation from practice to practice, with a few practices getting “superior” ratings from more than 90 percent of surveyed customers and others getting such favorable ratings from fewer than 40 percent.

### **Seeing You Quickly**

We also asked customers to rate vets on “arranging to see you quickly.” That's important to your peace of mind and to the comfort—and perhaps the survival—of your pet.

You can check on your own what provisions a vet makes for covering emergencies outside of office hours. Only a few surveyed veterinary hospitals reported they are open and staffed with a veterinarian on the premises 24 hours per day. But some vets will give you a home phone number, an answering service number, or both. Others will simply give you the number of one of the area's

24-hour facilities. When you call, some vets will come to meet you at the office, while others will talk with you and steer you to another facility or simply arrange for an answering service to steer you to another vet or facility. Ask any prospective vet exactly what kind of response you can expect in an emergency.

### **Phone Advice**

To save time and money, and to enable you to respond quickly to a pet's needs, it's important to be able to get meaningful advice by phone. Table 2 gives customer survey results bearing on this point. It shows the percent of surveyed customers who rated vet practices “superior” for “giving helpful advice by phone.”

### **Do They Care?**

The first time you visit a vet you'll get a sense of whether he or she really cares about animals. Note how gentle the vet is and how interested he or she is in learning relevant facts about your pet. Note also how your pet responds to the vet. It's generally a good sign if the vet has bulletin boards listing lost pets or pets up for adoption, has humane society brochures, or volunteers in some kind of humane work.

Also, ask about policies on visiting pets that are hospitalized. Flexibility reflects a concern about your happiness and the happiness of your pet rather than merely the convenience of clinic staff.

### **Openness**

To make a reliable judgment about a veterinary practice, you have to see more than the front office. Find out how open the vet is to showing you treatment rooms and the cages and runs where animals are temporarily held or boarded. Many clinics allow customers to tour the entire facility during regular office hours. If a facility doesn't allow this, push for a good explanation.

### **Cleanliness**

As in any human health care setting, cleanliness is essential in a veterinary practice. Be sure the waiting room and treatment rooms don't have debris from previous customers; check that treatment tables are disinfected after each animal is examined; note whether the staff's clothes and hands are clean; in

## Spay/Neuter Assistance Programs

Many local governments offer programs to subsidize consumers' costs for spaying or neutering a pet. Some offer two programs—one to help low-income pet owners and one for all pet owners—as an incentive to get pets fixed. To find out about such programs, call your local government's animal control division.

general, be sure there is a sterile, hospital-like atmosphere.

### Accommodations

Since your pet may have to stay for several hours or overnight, be sure the facilities where it will be kept are bright, clean, have fresh air, and are set up so that pets are sufficiently separated from one another that they will not hurt each other or transmit diseases. We plan to rate the boarding services of area kennels—including many area veterinary hospitals—in an upcoming *CHECKBOOK* issue.

### Advice on Prevention and Home Care

Look for a vet who will provide written materials and advice to help you avoid coming to his or her office. You need information on prevention and advice on how you can take care of your pet and diagnose problems on your own. Table 2 shows how each practice rated on this point.

### How They Communicate With You

You want a vet whom you like and with whom you communicate easily. On Table 2, the customer survey scores on “listening to you” are for a survey question that actually asked about “listening to/communicating with you.” Table 2 also shows how practices rated on “spending enough time with you,” a feature that is critical to adequate communication. But remember that communication is a highly personal matter. You might have a different opinion than our raters had about the ease of communication with a particular vet.

Good communication includes listening to you, making you feel comfortable about asking questions, explaining what is wrong with your pet, what is being done, and what you can expect. A vet should frankly admit his or her limitations and the need for outside specialist consultation. The vet should also talk openly about costs—so that there will be no financial surprises. And the vet should let you make decisions based on your finances, your devotion to your pet, and your informed understanding of the prognosis.

### Competence and Thoroughness

There is much you can judge about the competence and thoroughness of vets. Does the vet give a thorough exam and take a thorough medical history to find out about previous medical problems, previous occurrences of the current problem, what treatments have worked, and other matters? If your pet is referred to a specialist, does your primary vet follow up with the specialist and keep a record of what happened? If tests are given, does the vet keep a record of the results and share them with you? Table 2 shows what other pet owners have concluded about the listed vets.

### Keeping Costs Down

You want a vet that charges reasonable fees. To help you compare fees, Table 2 gives scores on our price index.

To calculate these price index scores, our researchers shopped each of the vets for their prices for six different procedures, such as spaying a six-and-one-half-month-old cat and cleaning the teeth of a seven-year-old, 25-pound dog. The scores show how each vet's prices compared to the average price for all surveyed vets. The scores are adjusted so that the average price index score is \$100. A vet with a score of \$90, for example, had prices 10 percent lower than the average. We found that most vets were quite consistent in their pricing; so a vet with a low price index score should be a very good prospect to have low prices for your pet's needs.

Low prices are not the only way a vet can save you money, of course. You also save if the vet is effective in showing you how to prevent disease and injuries and if the vet shows you how to care for your pet by yourself. Our customer survey sought to get consumer opinions on these broad aspects of cost control with a question on “helping keep pet's medical costs down.” There is a modest

Table 1

Illustrative Low, Average, and High Prices Quoted by Vets for a Few Sample Procedures <sup>1</sup>			
Procedure	Low price	Average price	High price
Spaying of a 6½-month-old cat	\$60 Island Lake Animal Hospital	\$140	\$275 Cairo Animal Hospital
Removal of a cat's front feet claws	\$55 Island Lake Animal Hospital	\$138	\$311 Christensen Animal Hospital
Spaying of a six-month-old, 40-pound dog	\$90 Island Lake Animal Hospital	\$181	\$334 Christensen Animal Hospital
Lab analysis of a dog's stool for worms	\$5 Skokie Animal Hospital	\$17	\$28 Knollwood Hospital For Pets
Neutering of a 5½-month-old, 40-pound dog	\$82 Carol Stream Animal Hospital	\$149	\$303 Family Pet Animal Hospital
Teeth cleaning of a seven-year-old, 25-pound dog	\$50 Island Lake Animal Hospital	\$131	\$280 Green Bay Animal Hospital

<sup>1</sup> Each firm was given additional, detailed information about what services had to be included in the price of the procedure (for example, anesthetic, pre-surgical exam, and hospitalization). Some prices were rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

# Pet Health Insurance

A handful of companies market health insurance for dogs. Before signing up for such insurance, read the policy carefully. For example, a policy offered by Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI) for an annual premium of \$160 for a five-year-old beagle—

- Limited benefits to a specified per-procedure price schedule (for example, \$733 for treatment of a fractured leg), which might be less than some vets charge;
- Limited benefits to a maximum of \$4,500 per accident or illness;
- Included a \$50 deductible for *each* accident or illness (rather than a *per year* deductible as you find in most human health insurance policies);
- Excluded coverage of vaccinations, annual physical exams, routine teeth cleaning, treatment of congenital defects or diseases, behavioral problems, heartworm protection, prescription flea control, spaying or neutering, or other elective procedures;

- Vaccination and routine care coverage could be added, but those benefits increased the annual premium to \$250 (no deductible applied to routine care benefits);
- Delayed the effective date of coverage until 14 days after acceptance of the application and premium.

You must decide whether what you get is worth the price. Our general view of insurance is that you shouldn't get it except against expenses that would seriously disrupt your life. Buying insurance to cover non-catastrophic expenses means you pay administrative costs for an insurance company to process bills you could pay yourself. You also add to your own paperwork. And you pay premiums to cover a pool of other policyholders, some of whom may be more wasteful—more prone to using excessive care—than you are.

Another option is a prepaid health plan, offered by some veterinarians. Under these plans, you usually pay the veterinarian a set dollar amount that covers specific procedures and/or vaccinations (at a discount) throughout the year.

correlation between scores on this question and our price index scores.

