

# Don't it just drive you *mad*...

This month I have an axe to grind about Vet bills and how they get so quickly out of hand. I have the pleasure of a £750 vet bill, give or take a few pence, for my dog. I would like to point out that I don't fault the vets; they are brilliant, they always talk me through the problem, avenues of treatment and the costs. I do blame the management and drug companies, who charge over the odds for medications and equipment. When the vets were still trying to diagnose the problem, my dog had a set of x-rays and they sedated him so he would remain still, the sedation cost me more than the x-rays. Another example was when my cat was on daily medication, it was costing over £50 per quarter and after a little shopping around, I found a reputable company on the Internet, called Pet Meds online. They require a prescription from your vet, which can be faxed over and then they send the medication straight to your door. I was then paying under £25 a quarter, which certainly adds up. If companies can afford to do this and Pet Meds do have offices in London and subsequently all the usual overheads, then how do the companies supplying the vets get away with such ridiculous charges?

We love our pets and if you are like me, you'll see them as part of the family. But how many people who love their animals just can't afford the price tag of even basic treatment? I know of one support avenue, the PDSA charity, which is the Peoples Dispensary for Sick Animals. They offer financial support



and subsidise the cost of treatment at their clinics, for people who just can't afford to pay the usual fees. We all moan about the price of petrol, groceries and your pint down the local, but we seem to accept vet bills as okay. I believe that vets provide an invaluable service and I would have lost many pets over the years if not for accurate diagnosis and prompt treatment. However the money does not go to the vets, it goes to pay companies who are probably turning over millions in the knowledge that we can be extorted through the love we have for our pets. My vets even told me to try other places for products and medication, as they know it's cheaper elsewhere.

My friend Donna rescued a stray cat (Kevin) to add to the three she already had. She paid for him to be wormed, flea sprayed and neutered, as every responsible person should do; we have enough unwanted and abandoned animals of which Kevin was one. Shortly after, the flipping thing went and got ran over. After months at the vet and a lot of care and monitoring from Donna, he recovered, minus a tail, but at the cost of over £1700. He is only a young cat and leads a completely normal and happy life now, but for many people he would have lost his chance, through either a lack of funds or an unwillingness to spend that much. It is bad enough in a household with two salaries, but what about other people who don't have as much income for whatever reason, such as an elderly person who may live with no other company than their pet? I can't see this problem being resolved when we are in the hands of corporations with pound signs in their eyes.

Have any of you had a frightening vet bill? Keep e-mailing me with your own issues, stories, pet hates etc.

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