

Children's Resources: How to Become a Veterinarian

Getting Started

Do you love animals? Are you interested in working with animals? Thinking about becoming a veterinarian?



If you answered yes to any of these questions, then this resource is for you! Veterinarians have the important job of taking care of sick and injured animals. Many veterinarians work with people and their pets, but there are also those who help take care of livestock, who take care of wildlife, or who specialize in treating certain diseases and conditions.

Many veterinarians today knew from a young age that they wanted to become a veterinarian when they grew up. However, when you're young, it can be difficult to know where to start!

As a child or teenager, the most important thing to do is gain experience interacting with animals and learning as much as you can both in school and outside of it. Check out these next few pages to learn what you can do specifically to help you on your journey to becoming a veterinarian!

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Gather Experience Caring for Animals

It is important to learn how to interact responsibly with animals. Below are some ways to gain experience caring for animals properly.

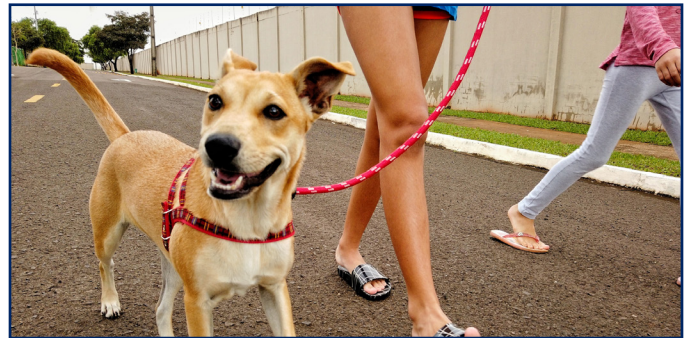


Help Take Care of Your Pet

If you have a family pet, offer to help take care of them! You can measure out their food, clean their dishes or toys, groom them, and (of course) play with them. Being a part of your pet's care team will give you lots of experience on how to responsibly care for an animal.

Offer to Pet Sit

If your immediate family does not have a pet, offer to help take care of a pet that belongs to a relative or family friend.



Help Foster Animals

To foster means to care for animals that are too young or sick to be adopted right away. If your family fosters animals, offer to help participate in their care. Not only will this help teach you the basics in animal health, it will show the animal shelter staff that you are a responsible individual.

Volunteer at an Animal Shelter

Animal shelters take in abandoned or lost animals and care for them until they can be adopted. Shelters are always in need of volunteers to help feed the animals, clean the living spaces, and socialize with the pets.



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Learn More About the Profession



Watch programs about animals and veterinary medicine

Watching television programs about animals or veterinarians is a great way to learn about animal health and gain insight into the world of veterinary medicine. Channels such as Animal Planet, National Geographic, Discovery, and Disney+ have programs starring veterinarians. Please note – sometimes the content can be graphic because the animals are sick or injured.



Attend a vet, farm, or zoo camp

Camp programs are wonderful opportunities to be around animals and the professionals who care for them. You will also be able to meet like-minded peers who love animals just as much as you do!



Shadow a veterinarian

A great way to learn about what veterinarians do during the workday is to job shadow. This means you will be allowed to observe the veterinarian while they are working in the clinic. This may involve sitting in on patient visits, observing medical procedures, and meeting the other veterinary professionals who take care of the animals and keep the clinic up and running.

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Focus on Your Studies

Once you are in high school or college, it's time to start preparing for veterinary school. Here are some tips for students interested in becoming a veterinarian.



Maintain Your Grades

Veterinary schools want to see that you are doing well in school. Make sure to keep high grades, and if you are ever struggling academically, reach out to your teachers for help.



Take Math & Science Courses

Math and science are extremely important subjects in veterinary medicine. If you are in high school, make sure to pay close attention in biology and chemistry class. Biology is the study of living organisms whereas chemistry is the study of substances and how they interact. Both are vital in veterinary medicine.



Join a Pre-Vet Club

While most high schools will not offer a pre-vet club, many colleges will. If you are an undergraduate student, join your school's pre-vet club to help you fulfill your academic requirements, get advice from experienced advisors, and meet your peers.



Check Your School's Requirements

If you are a college student and want to apply to veterinary school, check the school's requirements for admission. This will help guide you on which classes you need to take and the standardized test scores you need to achieve.



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Career Opportunities with Animals

There are many different job opportunities for those interested in working with animals. There are even different careers in veterinary medicine! Here are a few jobs that involve working with animals:



Veterinarian

Veterinarians are professionals who diagnose and treat sick or injured animals.



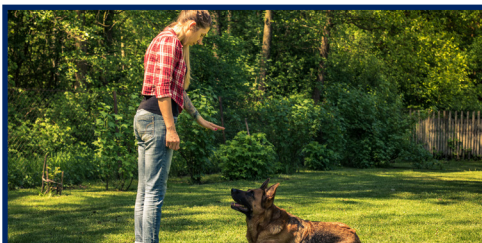
Veterinary Technician

Veterinary technicians assist veterinarians in exams and other medical procedures, record vital signs, run lab tests, and provide general nursing care to animal patients.