## Accreditation

Veterinary hospitals can become accredited by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) by meeting certain minimum standards: keeping adequate medical records and having complete diagnostic, pharmacy, anesthetic, surgical, nursing, dental, and emergency service facilities. Of the 182 firms in our study, 77 were AAHA accredited. Interestingly, being AAHA accredited seems not to be related to our other measures of quality. For example, on our customer survey question regarding “apparent competence/thoroughness” AAHA accredited firms, on average, scored about the same as non-accredited firms. But going to an AAHA accredited firm might cost you more: the average price index score for AAHA accredited hospitals was \$112, compared to an average of \$91 for non-accredited hospitals.

## What to Look Out For

You should evaluate your pet's general health with a nose-to-tail inspection daily. Many health problems in animals are subtle, and easily overlooked. The

following is a checklist, excerpted from a publication by the Humane Society of the United States, that lists warning signs to alert you to possible sickness. Keep in mind that this list is general to both dogs and cats, and that the best measure of your pet's health is whether or not its appearance and behavior are normal for the specific animal.

### Eyes

#### Good signs

- Clean, clear, and bright
- Responsive to visual stimuli

#### Warning signs

- Watery
- Red
- Filmy, cloudy, or discolored
- Dry
- Inflamed/swollen
- Hypersensitive to light
- Pupils are unequal in size
- Pupils are overly dilated or overly constricted
- Third (or middle) eyelid showing
- Itchy (animal rubbing at eyes)
- Painful (animal squinting)

### Ears

#### Good signs

- Both outer ear and canal are clean, and the canal is pink in color
- Responsive to noise

### Warning signs

- Showing discharge (waxy or other)
- Crusty or scabbed tissue
- Red, inflamed, or swollen
- Hair around ear is matted
- Flea-bitten
- Itchy (animal scratching ear or shaking head)
- Unusual smells
- Painful (animal cries or winces when ear is touched)

### Nose

#### Good signs

- Clean
- Free of discharge

#### Warning signs

- Tissue is scabbed, crusty, or cracked
- Showing discharge
- Congested or blocked

### Mouth

#### Good signs

- Free of odor
- Teeth are clean
- Gums are pink—after being pressed with finger, pink gum color returns within one to two seconds

#### Warning signs

- Animal has trouble eating or swallowing

(Continued on page 46)

Table 2

Veterinarians <sup>1</sup>		Types of animals cared for*	Percent of surveyed customers rating firm "superior" on our survey for...										CHECKBOOK's price index score <sup>2</sup>	CHECKBOOK's top rating (✓)	
			Listening to you and (number of ratings)	Arranging to see you quickly	Giving helpful advice by phone	Keeping down office waiting time	Maintaining pleasant office and staff	Giving prevention/self-help advice	Spending enough time with you	Apparent competence/thoroughness	Helping keep pet's medical costs down	Overall care and advice		For quality	For price
														For quality	For price
<b>All-Firm Averages</b>			78%	76%	71%	62%	79%	74%	74%	81%	44%	78%	\$100		
<b>Chicago</b>															
Abell Animal Hospital 6032 N Northwest Hwy	773-631-6727	A BD	82% (22)	76%	75%	64%	86%	61%	62%	73%	23%	82%	\$94		
Ace Animal Hospital 5233 W Irving Park Rd	773-685-4440	AB	79% (19)	61%	76%	42%	89%	71%	68%	84%	59%	79%	\$90		
Animal Medical Center of Chicago 1618 W Diversey Pkwy	773-525-3353	AB	90% (10)	90%	78%	70%	90%	90%	60%	100%	30%	90%	— <sup>3</sup>	✓	— <sup>4</sup>
Blum Animal Hospital 3219 N Clark St	773-327-4446	AB CDF	90% (43)	74%	84%	40%	90%	76%	79%	88%	29%	88%	\$126	✓	
Cat Hospital of Chicago 2851 W Irving Park Rd	773-539-9080	B	80% (15)	73%	67%	53%	80%	73%	67%	80%	29%	80%	\$100 <sup>5</sup>		
Chicago Cat Clinic <sup>6</sup> 5301 W Devon Ave	773-631-5300	B	88% (26)	72%	75%	52%	88%	83%	80%	88%	38%	88%	\$100 <sup>5</sup>	✓	
Chicago Veterinary Emergency 3123 N Clybourn Ave	773-281-7110	ABC DEF	60% (10)	80%	33%	40%	50%	50%	50%	80%	20%	60%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
City Cat Doctor 600 N Wells St	312-944-2287	B	77% (13)	77%	60%	77%	85%	85%	67%	85%	38%	77%	\$101 <sup>5</sup>		
Family Pet Animal Hospital 1401 W Webster Ave	773-935-2311	AB DF	87% (31)	83%	81%	65%	94%	84%	81%	90%	45%	87%	\$173	✓	
Hyde Park Animal Clinic 5210 S Harper Ave #G	773-324-4484	ABC DEF	70% (33)	67%	59%	42%	61%	61%	73%	73%	34%	67%	\$64		✓
Kragness Animal Hospital 6031 S Wentworth Ave	773-667-2334	AB	73% (12)	64%	70%	42%	67%	75%	67%	73%	73%	75%	\$71 <sup>5</sup>		✓
Mayfair Animal Clinic 4314 N Elston Ave	773-478-1868	AB	93% (15)	73%	85%	60%	80%	64%	73%	73%	73%	67%	\$124		
Mid-North Animal Hospital 2212 N Halsted St	773-929-0777	AB	70% (10)	80%	75%	89%	90%	80%	70%	70%	33%	70%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
Misener-Holley Animal Hospital 1545 W Devon Ave	773-743-3322	AB DF	79% (38)	82%	67%	46%	71%	65%	71%	82%	61%	79%	\$94		
North Center Animal Hospital 1808 W Addison St	773-327-5050	AB CDF	78% (19)	67%	61%	58%	79%	61%	63%	79%	35%	72%	\$116		
Portage Park Animal Hospital 5419 W Irving Park Rd	773-725-0260	AB	54% (13)	85%	64%	46%	69%	62%	54%	62%	38%	54%	\$86		
Pulaski Animal Hospital <sup>6</sup> 5424 S Pulaski Rd	773-735-2112	ABC DEF	64% (11)	64%	70%	60%	73%	73%	73%	70%	60%	82%	\$92		
Uptown Animal Hospital 5420 N Clark St	773-561-0734	AB	92% (25)	71%	74%	52%	72%	76%	92%	92%	67%	92%	\$95	✓	
<b>Cook County</b>															
Aberdeen Animal Hospital 11 E Golf Rd, Des Plaines	847-699-8387	AB	70% (10)	70%	50%	70%	70%	60%	70%	80%	40%	70%	\$83		✓
Agape Animal Clinic 617 S La Grange Rd, La Grange	708-352-1591	AB	30% (10)	50%	80%	60%	60%	50%	40%	60%	44%	60%	\$78		✓

## FOOTNOTES ON PAGE 45.

\*TYPES OF ANIMALS CARED FOR: A=Dogs; B=Cats; C=Birds; D=Small rodents; E=Reptiles; F=Rabbits; G=Farm animals.

