

# Blue Ravine News

YOUR PET'S HEALTH IS OUR CONCERN

Volume 19 Issue 2

May 2021

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## Who's Who in the Veterinary Office

**V**eterinary hospitals work a lot like human hospitals. Veterinarians (DVMs) are the doctors, registered veterinary technicians are similar to registered nurses, and everyone else is considered a DVM assistant. Most people know who the DVMs are in a pet hospital but sometimes consumers, even animal health professionals, may blur the lines between licensed and unlicensed staff. The roles they play in a pet's care are different.



### LICENSED STAFF

**DVMs:** Only DVMs are qualified to diagnose medical problems, prescribe therapies, and perform surgeries. They have completed veterinary school, passed both a national and state licensing examination, and passed a background check. Every veterinary premises must be registered with the Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) and have a managing licensee who is responsible for ensuring the facility and veterinary professionals providing services at the facility comply with all requirements under the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act and supporting regulations.

**Registered Veterinary Technicians (RVTs):** RVTs are skilled animal nursing professionals who have passed a national examination\* and passed a background check. An RVT performs veterinary medical tasks under the direct or indirect supervision of a DVM.

Under *direct* supervision, an RVT may:

1. Induce anesthesia
2. Perform dental extractions
3. Suture cutaneous and subcutaneous tissues, gingiva, and oral mucous membranes.
4. Create a relief hole in the skin to facilitate placement of an intravascular catheter.
5. Perform drug compounding from bulk substances.

Under *indirect* supervision, an RVT may:

- Operate radiographic equipment.
- Perform specific emergency lifesaving procedures.
- Administer medications, including controlled substances.
- Apply or change bandages.
- Draw blood and run lab tests.
- Perform drug compounding from non-bulk substances.

Like DVMs, RVTs must post their registration in the veterinary hospital in public view and carry the pocket version of their registration.

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## Who's Who in the Veterinary Office (cont'd.)

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### Veterinary Assistant Controlled Substances Permit

**(VACSP):** VACSP holders pass a background check and are authorized by VMB to handle and administer controlled substances at veterinary premises as directed by the licensed DVM. While they can administer the controlled substances, only a DVM can prescribe medications.

### Unlicensed Staff—Veterinary Assistants (VAs)

All unlicensed staff in a veterinary facility are considered veterinary assistants and may assist with supporting tasks under the direct or indirect supervision of a DVM or under the direct supervision of an RVT, but are not allowed to perform tasks restricted to DVMs, RVTs, or VACSP holders. Unlicensed staff may not treat animals outside a hospital setting. They may operate radiographic equipment but

only after completing specific training and only under direct supervision.

**Veterinary Facilities:** VMB is responsible for registering and inspecting veterinary premises where veterinary medicine is being practiced to insure that facilities are complying with the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act and supporting regulations.

### THE VETERINARY MEDICAL BOARD

VMB is responsible for licensing DVMs, RVTs, and VACSPs, and veterinary premises, and for enforcing the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act and its supporting regulations. For more about the laws, regulations, policies and legal opinions relating to veterinary care, visit [www.vmb.ca.gov/laws\\_regs](http://www.vmb.ca.gov/laws_regs).

\* Up until April 2019, RVTs were also required to pass a state examination. However, after determining all necessary clinical skills were covered in the national examination, VMB eliminated the state examination.

## The Benefits of Owning a Pet

**S**nuggling next to kitties while their furry chests softly rumble or providing a lap to a dog that wants to curl up is a proven antidote to the day's stress. Having a pet brings a circle of love into our lives -- they give affection, we give it back, and we are all the better for it.

Some scientists agree.

Psychologists and others who have long studied the human-animal connection say studies show that pet owners may have 10 health benefits: Higher survival rates, fewer heart attacks, less loneliness, better blood pressure, better psychological well-being, lower rates of depression and stress levels, fewer doctor visits, increased self-esteem, better sleep and more physical activity, are just some of the recorded benefits.

Despite the fact we're convinced of the blessings our fur babies bring to our lives, science has yet to *definitively* prove that pets are good for our health.

"A lot of us who have pets think, 'Oh, they must be sort of uniformly good for us'", said Megan Mueller, co-director of the Tufts Institute for Human-Animal Interaction and proud owner of a dog and guinea pig. However, she thinks that it is a little bit more complicated than originally thought. She also says



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that 'Are our pets good for us?' is not a great question. Rather, it's "Who are pets good for, under what circumstances, and is it the right match between the person and the pet?" A very good question.

### Some of the Benefits of Matching the "Right" Owners and Pets

**Confidence:** Having the opportunity to care for another living creature provides a wonderful setting for teaching the importance of caring for something beyond yourself. The confidence a child may gain from being able to nurture and provide care for an animal as they watch it grow is a very important undertaking which teaches them and us to learn more about others and how to care for their needs.

**Better Emotional Health:** Like humans, pets will have their moments when they are feeling sad, or depressed or perhaps just bored and in need of attention. Fortunately, our pets know that affection from their owners will make them feel better, which not only benefits our pets, but benefits us too! Owning a pet can improve your mood. It is difficult to stay angry or sad when your cat hops into your lap and starts to purr, or your dog lays his face in your lap and stares up at you with big adorable eyes. The next time you feel stressed, take a deep breath and stroke your cat or



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## The Benefits of Owning a Pet (cont'd.)

give your dog a hug.

**Entertainment:** Pets can be extremely entertaining without even trying. Just think about watching your pup chasing his tail or your cat chasing a fly or finding a piece of string on the carpet and trying to grab it. Their antics instantly make us laugh. How about that spectacular leap your dog makes catching a Frisbee or the funny posture your cat takes when leaping after a ball you've rolled her way? We enjoy watching these tricks they perform, and laughter is great for our health and emotional well-being.

