



# Want the best care for your animals?

Owners and veterinarians can work together to protect the health and welfare of animals.

In BC, vast geography, veterinary workforce shortages, and increasing demand for veterinary services combine to create challenges for animal owners. Accessing veterinary care, including after-hours and emergency care, requires a balance between animal needs, client expectations, legislative requirements, and veterinary staff availability. Here's what we can all do.

## What Animal Owners Can Do

Safeguard your animals' health and welfare with veterinary help and understand your legal duty of care.

Talk to your veterinarian about how to avoid emergency visits.

Know how to access after-hours care before an emergency happens.

Book routine wellness appointments and annual vaccines well in advance.

Be vigilant about your animal's health; contact your veterinarian at the first sign of a problem.

Be patient and kind to the veterinary team.

## What Veterinarians Can Do

Provide veterinary services according to legal, professional, and ethical obligations.

Make animal health and welfare your first consideration in providing veterinary care.

Educate clients on your service constraints, including delayed appointment scheduling.

Address client concerns and answer questions.

Involve clients in the decision-making process by reviewing treatments, procedures, costs, and informed consent.

Inform clients on availability or non-availability of after-hours care.

## Good To Know

Veterinary medicine is not publicly funded. Ask about your costs and payment options in advance. Research third-party payment plans if needed.

Veterinarians in BC are not required to provide after-hours care (section 215 (1) and (2) Part 4 of the CVBC Bylaws).

Veterinarians in BC may use telemedicine and telerriage if they determine them as suitable mechanisms for veterinary care (info [here](#) and [here](#)).