Table 2

Veterinarians <sup>1</sup>		Types of animals cared for*	Percent of surveyed customers rating firm "superior" on our survey for...										CHECKBOOK's price index score <sup>2</sup>	CHECKBOOK's top rating (✓)		
			Listening to you and (number of ratings)	Arranging to see you quickly	Giving helpful advice by phone	Keeping down office waiting time	Maintaining pleasant office and staff	Giving prevention/self-help advice	Spending enough time with you	Apparent competence/thoroughness	Helping keep pet's medical costs down	Overall care and advice		CHECKBOOK's	For quality	For price
															For quality	For price
<b>All-Firm Averages</b>			78%	76%	71%	62%	79%	74%	74%	81%	44%	78%	\$100			
<b>Cook County (continued)</b>																
Animal Care Hospital 9726 Irving Park Rd, Schiller Park	847-671-5258	AB	71% (14)	93%	67%	86%	93%	64%	79%	86%	50%	79%	\$74		✓	
Animal Emergency & Critical 1810 Frontage Rd, Northbrook	847-564-5775	AB	67% (15)	67%	57%	40%	73%	57%	73%	87%	36%	67%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>	
Animal Hospital of Streamwood 904 E Irving Park Rd, Streamwood	630-837-4400	AB	75% (12)	83%	80%	58%	83%	58%	58%	92%	42%	75%	\$81		✓	
Animal Medical Center 16200 S La Grange Rd, Orland Park	708-460-6000	ABC DEF	75% (24)	65%	65%	48%	79%	74%	67%	92%	41%	71%	\$87			
Animal Medical Center 8343 Skokie Blvd, Skokie	847-673-2616	AB	71% (21)	52%	50%	29%	67%	45%	62%	65%	42%	70%	\$101			
Animal 911 3735 W Dempster St, Skokie	847-328-9110	ABC DEF	86% (14)	86%	83%	75%	71%	91%	79%	79%	42%	79%	— <sup>3</sup>	✓	— <sup>4</sup>	
Archer Veterinary Clinic 13731 S Archer Ave, Lemont	630-257-5121	AB CDF	61% (18)	78%	80%	50%	67%	82%	67%	72%	71%	72%	\$58		✓	
Arlington Cat Clinic 841 N Wilke Rd, Arlington Heights	847-398-3355	B	77% (13)	75%	64%	69%	92%	77%	85%	92%	23%	77%	\$86 <sup>5</sup>			
Arlington Heights Animal Hosp 412 W Algonquin Rd, Arlington Heights	847-593-1898	AB	83% (42)	64%	82%	54%	86%	76%	83%	88%	66%	83%	\$87	✓		
Arlington Park Veterinary Hosp 2105 Hicks Rd, Rolling Meadows	847-934-1535	AB DF	100% (21)	76%	82%	65%	67%	70%	81%	90%	35%	95%	\$102	✓		
Avenue Animal Hospital 16736 Oak Park Ave, Tinley Park	708-532-3866	AB DF	100% (10)	100%	88%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%	\$83	✓	✓	
Barrington Animal Hospital <sup>6</sup> 216 S Northwest Hwy, Barrington	847-381-4100	AB CDF	69% (13)	62%	60%	62%	77%	67%	69%	92%	38%	69%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>	
Becker Animal Hospital 322 W Frontage Rd, Northfield	847-446-8010	AB DEF	93% (14)	71%	90%	71%	93%	91%	86%	93%	15%	93%	\$143	✓		
Berglund Animal Hospital 2515 Gross Point Rd, Evanston	847-328-1440	AB	95% (20)	85%	73%	80%	84%	74%	80%	75%	22%	85%	\$125	✓		
Bevlab Veterinary Hospital 2949 127th St, Blue Island	708-385-3790	AB	80% (15)	73%	80%	53%	73%	80%	67%	87%	33%	73%	\$100			
Boone Animal Hospital 905 55th St, Western Springs	708-246-5445	AB	75% (24)	70%	84%	43%	75%	62%	71%	67%	26%	71%	\$117			
Bramer Animal Hospital 1021 Davis St, Evanston	847-864-1700	AB	89% (37)	65%	73%	73%	92%	89%	86%	92%	49%	86%	\$92	✓		
Bremen Animal Hospital 7613 159th St, Tinley Park	708-532-5577	AB	91% (23)	83%	76%	83%	96%	91%	87%	96%	48%	91%	\$86	✓		
Buffalo Grove Animal Hospital 1031 W Dundee Rd, Buffalo Grove	847-394-1128	AB	91% (12)	75%	89%	50%	75%	82%	83%	75%	18%	83%	\$61		✓	
Burr Ridge Veterinary Clinic 559 S Frontage Rd, Burr Ridge	630-986-0600	ABC DEF	96% (27)	63%	92%	52%	96%	93%	85%	96%	56%	96%	\$118	✓		
Camp McDonald Animal Clinic 2010 E Camp McDonald Rd, Mount Prospect	847-296-1188	AB	86% (29)	93%	79%	86%	90%	88%	83%	79%	50%	83%	\$105	✓		

## FOOTNOTES ON PAGE 45.

\*TYPES OF ANIMALS CARED FOR: A=Dogs; B=Cats; C=Birds; D=Small rodents; E=Reptiles; F=Rabbits; G=Farm animals.

Table 2

Veterinarians <sup>1</sup>		Types of animals cared for*	Percent of surveyed customers rating firm "superior" on our survey for...										CHECKBOOK's price index score <sup>2</sup>	CHECKBOOK's top rating (✓)	
			Listening to you and (number of ratings)	Arranging to see you quickly	Giving helpful advice by phone	Keeping down office waiting time	Maintaining pleasant office and staff	Giving prevention/self-help advice	Spending enough time with you	Apparent competence/thoroughness	Helping keep pet's medical costs down	Overall care and advice		For quality	For price
														For quality	For price
<b>All-Firm Averages</b>			78%	76%	71%	62%	79%	74%	74%	81%	44%	78%	\$100		
<b>Cook County (continued)</b>															
Care Animal Hospital 1195 E Palatine Rd, Arlington Heights	847-394-0455	AB CDF	79% (39)	56%	62%	33%	79%	51%	77%	79%	32%	74%	\$81		✓
Carlson Animal Hospital 414 Lake St, Oak Park	708-383-3606	AB	73% (26)	73%	59%	54%	81%	81%	69%	88%	32%	69%	\$118		
Cat Practice 323 Chicago Ave, Oak Park	708-383-5997	B	77% (13)	75%	56%	58%	85%	67%	69%	85%	23%	69%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
Christensen Animal Hospital 730 Hibbard Rd, Wilmette	847-251-2600	ABC DEF	75% (12)	83%	75%	50%	67%	82%	67%	75%	33%	75%	\$161		
Elmwood-Grove Animal Hospital 8035 W Grand Ave, River Grove	708-456-6700	AB CDF	92% (12)	83%	92%	83%	75%	92%	92%	100%	42%	92%	\$112	✓	
Evergreen Park Animal Hospital 3000 W 95th St, Evergreen Park	708-422-9007	AB	95% (19)	95%	83%	89%	100%	100%	84%	89%	74%	89%	\$119	✓	
Family Pet Clinic <sup>6</sup> 17149 Harlem Ave, Tinley Park	708-614-6500	ABC DEF	80% (10)	67%	67%	70%	60%	75%	80%	80%	33%	70%	\$84		✓
Flossmoor Animal Hospital 19581 Governors Hwy, Homewood	708-798-9030	A BC	92% (26)	100%	95%	85%	100%	92%	96%	96%	60%	96%	\$94	✓	
Fox Animal Hospital 2107 Crawford Ave, Evanston	847-869-4900	AB	100% (12)	83%	82%	75%	83%	83%	92%	100%	45%	100%	\$146	✓	
Glencoe Animal Hospital 1820 Frontage Rd, Northbrook	847-835-1302	AB	73% (15)	73%	71%	53%	80%	73%	80%	80%	21%	79%	\$140		
Glenwood Village Pet Hospital 555 E Glenwood Lansing Rd, Glenwood	708-758-2400	ABC DEF	100% (14)	86%	100%	92%	100%	92%	100%	100%	77%	100%	\$92	✓	
Golf Mill Animal Hospital <sup>6</sup> 8950 N Milwaukee Ave, Niles	847-296-3359	AB	79% (19)	74%	58%	58%	89%	72%	63%	89%	37%	74%	\$115		
Golf Rose Animal Hospital 1375 N Roselle Rd, Schaumburg	847-885-3344	ABC DEF	69% (16)	69%	62%	50%	81%	71%	69%	75%	50%	75%	\$111		
Green Bay Animal Hospital 1221 Green Bay Rd, Wilmette	847-251-5900	AB	73% (11)	64%	67%	64%	82%	67%	64%	73%	30%	73%	\$152		
Harper Animal Hospital 1460 W Algonquin Rd, Palatine	847-358-6767	AB	75% (12)	91%	73%	58%	83%	83%	67%	83%	36%	83%	\$96		
Hill Chester Animal Hospital 4700 Roosevelt Rd, Hillside	708-449-6300	AB	73% (11)	82%	67%	73%	64%	50%	64%	82%	40%	80%	\$124		
Hilltop Animal Hospital <sup>6</sup> 10042 S Kedzie Ave, Evergreen Park	708-424-5572	AB	64% (11)	82%	63%	82%	91%	73%	91%	82%	70%	80%	\$78		✓
Hilltop Animal Hospital 135 E Lake Cook Rd, Palatine	847-359-7688	ABC DEF	75% (12)	83%	82%	92%	92%	58%	75%	82%	67%	75%	\$74		✓
Homewood Animal Hospital 2207 183rd St, Homewood	708-798-1016	AB	33% (12)	75%	40%	67%	50%	42%	58%	50%	18%	33%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
Howard Street Animal Hospital 715 Howard St, Evanston	847-475-1880	AB	93% (14)	77%	71%	62%	71%	71%	71%	93%	62%	79%	\$82	✓	✓
Illiana Veterinary Hospital 16259 Van Dam Rd, South Holland	708-331-4640	AB	100% (14)	77%	92%	71%	86%	86%	86%	93%	46%	93%	\$82	✓	✓
Knollwood Hospital for Pets 2237 W Schaumburg Rd, Schaumburg	847-891-8944	AB DEF	100% (10)	90%	89%	100%	100%	90%	80%	100%	70%	100%	\$125	✓	

