

Pet Insurance – What do I need to know?

Should your beloved pet feel out of sorts, the last thing you want to be worrying about are vet bills. In the absence of a Pet National Health Service - we strongly recommend that all our clients take out pet insurance.

We are a Vetsure-accredited practice and, as such, promote their range of pet insurance products*. The Vetsure range has been designed in close collaboration with vets to try to keep things as clear and simple as possible. We promote Vetsure Pet Insurance®, but should you wish to look elsewhere, please take into consideration the following information when making your choice:



What types of pet insurance policies are available?

Policies will normally fall into one of the following three categories:

'Lifetime Cover'

These policies typically provide the most comprehensive level of cover. Veterinary Fee benefits 're-charge' each year that the policy is renewed. Depending on the provider, the benefit limit may apply in one of two ways:

1. The benefit limit is applied to ALL conditions per year e.g. £5,000 in total per year.
2. The benefit limit is applied PER CONDITION per year e.g. £5,000 per unrelated condition per year. For example, if your pet was unfortunate enough to have three unrelated conditions you could benefit from up to £15,000 per year.



All Vetsure policies fall into the 'lifetime' category and benefit limits are 'per condition per year'.

'Maximum Benefit'

These policies typically provide cover per condition, but up to a maximum financial amount. Once the financial limit has been reached, no further claims for that condition will be paid.

'Time and Benefit Limited'

These policies typically provide the most basic level of cover and are usually amongst the cheapest available. Each condition is covered for 12 months from its onset up to a set financial limit. The condition will stop being covered after 12 months or when the financial limit is reached – whatever happens first.

Each policy is different – so check the terms and conditions carefully to ensure it meets your needs.

Why might treatment not be covered?

There are a variety of reasons why treatment might not be covered with any type of policy. The most common exclusions on a pet insurance policy include:

- Anything that relates to a pet's medical history before the policy started (pre-existing medical conditions).
- Age of your pet - many companies will not insure new pets when they reach a certain age, typically 8-10 years.
- Any routine, preventative and elective treatments e.g. flea and worm treatments or vaccinations.
- Anything related to pregnancy or birth.
- Most policies have an illness claim exclusion applicable at the start of the policy, often called a 'waiting period,' which typically ranges from 10 to 30 days.

Your pet must be between 8 weeks and 10 years old to arrange a Vetsure Pet Insurance policy for the first time.

Changing your insurance

If you decide to change your insurance after a medical condition has occurred, that condition will almost certainly be excluded under any new insurance – even if you haven't submitted a claim for it. For this reason, it is worth taking all factors into account when making your selection as, unlike with other types of insurance, it may not be viable to change provider at a later date.

The cost of insurance

Premiums

As a pet ages the premium and policy excess are likely to increase because, like humans, the risk of illness increases. With many providers there is a tiered increase in premiums once the pet becomes classed as 'senior', but the approach taken by insurers varies widely. Some breeds can be more expensive to cover than others because many have a predisposition to certain medical conditions.

Excesses and 'co-payments'

Most policies have an 'excess'. This is a sum that the policyholder must pay towards the cost of their insurance claim. Excesses can vary greatly so refer to the policy terms and conditions. For ongoing conditions most insurers will apply the excess once per year per condition. In addition, insurers commonly ask for co-payments – where the policyholder also pays a percentage of the over all veterinary treatment bill. This commonly applies for 'senior pets', but can be seen much earlier on some policies.

With Vetsure, the excess is only applied ONCE per condition – NOT per year.

A 15% co-payment is introduced once your pet reaches their 8th birthday.



With Vetsure you can tailor your policy by choosing from a range of excess levels:

£69

£109

£149

Claiming

Normally, payment for treatments is made by the client to the vet at the time of treatment. The treatment costs are then claimed back from the insurer by the client. Most insurers suggest that they will 'allow' direct claims - meaning that the client would only have to pay the vet the excess and any co-payments for eligible treatments. However, vets are not obliged to offer this and it is entirely at their discretion.



All Vetsure-accredited practices will accept 'direct claims' from Vetsure.

Pet Insurance - Key questions to ask

Will ongoing conditions remain covered each year?

Vetsure policies are cover for life, so ongoing conditions will continue to be covered each year (provided you continue to renew your policy and your premiums are kept up to date).

Does the vet fee limit relate to each condition or is there a maximum for all conditions?

Vetsure policies are per condition per year e.g. on our Premier Plus Policy you can claim up to £5,000 for each unrelated condition per year.

What is the excess? What is the co-payment and when does it apply?

Vetsure can tailor your excess to suit your budget - either £69, £109 or £149.

For Vetsure, pets over the age of 8 years will require a 15% 'co-payment' towards the cost of each claim.

Does the excess need to be paid only once or every year for ongoing illness?

Vetsure will only charge the excess once per unrelated condition!

Will your vet allow 'direct claims' from the insurer?

Vetsure-accredited practices like this one are happy to accept 'direct claims' from Vetsure.

REMEMBER

Always read any policy documentation carefully to ensure it meets your needs. Always answer the insurer's questions to the best of your knowledge.



Your vet is Vetsure... are you?

*Please refer to Vetsure Pet Insurance® leaflets in your clinic or [Vetsure.com](https://www.vetsure.com) for further information, a quote and/or full terms and conditions. If you would like to speak to a member of our friendly team give us a call on **0800 050 2022**.