



Learn 5 Ways to Save Money on Pet Expenses

Description

We adore our four-legged companions, but pet bills can put a strain on our finances at times.



Black labrador puppy lying on a pile of money and chewing on a banknote – portrait

According to the National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy, one of the top three reasons dogs are surrendered to rescue networks is an inability to afford the cost of pet maintenance. However, like with other things, a little forethought and planning may help keep your bills low and manageable. Here's how it works:

1. Take the initiative.

When it comes to preventive drugs and immunizations, don't skimp. Those few extra dollars you spend on heartworm or flea and tick medicine a few times a year may appear to be an annoyance, but in this situation, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. If your dog contracts heartworm (which is now present in all 50 states), the treatment, paired with hospitalization, will most likely result in a four-figure veterinarian expenditure. And anyone who has had their home "bombed" due to a flea infestation will tell you how much preventive treatment is worth the money. Furthermore, infections like parvovirus and distemper, which may be prevented with vaccinations, are not only expensive to treat but can potentially kill your pet.

2. Purchase only from a recognized breeder.

Yes, those "free pups" listed on Craigslist or for sale at the local pet store are adorable, but what you don't know about their background could cost you a lot more in the long run. Reputable breeders charge more than the ordinary pet store, but you are paying for expertise in breeding healthy dogs. This includes everything from genetic testing to early socialization of the puppies, which will save you money at the doctor and behaviorist later on. You get what you pay for when it comes to pets, just like anything else.

3. Clean your dog's teeth.

You can laugh all you want about how ridiculous this appears, but here's the reality: If your dog is beyond the age of three and you haven't been brushing his teeth, he most likely has periodontal disease. That concludes the story. And the therapy for this, which includes anesthetic and blood work, is quite expensive. After you've paid for tooth extractions and surgery, the sight of a dog toothbrush won't seem so amusing.

4. Comb your dog's hair

Groomers charge an additional fee to remove matting and knots. Reduce your bill by brushing or combing your pet's fur at least once a week (some breeds require daily brushing). Here's a hint: Matting is more common around the cheekbones and ears than in other areas.

5. Keep a credit card or savings account just for pet care.

Nobody likes to be in debt, but having a credit card or savings account set up for pet emergencies can be a lifeline, especially for those 2 a.m. treks to the emergency vet after the bank has closed. Also, knowing you have a way to pay the bill will allow you to concentrate on your pet.

Category

1. Finance

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