Table 2

Veterinarians <sup>1</sup>		Types of animals cared for*	Percent of surveyed customers rating firm "superior" on our survey for...										CHECKBOOK's price index score <sup>2</sup>	CHECKBOOK's top rating (✓)	
			Listening to you and (number of ratings)	Arranging to see you quickly	Giving helpful advice by phone	Keeping down office waiting time	Maintaining pleasant office and staff	Giving prevention/self-help advice	Spending enough time with you	Apparent competence/thoroughness	Helping keep pet's medical costs down	Overall care and advice		For quality	For price
														For quality	For price
<b>All-Firm Averages</b>			78%	76%	71%	62%	79%	74%	74%	81%	44%	78%	\$100		
<b>Cook County (continued)</b>															
Lansing Animal Hospital 17916 Torrence Ave, Lansing	708-474-0021	A BF	64% (11)	27%	56%	36%	55%	55%	55%	73%	45%	64%	\$53		✓
Lincolnway Animal Hospital <sup>6</sup> 6363 Lincoln Hwy, Matteson	708-720-2400	ABC DEF	70% (23)	74%	59%	70%	83%	57%	61%	77%	37%	77%	\$104		
Lyons Animal Hospital 4113 Joliet Ave, Lyons	708-442-7387	AB	75% (12)	83%	73%	92%	83%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	\$90		
Mannheim Veterinary Hospital 2740 Mannheim Rd, Franklin Park	847-455-7387	AB	81% (27)	69%	73%	58%	77%	88%	81%	88%	77%	88%	\$66	✓	✓
Markham Animal Clinic 3451 W 159th St, Markham	708-339-4010	AB DF	88% (16)	81%	75%	75%	81%	81%	81%	81%	56%	81%	\$93	✓	
McCormick Animal Hospital 8260 McCormick Blvd, Skokie	847-676-2444	AB	81% (37)	73%	56%	57%	70%	74%	78%	78%	50%	77%	\$85		
Melrose Park Animal Hospital 1711 W North Ave, Melrose Park	708-345-7640	AB	90% (10)	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	100%	78%	80%	— <sup>3</sup>	✓	— <sup>4</sup>
Merrick Animal Hospital 9115 Ogden Ave, Brookfield	708-485-6500	AB DF	82% (28)	79%	74%	68%	82%	82%	86%	86%	64%	82%	\$82	✓	✓
Midwest Bird & Exotic Animal Hosp 1923 S Mannheim Rd, Westchester	708-344-8166	CD EF	85% (13)	62%	83%	31%	85%	69%	85%	92%	31%	85%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
Niles Animal Hosp & Bird Med Ctr 7278 N Milwaukee Ave, Niles	847-647-9325	AB CDF	79% (43)	68%	58%	44%	74%	88%	84%	91%	58%	81%	\$110		
Northbrook Animal Clinic 1743 Dundee Rd, Northbrook	847-291-2262	AB	83% (18)	89%	77%	78%	94%	78%	89%	89%	44%	83%	\$104	✓	
Oak Lawn Animal Hospital 9244 S Cicero Ave, Oak Lawn	708-424-0310	AB	91% (11)	91%	80%	91%	91%	80%	73%	91%	80%	91%	\$77	✓	✓
Oak Park Animal Hospital 242 Madison St, Oak Park	708-383-5542	ABC DEF	58% (12)	83%	45%	58%	75%	70%	67%	67%	17%	58%	\$102		
Palatine Animal Hospital 496 W Northwest Hwy, Palatine	847-359-1688	AB	82% (17)	50%	47%	53%	65%	65%	53%	59%	24%	59%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
Palos Animal Hospital 11917 S Harlem Ave, Palos Heights	708-448-6600	AB CDF	80% (20)	65%	67%	45%	90%	61%	65%	79%	21%	74%	\$110		
Park Ridge Animal Hospital 2311 W Touhy Ave, Park Ridge	847-823-4193	AB	86% (29)	71%	70%	41%	86%	79%	76%	79%	50%	79%	\$129		
Park Wise Animal Hospital 1800 W Irving Park Rd, Schaumburg	847-895-0770	AB	78% (18)	83%	63%	83%	72%	81%	78%	78%	41%	81%	\$106		
Petvets Animal Hospital 342 Harrison St, Oak Park	708-445-9988	A BD	94% (16)	94%	93%	75%	100%	88%	94%	100%	80%	100%	\$91	✓	
Preiser Animal Hospital 2975 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook	847-827-5200	AB	75% (24)	83%	75%	67%	79%	77%	74%	83%	74%	79%	\$71		✓
Rand Road Animal Hospital 1824 N Rand Rd, Palatine	847-359-7611	AB DF	80% (10)	60%	78%	50%	80%	78%	80%	90%	70%	80%	\$79		✓
Riser Animal Hospital 5335 Touhy Ave, Skokie	847-673-2520	AB DF	87% (30)	86%	77%	57%	80%	68%	73%	77%	37%	83%	\$96		

## FOOTNOTES ON PAGE 45.

\*TYPES OF ANIMALS CARED FOR: A=Dogs; B=Cats; C=Birds; D=Small rodents; E=Reptiles; F=Rabbits; G=Farm animals.