Veterinary Assistant

Veterinary assistants are responsible for taking care of general tasks in the clinic, such as feeding, cleaning, exercising, and comforting the animal patients.



Animal Trainer

Trainers work with animals and their owners to teach them how to behave and perform certain tasks.



Zookeeper

Zookeepers take care of wild animals. Zookeepers need to make sure their animals are getting the proper nutrition and environment to keep them happy and healthy.



Wildlife Rehabilitator

Wildlife rehabilitators care for sick or injured wildlife. They work closely with veterinarians to come up with treatment plans until the animals can be released back into the wild.

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Career Opportunities as a Veterinarian

While many veterinarians work in a clinic or hospital, there are a variety of industries where a veterinarian's expertise is needed. Check out these different job opportunities for veterinarians below:

Education

- Teach at college or university
- Educate the public through written articles or media appearances

Consultation

- Work with private corporations on their products (food, medications, toys, and animal care equipment)

Research

- Investigate how to treat different diseases/conditions
- Research and develop new medications/vaccines

Government & Public Health

- Investigate and control infectious diseases
- Help develop safety regulations for food and medicine

Diagnostics

- Develop new equipment and diagnostic tests that can determine a disease/condition
- Test and analyze body samples



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Veterinary Specialties

Some veterinarians choose to become specialists. These specialists are experts in their field and focus on a particular type of animal or a particular area of medicine. Here are a few examples below:

Animal Specialties

Companion
Mammals



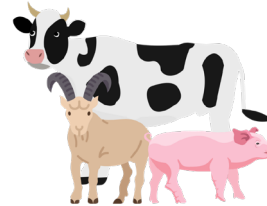
Birds



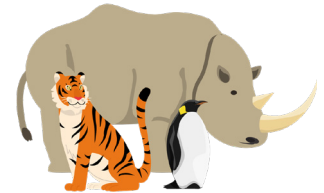
Reptiles &
Amphibians



Livestock

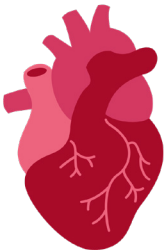


Zoo
Medicine



Areas of Medicine

Cardiology



Emergency
Medicine



Neurology



Sports Medicine
& Rehabilitation



Surgery



Interested in learning more about a particular specialty? Check out our Children's Educational Resource series on our website at

<https://www.amcny.org/childrens-education/>

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Schwarzman
Animal Medical Center
Usdan Institute for
Animal Health Education

Additional Resources for Aspiring Veterinarians

Check out these additional resources and opportunities below to help guide you on your journey to becoming a veterinarian!

Elementary - High School

The Usdan Institute for Animal Health Education

Free resources on veterinary medicine and animal science

<https://www.amcnyc.org/childrens-education/>

Vet Set Go!

Books, articles, and resources on how to become a veterinarian

<https://www.vetsetgo.com/>

Wildlife Conservation Society

Zoo Camp programs

<https://bronxzoo.com/learn/camps/wildlife-camp-online>

Tufts University

Adventures in Veterinary Medicine

<https://vet.tufts.edu/adventures-veterinary-medicine-avm>

Purdue University

Boiler Vet Camp

<https://vet.purdue.edu/boilervetcamp/>

Auburn University

Junior Vet Camp

<http://www.auburn.edu/outreach/opce/auburnyouthprograms/juniorvet.htm>

Cornell University

Precollege Studies

<https://sce.cornell.edu/precollege>

Pre-Vet & College

Cornell University

Pre-Vet Newsletter

<https://secure.vet.cornell.edu/admissions/application/inquiry.asp>

AAVMC

Pre-Vet Student Resources

<https://www.aavmc.org/students-applicants-and-advisors/pre-vet-student-resources>

AAVMC

Pre-Vet Brochure & Checklist

https://www.aavmc.org/assets/site_18/images/career%20brochure%20-%20web.pdf

AVMA

Accredited Colleges of Veterinary Medicine

<https://www.avma.org/education/accredited-veterinary-colleges>

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Advice for Caregivers

If you are a parent or caregiver that has a child interested in becoming a veterinarian, here are ways you can support them in achieving their dream:

- **Allow your child to help care for animals** by letting them interact with the pets in your home or a relative's home. Give your child responsibilities, such as feeding your pet, cleaning their living area, providing exercise, and socializing. The amount of supervision needed will depend on your child's age.
- **Visit zoos and other spaces with animals** such as a dog park (if you frequent dog parks often), national park, or farm to allow your child to observe and learn about animals from a safe distance.
- **Search for opportunities** such as volunteer work at animal shelters, camp programs in your area, or local veterinary clinics that may be willing to allow your child to tour the clinic or shadow their staff.
- **Look into scholarships** if finances are an issue preventing your child from gaining experience working with animals. The organization *Vet, Set, Go!*, for example, offers scholarships to aspiring veterinarians each year to attend Auburn College of Veterinary Medicine's Jr. Vet Camp.