

## YOUR CAREER IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

### Slide 1: What is a Veterinarian?

Hello, my name is Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a veterinarian.

“Veterinarian” is a long word, and sometimes we just call ourselves “vets.” Does anyone know what a veterinarian is? *(Call on kids to get some ideas of what they think it means)*

How many of you have pets at home?

*(Call on kids to find out what type of pets they have)*

### Slide 2: Pets

A veterinarian is a doctor for animals. We can take care of your pets like cats, dogs, birds and fish...

### Slide 3: Pets

...but that’s not all. There are many other types of pets, including ferrets, rabbits, amphibians (like frogs), reptiles (such as turtles, snakes and lizards) and rodents (such as hamsters, mice, gerbils and guinea pigs) that veterinarians care for, too.

### Slide 4: Farm Animals

We also take care of animals on the farm like horses, cows, pigs...

### Slide 5: Farm Animals

...as well as chickens, goats and sheep.

### Slide 6: Zoo Animals & Wildlife

Some of us take care of animals that you see in the zoo or aquarium like tigers, dolphins and elephants; or animals you see in the wild, like deer and owls, just to name a few.

### Slide 7: Vets help people and animals

Veterinarians help all animals (even people!) stay healthy.

### Slide 8: Do you want to be a veterinarian?

Do you want to be a veterinarian?

Do you like math and science?

Do you like working with animals?

Do you like solving mysteries and learning new things?

If you answered yes to these questions, then maybe you should think about becoming a veterinarian when you grow up.

### **Slide 9: Check-Ups**

So how do veterinarians take care of your pets and what happens when you take your pet to the veterinarian?

Your veterinarian will give your pet an examination, just like when you go to the doctor for a check-up. They'll check your pet's ears, eyes and mouth and feel around your pet's body for anything that shouldn't be there or doesn't feel normal. Your veterinarian will also listen to your pet's heartbeat and lungs to make sure they're OK, and check your pet's weight and temperature.

Since animals can't talk to us – except in the movies, that is – we have to figure out what's bothering them. It's like solving a puzzle, really. We ask the owner lots of questions about their pet – how it's acting, if it's eating and peeing and pooping normally, etc. – and examine them to find all the clues we can so we can piece them together to find out what's wrong.

### **Slide 10: “Normal” temperature**

What is a “normal” temperature? People have a normal temperature of 98.6° F. Does anyone know the normal temperature for a cat or dog? *(Pause for kids responses)*

*(Click presentation slide to reveal answer)*

Cats and dogs have a higher temperature than people; it's about 101° F. If their temperature is lower or higher than that, it might mean your pet is sick.

### **Slide 11: What is wrong?**

How do veterinarians know what's wrong? Sometimes we can figure it out pretty quickly, based on what we find when we ask you questions and examine your pet. Other times, it can be a bit tougher to figure it out. We may need to do some tests to find out, including things like x-rays or blood tests or an ultrasound.

This picture shows a veterinarian and veterinary technician doing an ultrasound exam on a pregnant dog. Ultrasounds and radiographs (x-rays) let us see many things inside your pet. For example, an x-ray can show us broken bones. Ultrasounds let us see the “squishier” things inside, such as their guts.

### **Slide 12: Can you see the puppies?**

This is a picture of what the veterinarians see when we take an x-ray of a pregnant dog. Can you see all of the puppies?

*(Click presentation slide to reveal puppies)*

How many puppies are there? (5)

### **Slide 13: What can you see?**

Sometimes we can see weird and interesting things. These are some real x-rays of animals. X-rays show bones, but they also can show the animal's organs and if there is something else inside your pet that is making them not feel good. What do you see in these are pictures? *(Pause for kids responses)*

*(Click presentation slide to reveal answers)*

Picture A: This dog ate a Homer Simpson doll. This is what it looked like when it was in the dog's stomach.

*(If you choose, take this opportunity to remind them that they should always pick up their toys and not let their dogs chew on them or eat them.)*

Picture B: Here is a turtle that ate some gravel.

Picture C: This is a parakeet that is about to lay an egg.

Once your veterinarian knows what is wrong, he or she can help to make your pet feel better so you can bring your pet home. Sometimes that means just giving your pet some medications, but sometimes it means your pet needs surgery – an operation – to make it feel better.

### **Slide 14: Pet needs**

Owning a pet is a lot a responsibility. What else does your pet need?

*(Click presentation slide to reveal answers)*

A pet needs food, water, a home (shelter), exercise and playtime, grooming (like baths, brushing their fur and trimming their nails) and training, as well as medical care.

*(Click presentation again)*

...but, most of all, they need your time, attention, and love.

### **Slide 15: My story – why I became a vet**

*(Add a personal story or talk about why you became a veterinarian here if desired)*

### **Slide 16: Jobs of a veterinarian**

Is that all we do? Well, it's certainly an important thing, but that's not everything veterinarians do. Who knows what else a veterinarian does? *(Pause for kids responses)*

### **Slide 17: Take care of pets**

Not only does your pet need a veterinarian to help them feel better and take care of them when they are sick or hurt, they also need a veterinarian to keep them healthy.

After all, wouldn't you rather stay healthy and not get sick at all?

### **Slide 18: Keep farm animals healthy**

Some veterinarians work with animals on the farm to make sure that they are healthy and that their milk, meat, eggs, cheese and other animal products are safe for people to eat.

**Slide 19: Teaching**

Veterinarians can be teachers and train other people to become veterinarians.

**Slide 20: Research**

Research is another choice. Research vets work with lab animals to make sure they stay healthy and they are properly taken care of at the lab and during the research project. They try to find answers to solve health problems in both people and animals.

Research vets have discovered cures for some really bad diseases and also developed important surgeries and other ways to help both animals AND people and help them live longer, healthier lives.

**Slide 21: Study medicines & vaccines**

Some veterinarians help make new vaccines to help keep people and animals from getting sick. They also study and help make medications for people and animals to help them to feel better when they are sick.

**Slide 22: Becoming a vet**

Are you surprised to learn about all the different things a veterinarian can do? Well, there are even more things veterinarians do, but we don't have enough time to talk about all of them. Do you want to know more? Do you think you want to be a veterinarian?

To become a veterinarian, you've got to finish school first (all the way through high school), and then you have to go to college and take courses that will help you get ready for vet school. After college, veterinary school takes about 4 more years. There's a lot to learn, after all.

After you graduate from veterinary school and pass the veterinary tests, you are a veterinarian!

**Slide 23: There is a place for you**

It may seem like a long time in school, but it's worth it. As you just saw, there are so many things veterinarians can do and there is a place in veterinary medicine just for you!

With hard work and good grades...you can do it!