Table 2

Veterinarians <sup>1</sup>		Types of animals cared for*	Percent of surveyed customers rating firm "superior" on our survey for...										CHECKBOOK's price index score <sup>2</sup>	CHECKBOOK's top rating (✓)	
			Listening to you and (number of ratings)	Arranging to see you quickly	Giving helpful advice by phone	Keeping down office waiting time	Maintaining pleasant office and staff	Giving prevention/self-help advice	Spending enough time with you	Apparent competence/thoroughness	Helping keep pet's medical costs down	Overall care and advice		For quality	For price
														For quality	For price
<b>All-Firm Averages</b>			78%	76%	71%	62%	79%	74%	74%	81%	44%	78%	\$100		
<b>Cook County (continued)</b>															
River Forest Animal Hospital 7515 Lake St, River Forest	708-366-8370	AB	58% (19)	72%	47%	58%	72%	47%	58%	74%	32%	68%	\$105		
Roberts Road Animal Clinic 10504 S Roberts Rd, Palos Hills	708-974-2600	ABC DEF	60% (10)	70%	67%	50%	40%	78%	70%	60%	60%	70%	\$71		✓
Scottsdale Animal Clinic 8528 S Cicero Ave, Burbank	708-636-0303	AB	70% (10)	60%	88%	50%	80%	70%	60%	70%	0%	50%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
Skokie Animal Hospital 7550 N Lincoln Ave, Skokie	847-673-3100	AB	74% (19)	63%	65%	42%	63%	78%	74%	74%	74%	68%	\$56		✓
Sutton Road Animal Hospital 10 Southwicke Dr, Streamwood	847-742-8298	AB	92% (13)	85%	67%	69%	85%	85%	85%	92%	38%	92%	\$104	✓	
Terry Animal Hospital 1419 Lake Ave, Wilmette	847-256-1131	ABC DEF	77% (36)	89%	77%	72%	86%	69%	83%	86%	37%	83%	\$134		
Tri-City Animal Hospital 790 Summit St, Elgin	847-741-6770	AB	60% (10)	70%	40%	50%	70%	50%	60%	60%	20%	70%	\$94		
VCA Berwyn Animal Hospital 2845 Harlem Ave, Berwyn	708-749-4200	AB	86% (29)	72%	68%	48%	79%	80%	72%	79%	24%	76%	\$130		
VCA Burbank Animal Hospital 6161 W 79th St, Burbank	708-599-3535	AB CDF	60% (10)	70%	75%	60%	70%	70%	70%	70%	60%	70%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
VCA Franklin Park Animal Hosp 9846 Grand Ave, Franklin Park	847-455-4922	AB	65% (23)	61%	60%	41%	48%	48%	48%	57%	20%	50%	\$82		✓
VCA Worth Animal Hospital 7727 W 111th St, Palos Hills	708-974-3070	AB DF	75% (24)	75%	78%	58%	88%	83%	83%	87%	38%	86%	\$105		
Western Springs Vet Clinic 500 Hillgrove Ave #E, Western Springs	708-246-6462	AB	85% (20)	95%	76%	80%	85%	94%	75%	95%	53%	90%	\$95	✓	
Wise Road Animal Hospital 531 W Wise Rd #A, Schaumburg	847-895-5911	AB	88% (16)	88%	79%	88%	94%	88%	88%	94%	63%	87%	\$96	✓	
Wright Animal Hospital 265 S River Rd, Des Plaines	847-299-0135	ABC DEF	93% (14)	100%	92%	93%	93%	93%	86%	93%	77%	93%	\$105	✓	
<b>DuPage County</b>															
Abbeywood Cat Clinic 7 E 7th Ave, Naperville	630-369-6009	B	78% (18)	78%	53%	67%	83%	82%	72%	78%	24%	76%	\$106 <sup>5</sup>		
Addison Animal Hospital 951 W Lake St, Addison	630-543-9500	AB CDF	73% (11)	82%	73%	80%	91%	89%	90%	100%	36%	100%	\$87	✓	
Amber Leaf Animal Hospital 28W730 Roosevelt Rd, Winfield	630-231-7640	AB CDF	74% (38)	87%	73%	63%	79%	75%	74%	82%	63%	82%	\$76		✓
Animal Medical Center of Itasca 220 Catalpa Ave, Itasca	630-773-2040	AB	87% (15)	80%	85%	60%	100%	93%	80%	93%	53%	87%	\$83	✓	✓
Animal Medical Clinic 414 S Main St, Wheaton	630-668-3700	ABC DEFG	73% (15)	80%	91%	60%	87%	80%	73%	80%	60%	80%	\$137		
Arboretum View Animal Hospital 2551 Warrenville Rd, Downers Grove	630-963-0424	ABC DEF	79% (14)	86%	73%	54%	71%	69%	79%	93%	57%	86%	\$84		✓
Bloomington Animal Hospital 290 Glen Ellyn Rd, Bloomington	630-893-4330	ABC DEF	85% (20)	80%	83%	55%	80%	55%	80%	90%	47%	80%	\$109		

Table 2

Veterinarians <sup>1</sup>		Types of animals cared for*	Percent of surveyed customers rating firm "superior" on our survey for...										CHECKBOOK's price index score <sup>2</sup>	CHECKBOOK's top rating (✓)		
			Listening to you and (number of ratings)	Arranging to see you quickly	Giving helpful advice by phone	Keeping down office waiting time	Maintaining pleasant office and staff	Giving prevention/self-help advice	Spending enough time with you	Apparent competence/thoroughness	Helping keep pet's medical costs down	Overall care and advice		CHECKBOOK's	For quality	For price
															For quality	For price
<b>All-Firm Averages</b>			78%	76%	71%	62%	79%	74%	74%	81%	44%	78%	\$100			
<b>DuPage County (continued)</b>																
<b>Boulder Terrace Animal Hospital</b> 1586 W Ogden Ave, Naperville	630-420-9155	AB	69% (36)	63%	69%	47%	72%	70%	63%	75%	27%	67%	\$113			
<b>Brumley Veterinary Clinic</b> 5328 Main St #106, Lisle	630-852-3570	AB	82% (11)	64%	67%	82%	73%	80%	73%	73%	64%	73%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>	
<b>Care Animal Clinic</b> 531 W 87th St, Naperville	630-355-6164	AB	69% (16)	81%	64%	73%	81%	63%	73%	75%	60%	63%	\$81		✓	
<b>Carol Stream Animal Hospital<sup>6</sup></b> 140 Elk Trl, Carol Stream	630-462-7888	ABC DEF	72% (18)	61%	56%	44%	78%	72%	78%	72%	33%	72%	\$81		✓	
<b>Countryside Animal Clinic</b> 24W380 St Charles Rd, Carol Stream	630-668-1748	AB DF	82% (11)	91%	60%	91%	82%	80%	91%	91%	64%	91%	\$92	✓		
<b>County Line Animal Hospital</b> 2200 S Washington St, Naperville	630-983-5551	ABC DEF	78% (18)	72%	67%	44%	67%	61%	56%	72%	38%	67%	\$91			
<b>Danada Veterinary Hospital</b> 1 Rice Lake Sq, Wheaton	630-665-6161	ABC DEF	77% (36)	81%	84%	61%	71%	74%	75%	78%	41%	78%	\$90			
<b>De Vries Animal Hospital</b> 528 Spring Rd, Elmhurst	630-833-7387	AB	77% (13)	69%	67%	62%	69%	54%	69%	77%	25%	62%	\$144			
<b>Downers Grove Animal Hospital</b> 635 Ogden Ave, Downers Grove	630-968-2812	ABC DEF	86% (21)	76%	67%	57%	81%	67%	71%	81%	42%	76%	\$118			
<b>DuPage Animal Hospital</b> 377 E North Ave, Villa Park	630-834-8242	AB DEF	68% (25)	68%	73%	60%	84%	76%	64%	80%	46%	84%	\$99			
<b>DuPage River Animal Hospital</b> 315 S Main St, Naperville	630-355-6692	AB	93% (15)	80%	87%	67%	93%	93%	93%	93%	47%	93%	\$143	✓		
<b>Glen Ellyn Animal Hospital</b> 21 S Park Blvd, Glen Ellyn	630-469-7400	AB	59% (35)	71%	50%	69%	53%	55%	44%	52%	18%	61%	\$94			
<b>Green Trails Animal Clinic</b> 6430 College Rd, Lisle	630-369-9666	ABC DEF	80% (20)	90%	59%	85%	85%	70%	80%	89%	22%	85%	\$111			
<b>Hinsdale Animal Hospital</b> 218 W Ogden Ave, Hinsdale	630-323-1312	AB	89% (18)	83%	86%	78%	83%	78%	83%	89%	50%	83%	\$93	✓		
<b>Indian Prairie Animal Hospital</b> 621 S Rte 59, Aurora	630-820-6999	ABC DEF	81% (16)	100%	83%	73%	94%	81%	88%	88%	40%	93%	\$143	✓		
<b>Lake Street Animal Clinic</b> 25W571 Lake St, Roselle	630-894-6220	AB CDF	73% (11)	90%	33%	55%	73%	45%	55%	64%	18%	55%	\$127			
<b>Lisle Animal Clinic</b> 1603 Ogden Ave, Lisle	630-969-4224	AB	73% (11)	73%	70%	73%	91%	55%	55%	82%	40%	73%	\$108			
<b>Lombard Animal Clinic</b> 603 S Main St, Lombard	630-627-4788	AB DF	80% (11)	80%	75%	80%	91%	67%	80%	70%	67%	70%	\$103			
<b>Lombard Veterinary Hospital</b> 244 E St Charles Rd, Lombard	630-627-7090	ABC DEF	83% (41)	88%	77%	66%	78%	84%	78%	88%	56%	88%	\$103	✓		
<b>Naperville Animal Hospital</b> 1023 E Ogden Ave, Naperville	630-355-5300	AB	60% (42)	60%	63%	36%	67%	50%	46%	62%	25%	64%	\$84		✓	
<b>VCA Naper Ridge Animal Hosp</b> 987 Maplefield Rd, Naperville	630-717-9701	AB	67% (12)	92%	73%	58%	83%	75%	75%	67%	33%	67%	\$101			

FOOTNOTES ON PAGE 45.