**Exercise:** If you own a dog, you are likely to walk more and generally get more exercise because dogs are more active and require a bit more "active" interaction and attention than felines do. You don't even have to take long walks; just a short walk each day gives both of you an opportunity to get outdoors and exercise without it feeling like exercise, and is also an excellent chance to further nurture the bond between you. For cat owners, daily walks aren't necessary, but taking time to interact with your favorite feline with a game of catch or pulling a ball around on a string will motivate your cat to happily chase it.

**Social Interaction:** People who own a dog usually find it easier to interact with strangers when out and about. With the technological advances in recent years making us generally less interactive beyond our work and home, many pet owners agree that having a pet has helped to keep the balance of technology and humanness more in balance. Living with a pet, especially at this period of COVID-19 which has unfortunately caused humans to stay at home and indoors and participate less in the "real time social and interactive" areas of life, has benefitted us.

**Friendship:** Pets make the best friends! Many people automatically consider them a member of the family. Unlike humans, pets always return affection unconditionally. They do not hold grudges, or question motives or have selfish reasons for interacting with us. Pets enjoy the affection we show them and thrive on it just like we feel special when they wag their tails and show excitement when they see us.

**Pet Ownership Affects Us:** Recent studies in the past few years have shown how significantly pet ownership affects individuals. A study conducted by US National Institute of

Health showed that people who own pets visit doctors less often for simple medical conditions than those who do not.

Both physical and emotional recovery from surgeries and more serious illnesses was also found to progress at a higher rate for pet owners than people without pets.

Blood pressure rates in humans who own pets are less likely to spike due to tension and stress, and studies have even found that people who own a pet, particularly a cat, generally have a lower blood pressure.

A study conducted by AAHA (American Animal Hospital Association) found that over 90% of the pet owners surveyed indicated their awareness of the health benefits of owning a pet and acknowledged it clearly affected the quality of their daily lives. Some other important statistics include: 31% improved physical fitness, 76% reduced stress level, 65% mental health improved.

Because pet owners enjoy fewer visits to the doctor and can experience the benefits of lower blood pressure and negative effects of depression, stress and tension, they may experience lower health care costs.

Owning a pet may also:

- Help fight depression – give us an interest in life, and provide a positive focus
- Help to reduce heart disease – research suggests this may even help because it provides psychological and emotional stability during stressful periods
- Help reduce stress without drugs – interaction with our pets provides "instant" stress relief and relaxation without the use of drugs or stimulants

### Pets as 'Personalized Medicine'?

Another research method being used is longitudinal studies, in which huge numbers of people are followed over long periods of time. The hope is that these studies, and the more scientifically designed experiments, will tease out more precise reasons for why a particular pet might -- or might not -- be a good fit for a person and their needs.

Until then, fellow pet lovers, what we intuitively know is that our pets are some of the most loving "people" in our lives, and that, if nothing else, makes them good for us.



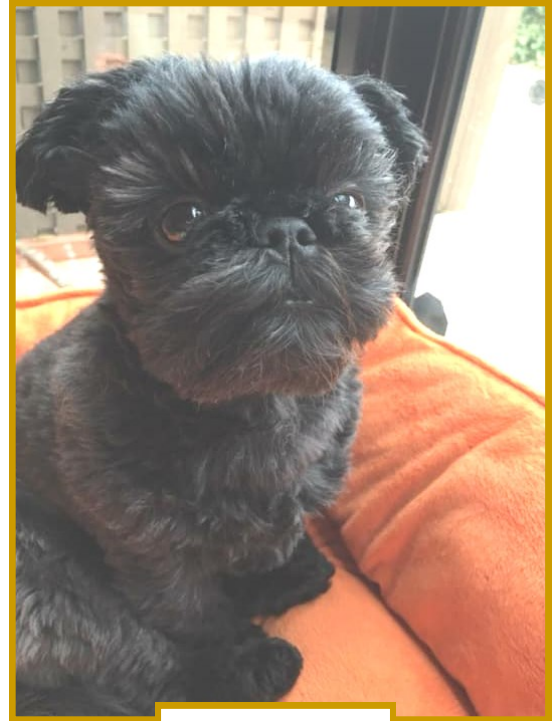


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## Results of the February Valentines Day Pet Photo Contest: Winner—Monkey!

Daniella B. says:

Monkey is the love of my life! My best friend and a warrior! Over a year ago he was diagnosed with oral cancer and we were told he had 3 months to live. Through your wonderful support and my hospice skills (and let's face it Monkey's determination !!! ) he has beat all the odds!!! He walks every day, eats his veggies and chicken, and loves to play! And he still does his monkey doodle dance every time I walk in the door! Some times life is hard but with our best buddies around us we stay strong! So maybe during these uncertain times we can take a moment to see what gifts we do have. Isn't that the definition of love? Happy Valentine's Day!



Monkey

## BLUE RAVINE OFFICE HOURS

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 8:00 pm; Saturday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.  
For emergencies outside regular office hours, please call MarQueen Pet Emergency & Specialty, 916 757-6600 or Sacramento Veterinary Referral Center, 916 362-3111.

[www.blueravineanimalhospital.com](http://www.blueravineanimalhospital.com)

### COUPON

Purchase 1 year of Heartgard *and* 1 year of Nexgard or Frontline—receive \$75 instant rebate. (Exp. 5/31/21)

or

Purchase 1 year of Heartgard *and* 6 months of Nexgard or Frontline—receive \$35 instant rebate. (Exp. June 2021. Call for details)

Free Kong Toy  
with either  
rebate  
(while supplies last)

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