

Love your pet; KNOW YOUR VET

By Donna Winslow (a GDSTC Member)

Due to the great difficulty that (our bitch) Eve was subjected to because of the lack of care given to her by the veterinarian before, during and after she was spayed, I have endeavored to compile a list of possible attributes that you should look for when searching for a vet to care for your pet.

Please know that these are the qualities that I look for in my vet, they are not absolute. Your situation should be taken into account and the decision made for your pet and your circumstances. I take no responsibility for your choice of Veterinarian or his ability to care for your pet. I only offer these as possible guidelines.

- Communication Skills
 - The vet should be willing to talk to you and take the time to educate you if necessary. Does he give you credibility and accept the fact that you may know more about your specific breed health issues (if in fact you do) than he does?
- After Hours Emergency availability
 - Will he give you his home phone number if it is unlisted in the phone book? Be mindful though, that you do not abuse the privilege of having that number.
 - If he has an after hours answering service, what is a reasonable time to expect a call back from him?
- Is he current and up-to-date on procedures, protocol, medicines, and equipment?
 - This would include continuing education (you should be well read enough to know what is current.)
 - Does he use all of the equipment that he has? Does he use mechanical monitoring during surgery, or is it visual only. How many people assist during surgery? What are their duties?
 - If your pet is going in for surgery, who EXACTLY will be performing that surgery?

- Does he consult with others if he does not know or is uncertain about a diagnosis?
- Have there been any complaints filed with the State Board of Medical Examiners. (The phone number and address must be posted in the Vet's office – at least in Texas.)
- Does he like what he's doing? NO?! Find another vet immediately!!
- Does he like my breed of pet? If not, go elsewhere.
- Is the facility clean and uncluttered?
- Is the staff courteous and caring? Do they seem to be knowledgeable?
- If, after surgery, he wants to keep your pet over night, will someone be there all night? If not, how often will your pet be checked during the night? Can you take your pet home the afternoon of the surgery? Would you know what to watch for if you did take your pet home?
- Would your pet rest better at home during the night? Would you know what to watch for in case he took a turn for the worse?

Remember, there are times when the absolute best place for your pet is at your Veterinarian's clinic. Your job, and his, is to know when. Remember too that it is your job to educate yourself. Don't leave your pet's care completely in the vet's hands and give blind trust. You know your pet better than anybody else. Rely on that knowledge and keep a level head.

A piece of advice given to me many years ago by a very good friend and breeder of champion Basset Hounds is this: *"When in doubt, call the vet!"* If you are in doubt, ACT. It may be a false alarm, but you'll still have your pet with you and you won't be lamenting his or her death because you did not take action!

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Donna's website: springbokscottiterriers.com)