\*TYPES OF ANIMALS CARED FOR: A=Dogs; B=Cats; C=Birds; D=Small rodents; E=Reptiles; F=Rabbits; G=Farm animals.

Table 2

Veterinarians <sup>1</sup>		Types of animals cared for*	Percent of surveyed customers rating firm "superior" on our survey for...										CHECKBOOK's top rating (✓)		
			Listening to you and (number of ratings)	Arranging to see you quickly	Giving helpful advice by phone	Keeping down office waiting time	Maintaining pleasant office and staff	Giving prevention/self-help advice	Spending enough time with you	Apparent competence/thoroughness	Helping keep pet's medical costs down	Overall care and advice	CHECKBOOK's price index score <sup>2</sup>	For quality	For price
<b>All-Firm Averages</b>			78%	76%	71%	62%	79%	74%	74%	81%	44%	78%	\$100		
<b>DuPage County (continued)</b>															
Village Animal Clinic 25W510 Geneva Rd, Carol Stream	630-690-9191	AB DF	89% (19)	84%	69%	79%	79%	78%	79%	79%	42%	84%	\$108	✓	
West Suburban Veterinary 209 E Ogden Ave, Westmont	630-968-4212	AB	83% (23)	91%	84%	70%	91%	76%	87%	91%	57%	91%	\$118	✓	
Wheaton Animal Hospital <sup>6</sup> 266 Roosevelt Rd, Glen Ellyn	630-665-1500	AB	94% (18)	94%	100%	94%	83%	88%	72%	83%	47%	83%	\$88	✓	
Wheeling Animal Hospital 532 S Elmhurst Rd, Wheeling	847-520-7387	AB DEF	71% (14)	86%	75%	69%	100%	85%	86%	86%	29%	71%	\$106		
Woodridge Animal Hospital 2009 75th St, Woodridge	630-985-3101	AB	80% (10)	90%	63%	100%	100%	78%	90%	100%	50%	100%	\$102	✓	
<b>Kane and McHenry Counties</b>															
Animal Care Clinic 2301 Stonegate Rd, Algonquin	847-854-8387	AB CDF	68% (19)	68%	47%	58%	74%	61%	58%	68%	16%	68%	\$79		✓
Animal Doctor 600 Industrial Dr #L, Cary	847-516-8190	ABC DEF	82% (17)	88%	69%	47%	76%	65%	71%	76%	33%	65%	\$114		
Animal House Veterinary Hosp 2079 IL Route 38, St Charles	630-443-1472	A BC	68% (22)	77%	78%	67%	71%	75%	73%	73%	45%	73%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
Animal Medical Center 41 S Virginia St, Crystal Lake	815-455-0770	AB DF	84% (19)	53%	74%	47%	79%	84%	79%	95%	47%	94%	\$110	✓	
Dundee Animal Hospital 199 Penny Ave, Dundee	847-428-6114	ABC DEF	86% (28)	89%	77%	78%	79%	75%	86%	82%	29%	86%	\$127	✓	
Dundee Animal Hosp of Algonquin 2565 W Algonquin Rd, Algonquin	847-658-7787	AB	83% (12)	67%	67%	75%	83%	75%	75%	75%	25%	83%	\$137		
Dundee Animal Hospital of Elgin 11N250 Gale St, Elgin	847-888-3933	ABC DEF	80% (25)	80%	67%	76%	88%	71%	72%	88%	38%	83%	\$125		
Fox Valley Animal Hospital 6115 Northwest Hwy, Crystal Lake	815-459-0317	AB	84% (19)	89%	69%	74%	84%	65%	89%	89%	58%	89%	\$107	✓	
Fox Valley Vet Clinic 405 Oak St, North Aurora	630-896-6664	AB	77% (13)	69%	77%	69%	92%	92%	85%	85%	50%	77%	\$93		
Gateway Veterinary Clinic 3225 W Main St, St Charles	630-377-6660	AB	75% (20)	75%	71%	75%	90%	75%	80%	80%	42%	75%	\$109		
Island Lake Animal Hospital 414 State Rte 176, Island Lake	847-526-5363	AB	77% (13)	77%	83%	62%	77%	77%	85%	85%	85%	77%	\$45	✓	✓
Lakeland Animal Hospital 4806 W Elm St, McHenry	815-385-6925	AB	62% (13)	62%	64%	69%	62%	62%	46%	62%	42%	69%	\$87		
St Charles Veterinary Clinic 530 Dunham Rd, St Charles	630-584-7404	ABC DEF	64% (25)	64%	64%	60%	68%	71%	76%	76%	44%	71%	\$113		
VCA Aurora Animal Hospital 215 W Galena Blvd, Aurora	630-896-8541	AB	74% (19)	74%	84%	68%	68%	72%	63%	84%	47%	84%	\$98		
Woodstock Veterinary Clinic 691 Lake Ave, Woodstock	815-338-0132	AB	76% (25)	60%	78%	38%	88%	88%	75%	92%	48%	80%	\$109		
Animal Care Center 1347 N Division St, Plainfield	815-436-8387	AB DF	54% (13)	54%	11%	23%	54%	38%	46%	38%	15%	31%	\$75		✓

Table 2

Veterinarians <sup>1</sup>		Types of animals cared for*	Percent of surveyed customers rating firm "superior" on our survey for...										CHECKBOOK's price index score <sup>2</sup>	CHECKBOOK's top rating (✓)	
			Listening to you and (number of ratings)	Arranging to see you quickly	Giving helpful advice by phone	Keeping down office waiting time	Maintaining pleasant office and staff	Giving prevention/self-help advice	Spending enough time with you	Apparent competence/thoroughness	Helping keep pet's medical costs down	Overall care and advice		For quality	For price
														For quality	For price
<b>All-Firm Averages</b>			78%	76%	71%	62%	79%	74%	74%	81%	44%	78%	\$100		
<b>Kane and McHenry Counties (continued)</b>															
Animal Care Clinic 13061 W 143rd St, Lockport	708-301-1661	AB DF	93% (15)	100%	92%	100%	93%	93%	93%	93%	45%	93%	\$85	✓	
Countryside Veterinary Clinic 601 Center Pkwy, Yorkville	630-553-7436	AB	93% (28)	75%	78%	54%	68%	85%	81%	86%	56%	89%	\$88	✓	
Forest South Animal Hospital 24341 Western Ave, University Park	708-672-6166	ABC DEF	80% (25)	80%	90%	72%	84%	91%	76%	80%	48%	79%	\$78	✓	✓
Mokena Animal Clinic 9455 W 191st St, Mokena	708-479-2811	AB DF	80% (25)	84%	82%	84%	88%	88%	76%	92%	46%	84%	\$80	✓	✓
River Heights Veterinary 5580 US Hwy 34, Oswego	630-554-3400	AB	78% (28)	57%	54%	50%	82%	74%	67%	75%	29%	75%	\$90		
VCA Bolingbrook Animal Hosp 570 Concord Ln, Bolingbrook	630-759-5700	AB	69% (13)	85%	67%	62%	69%	54%	54%	62%	17%	62%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
Wheatland Animal Hospital 24041 103rd St, Naperville	630-904-2020	AB	82% (11)	82%	78%	82%	82%	90%	82%	82%	30%	82%	— <sup>3</sup>	✓	— <sup>4</sup>
<b>Lake County</b>															
Acacia Animal Hospital 5101 Washington St #30, Gurnee	847-249-8883	AB	83% (12)	83%	67%	67%	67%	73%	92%	92%	58%	92%	\$91	✓	
All Creatures Animal Hospital 1210 E Main St, Lake Zurich	847-726-0050	AB CDF	91% (23)	65%	63%	52%	87%	77%	68%	78%	35%	78%	\$87		
Alpine Animal Hospital <sup>6</sup> 880 S Rand Rd, Lake Zurich	847-540-0010	AB	46% (13)	69%	60%	54%	46%	33%	38%	46%	0%	54%	\$97		
Animal Health Clinic 3479 Washington St, Gurnee	847-623-5989	AB DF	73% (11)	60%	64%	36%	55%	90%	73%	73%	55%	73%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
Animal Hospital of Gurnee 38028 N Dilley Rd, Wadsworth	847-360-1630	AB	75% (12)	73%	67%	55%	75%	82%	91%	83%	50%	75%	\$67		✓
Animal Hospital W Lake Forest 1089 Conway Rd, Lake Forest	847-234-2110	AB	92% (12)	92%	78%	83%	75%	91%	83%	92%	50%	92%	\$125	✓	
Animas Veterinary Clinic 320 Neville Dr, Grayslake	847-223-5593	AB	80% (15)	87%	62%	60%	87%	92%	73%	80%	40%	67%	\$99		
Antioch Animal Hospital 40949 N State Rte 83, Antioch	847-395-0636	ABC DEF	65% (26)	69%	50%	50%	69%	62%	58%	69%	23%	69%	\$71		✓
Beach Park Animal Hospital <sup>6</sup> 37063 N Sheridan Rd, Beach Park	847-244-1230	ABC DEF	67% (15)	93%	73%	50%	93%	80%	79%	71%	43%	79%	\$98		
Best Friends Animal Hospital 1203 N State Rte 83, Grayslake	847-548-2626	ABC DEF	100% (16)	63%	86%	75%	100%	93%	94%	100%	44%	94%	\$100	✓	
Cairo Animal Hospital 2276 Skokie Valley Rd, Highland Park	847-432-0157	AB	86% (14)	79%	85%	57%	86%	86%	64%	79%	36%	100%	\$166	✓	
Deerfield Animal Hospital 150 N Waukegan Rd, Deerfield	847-945-4011	AB	60% (11)	73%	56%	50%	64%	20%	40%	40%	27%	40%	\$136		
Fox Lake Animal Hospital 161 S US Hwy 12, Fox Lake	847-587-0505	AB DF	76% (25)	39%	70%	24%	52%	72%	76%	88%	80%	80%	\$60		✓
Grayslake Animal Hospital 1490 E Belvidere Rd, Grayslake	847-223-8612	ABC DEF	69% (42)	71%	55%	48%	74%	64%	79%	76%	40%	73%	\$83		✓

Table 2

Veterinarians <sup>1</sup>		Types of animals cared for*	Percent of surveyed customers rating firm "superior" on our survey for...										CHECKBOOK's price index score <sup>2</sup>	CHECKBOOK's top rating (✓)	
			Listening to you and (number of ratings)	Arranging to see you quickly	Giving helpful advice by phone	Keeping down office waiting time	Maintaining pleasant office and staff	Giving prevention/self-help advice	Spending enough time with you	Apparent competence/thoroughness	Helping keep pet's medical costs down	Overall care and advice		For quality	For price
<b>All-Firm Averages</b>			78%	76%	71%	62%	79%	74%	74%	81%	44%	78%	\$100		
<b>Lake County (continued)</b>															
Grove Animal Hospital 600 McHenry Rd, Buffalo Grove	847-541-4005	AB	79% (29)	72%	74%	52%	90%	69%	62%	83%	41%	79%	\$116		
Harbor Animal Hospital 1915 9th St, Winthrop Harbor	847-746-1915	AB	67% (12)	67%	70%	42%	75%	70%	58%	58%	25%	50%	\$93		
Hawthorn Animal Hospital 203 US Hwy 45, Vernon Hills	847-362-0780	AB DF	100% (12)	83%	100%	91%	92%	100%	92%	92%	50%	100%	\$77	✓	✓
Lakes Animal Clinic 222 W Rte 173, Antioch	847-395-0100	AB	92% (12)	67%	75%	25%	75%	67%	58%	75%	42%	82%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>
Libertyville Animal Hospital 134 S Milwaukee Ave, Libertyville	847-362-3103	AB	61% (18)	83%	67%	72%	50%	61%	56%	61%	47%	61%	\$78		✓
Lincolnshire Animal Hospital <sup>6</sup> 420 Half Day Rd, Lincolnshire	847-634-9250	AB	81% (26)	76%	80%	65%	85%	85%	81%	88%	52%	84%	\$133	✓	
Lindenhurst Animal Hospital 2595 E Grand Ave, Lake Villa	847-356-1516	AB	50% (10)	60%	60%	20%	80%	60%	40%	70%	22%	40%	\$133		
Mundelein Animal Hospital 1133 W Maple Ave, Mundelein	847-566-5750	AB	69% (35)	77%	57%	69%	83%	71%	71%	86%	41%	77%	\$87		
Northern Illinois Cat Clinic 295 Peterson Rd, Libertyville	847-680-1770	B	83% (12)	67%	80%	42%	92%	73%	83%	100%	27%	83%	\$89 <sup>5</sup>		
River Trails Animal Hospital 238 N Saunders Rd, Deerfield	847-945-9591	AB	64% (11)	64%	73%	64%	73%	50%	73%	73%	11%	64%	\$118		
Skycrest Animal Clinic <sup>6</sup> Rte 83 & Hilltop Rd, Lake Zurich	847-634-3538	AB	95% (22)	38%	78%	14%	77%	86%	77%	91%	50%	77%	\$94		
VCA Noyes Animal Hospital 22055 N Kelsey Rd, Barrington	847-381-1920	AB	80% (10)	70%	78%	70%	90%	80%	70%	80%	20%	80%	\$135		
Vernon Hills Animal Hospital 1260 S Butterfield Rd, Mundelein	847-367-4070	AB DEF	86% (29)	81%	73%	62%	86%	86%	79%	89%	56%	86%	\$83	✓	✓
Veterinary Specialty Center 1515 Busch Pkwy, Buffalo Grove	847-459-7535	ABC DEF	85% (13)	77%	75%	46%	77%	75%	85%	85%	46%	83%	— <sup>3</sup>		— <sup>4</sup>

\*TYPES OF ANIMALS CARED FOR: A=Dogs; B=Cats; C=Birds; D=Small rodents; E=Reptiles; F=Rabbits; G=Farm animals.

#### FOOTNOTES:

<sup>1</sup> See text and page 120 for description of research methods, dates, and limitations. We've included all firms that received 10 or more ratings on our customer survey. If a firm is not listed here, it simply means that we did not have 10 ratings for it; that fact has no negative or positive implications.

<sup>2</sup> For each firm, this index is intended to suggest the price a customer might expect to pay for procedures that would cost \$100 at the "average" veterinary hospital. The price index is based on prices quoted to CHECKBOOK telephone shoppers who shopped for six procedures; except where otherwise noted, scores are based on at least three procedures.

<sup>3</sup> Insufficient data.

<sup>4</sup> Insufficient data to determine whether checkmark is warranted.

<sup>5</sup> Price index score is based on two price quotes.

<sup>6</sup> Firm changed ownership during customer survey period; management policies may have changed.

(Continued from page 36)

- Unusually pale, red, or purple gums
- Dry
- Excessive salivating
- Foul odor not caused by food
- Showing discharge
- Swollen or inflamed
- Teeth are loose, pitted, broken, or tartar-covered
- Animal is pawing at or rubbing the mouth

### Breathing/Respiration

#### Good signs

- Respiration sounds clear
- Respiration rate is normal

#### Warning signs

- Breathing is irregular, rapid, shallow, or labored
- Animal is sneezing, coughing, or wheezing excessively
- Breathing is through open mouth

### Skin/Hair

#### Good signs

- Skin is elastic (springs back immediately after being raised between the shoulder blades)
- Coat is bright and glossy
- Skin is clean and free of oil
- Skin is free of swelling, lumps, mats, or lesions

#### Warning signs

- Coat is dull, oily, or dirty
- Coat has areas of hair loss or thinning
- Hair is matted
- Skin is dry, flaky, scabby, or shows swelling, lumps, or lesions
- Skin is red or irritated
- Fleas, ticks, lice, or other parasites

### Legs/Feet

#### Good signs

- Legs support weight evenly (no limping)
- Pads are clean and smooth
- Nails are healthy-looking

#### Warning signs

- Animal favors one leg
- Animal has limited motion, or is weak or uncoordinated

## Euthanasia and Disposition

At some point, most of us will have to make a decision as to whether or not to authorize euthanasia. While this decision is difficult, pet health care practitioners widely agree that this is frequently the right choice for a terminally ill or dying pet.

Local humane societies and animal control agencies usually offer euthanasia services and either perform cremations themselves, or can refer you to a local service or pet cemetery that does. Most veterinarians perform euthanasia procedures and will arrange for disposition.

Options for disposition include burial—either in a pet cemetery or somewhere on the owner's property—and cremation. If you choose to have your pet buried in a cemetery,

you will have to pay for a lot and a container for the pet's remains. If you decide on a home burial, it's a good idea to check with local public health officials for requirements. The Humane Society recommends that you put the pet in a heavy-duty plastic bag, encase it in a secure receptacle such as a wood or metal box, and bury it at least three feet deep.

Cremation costs usually depend on the weight of the pet and whether it is a private or communal cremation. Costs can vary widely—for a private cremation, we found that prices ranged from about \$50 to \$175. Usually you can decide whether you want the crematory service to dispose of the remains or return the remains to you.

- Joints feel tender
- Pads are cracked or hard
- Pads have matted hair between them
- Nails are long, short, or ingrown
- Legs show swelling, lumps, or lesions

### Anal/Genital

#### Good signs

- Area is clean and free of discharge
- Stool is normal in appearance, color, and consistency

#### Warning signs

- Increased or decreased urination or droppings
- Stool is watery or bloody
- Area around anus shows swelling or lumps
- Swollen testicles (one larger than the other)
- Foul odor
- Animal is dragging rear end on the ground
- Animal is excessively licking area

### General Appearance

#### Good signs

- Animal is bright, alert, and responsive
- Animal is balanced and coordinated
- Body temperature is normal
- Animal is interested in/oriented to surroundings

#### Warning signs

- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Wounds or abscesses
- Any swelling, lumps, or bumps
- Animal is losing or gaining weight
- Mammary glands are swollen or discharging fluid
- Coughing, sneezing, or wheezing
- Animal appears uncoordinated or disoriented
- Animal tilts head
- Animal repeatedly walks in circles
- Abdomen is bloated
- Abnormal body temperature
- Hyperactive or lethargic activity
- Excessive water drinking or urination

# How We Gather (and How to Interpret) Our Data

Our tables rating individual firms will be more valuable to you if you know how the data were gathered and how they should be interpreted.

## Opinion Surveys

Customer survey scores reported on our tables are from our surveys of consumers, conducted via mail and telephone. We primarily surveyed *Consumer Reports* subscribers, but we also surveyed a sampling of other consumers.

Since many firms were rated by rather small numbers of raters, small differences between two firms in the percent of raters who gave a particular rating (say, “superior”) should be ignored. The table below gives a rough guide to minimum differences you should look for in deciding on one firm over another.

When using these survey data, remember that the questions are to some degree subjective and that the differences among firms might be explained by differences in the personalities, backgrounds, and critical standards of the raters or by biases these raters might have.

## Complaints

Our ratings tables on auto repair shops and tree care services show the number of complaints filed against individual firms with the Better Business Bureau Serving Chicago and Northern Illinois for a three-year period.

Our ratings table on auto repair shops includes the number of complaints filed against individual firms with the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General for a two-year period; our ratings table on tree care services includes the number of complaints on file with the Consumer Protection Division for a three-year period.

On our ratings tables, we calculate complaint rates, where we are able, by dividing the number of complaints by the best measure we can devise of each firm’s business volume and exposure to complaints.

There are limitations to the complaint data. One problem is that some complaints may be unjustified, simply filed by cranks. Another problem is that, in some cases, we don’t have a measure of business volume and therefore cannot control for differences in firms’ exposure to complaints.

We always recommend that you look for substantial differences in complaint counts. We also advise giving little weight to complaint counts if the total count against a firm is less than three or four.

## Surveys of Firms

To gather much of the other information on our tables, we surveyed the firms. In general, our researchers surveyed firms by phone (sometimes without revealing their affiliation with *CHECKBOOK*), but in some cases data were collected by mail or from firms’ websites, or phone responses were confirmed by mail follow-up.

## Price Index Scores

To compute our price index scores, we calculated an average price for each job or item for all the firms that quoted on that job or item. Next we compared each firm’s price to the average. One firm might come in at 120 percent of the multifirm average for a particular job, and another firm might come in at 90 percent. We took each firm’s percentage score on each job or item, standardized it, and assigned a weight to each job or item, based on our judgment. We then averaged the standardized, weighted percentage scores to find how the firm compared to other firms overall. Finally, we multiplied this overall percentage score by a flat dollar amount, say \$100.

The price index score, then, is intended to indicate the relative prices we found for the firms, adjusted to the base of this flat dollar amount. These index scores are imperfect for various reasons: for instance, the jobs or items checked may not be representative; the weighting of various jobs or items in the index may not accurately reflect typical expenditure patterns; and the number of jobs or items is small.

## Timeliness of the Data

All of the data must be interpreted in view of timeliness. Our customer survey data apply to the period from March 1998 to November 2002 for auto repair shops, hospitals, tree care services, and veterinarians and from March 2001 to November 2002 for cell phone services. Our survey of

physicians was conducted from April to September 2001.

For the BBB, the complaint data are for a three-year period dating back from November 18, 2002.

For the complaint data from the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General for auto repair shops, the data are for a two-year period dating back from October 31, 2002; for tree care services, the data are for a three-year period dating back from June 30, 2002.

The data from our survey of firms were collected from August to September 2002 for veterinarians; from August to November 2002 for auto repair shops; and from August to December 2002 for tree care services.

Our price data were collected from May to August 2002 for auto repair shops and from May to September 2002 for veterinarians. Cell phone service costs were in effect on November 15, 2002.

For the most part, our tables include firms for which we collected a threshold number of ratings on our customer survey during the customer survey period mentioned above, but we do not report data for periods prior to firms’ changes of name and ownership. As a result, some large firms are not listed at all. If only name or ownership changed, we do report the data. Changes subsequent to the dates listed above may not be taken into account.

## Top Ratings

We give checkmarks to firms that score highest on a scoring system that we devise for each service field. Our scoring systems weight the various data in our tables based on our subjective judgment of their importance. Since the scores are based entirely on information presented, you can apply your own judgments, and decide whether you prefer firms we have not given checkmarks. Where we do not have important data on a firm, we cannot give our checkmark.

<b>A Rough Guide for Deciding Whether the Difference Between Two Percentages is Important</b>	<b>If one firm had this number of ratings:</b>	<b>And a second firm had this number of ratings:</b>	<b>Do not give much importance to the difference between the frequency with which the two firms experience a particular rating or result unless the difference is at least this many percentage points:</b>
<b>Assuming the average of the two firms’ percentages is 50 percent</b>	10	10	45
	30	30	26
	60	60	18
	120	120	13
<b>Assuming the average of the two firms’ percentages is 80 percent</b>	10	10	36
	30	30	21
	60	60	15
	120	120	10