

Become a
Champion for
Excellent
Care

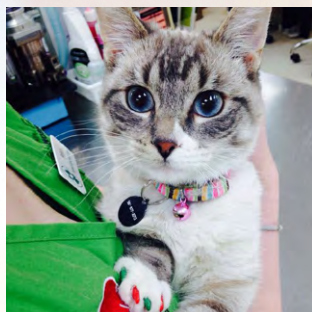


The Standard of
Veterinary Excellence

I am a **Champion** for **Excellent** **Care**

I hold my pet's veterinary team
to a higher standard. Pets are
my passion. And keeping my pet
healthy is my **#1** priority. I seek out
AAHA-accredited hospitals. Because
my pet deserves nothing less.





Become a **Champion for Excellent Care.**

The American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) is the only organization to accredit companion animal veterinary hospitals in the US and Canada. Unlike human hospitals, not all animal hospitals are required to be accredited. Nearly 60 percent of pet owners believe their veterinary hospital is accredited when it is not. In actuality, only 15% of veterinary hospitals in the United States and Canada are accredited by AAHA.

Accredited practice teams are **Champions for Excellent Care**. Taking your pet to an AAHA hospital means your pet is receiving treatment according to the highest standards in veterinary care. AAHA sends consultants to AAHA-accredited veterinary hospitals every three years to evaluate their adherence to the *AAHA Standards of Accreditation*. AAHA consultants evaluate hospitals on approximately 900 different standards of veterinary care during these visits. There are over 50 mandatory standards to which all accredited hospitals must adhere. The remaining standards have “points” assigned to them and a hospital must earn an established value of points in order to pass.

In this booklet, you will find a sampling of the *AAHA Standards of Accreditation* which will help you understand the level of care your pet receives in each department. While it does not cover every standard an AAHA-accredited veterinary hospital may have passed, it will guide you through just some of the countless hours of hard work and dedication accredited practice teams go through to provide quality health care for your pet.

You are the difference between ordinary and extraordinary. Let's join together to share why AAHA accreditation matters. Because our pets deserve nothing less.

Anesthesia



MANDATORY STANDARD

A qualified team member must be present to monitor my pet's care while under anesthesia. In addition, monitoring equipment is required.

ADDITIONAL POINTS-BASED STANDARDS.

- A trained professional is dedicated to continuously monitoring my pet, recording vital signs, and communicating the findings to the veterinarian.
- Frequent evaluations of vital statistics are performed and documented while under general anesthesia.

What's in it for me and my pet?

When sedated or anesthetized, your pet will be carefully monitored by focused, well-trained veterinary technicians under the supervision of your veterinarian.

Ask your veterinarian:

- Who will be monitoring my pet before, during, and after anesthesia?
- What equipment might you use to monitor my pet?



MANDATORY STANDARD

Dental procedures are performed under anesthesia.

Dentistry

ADDITIONAL POINTS-BASED STANDARDS

- Veterinarians perform dental extractions.
- All instruments used for dental procedures are sterilized.

What's in it for me and my pet?

Pets seldom tolerate sharp dental instruments in their mouths, let alone under their gums. A complete oral health assessment and treatment plan is best performed under anesthesia. This allows time for proper cleaning below the gumline, where most inflammation and infection lies.

Ask your veterinarian:

- If my pet needs extractions, who will perform them?
- Will my pet be intubated during his dental cleaning?



Pain Management

MANDATORY STANDARD

Pain management and assessment is part of all exams and surgical procedures and every pet's evaluation.

ADDITIONAL POINTS-BASED STANDARDS

- Each pet receives individualized pain management care.
- The team will utilize preemptive pain management as needed.

What's in it for me and my pet?

Just like people, animals have different tolerances for pain, so your pet's care will be individualized, start to finish. Pain management is tailored to each patient and each procedure.

Ask your veterinarian:

- Which pain medications will you be using before, during, and after surgery?
- Why did you choose these medications?

Patient Care



ADDITIONAL POINTS-BASED STANDARDS.

- The veterinary hospital uses individualized preventive recommendations based on pet's lifestyle.
- The condition of every hospitalized pet is assessed at least twice daily by a veterinarian.
- Credentialed veterinary technicians perform and supervise activities related to your pet's care.

MANDATORY STANDARD

The veterinary hospital has the means to deliver oxygen to compromised pets in many different ways.

What's in it for me and my pet?

Your pet's preventive healthcare will be as unique as your pet. Special care will be taken to evaluate how he responds to treatment. Rest assured that if your pet is hospitalized in a crisis, your veterinary practice team will work together to provide the best care possible.

Ask your veterinarian:

- How can I partner with you to individualize my pet's preventive healthcare plan?
- What should I expect if my pet needs to be hospitalized and monitored overnight?

Surgery



MANDATORY STANDARD

Surgical suites are separate, closed rooms dedicated only to aseptic surgical procedures.

ADDITIONAL POINTS-BASED STANDARD

- Equipment utilized in the surgery suite includes:
 - A heat source for anesthetized patients
 - Pulse oximeter (measures oxygen levels)
 - Blood pressure monitor
 - Suction apparatus
 - Many more!

What's in it for me and my pet?

Surgery can be stressful for everyone in the family. Fortunately, compassionate teams provide clean surroundings, use extensive monitoring equipment, and focus solely on your pet during this time.

Ask your veterinarian:

- What type of monitoring equipment will you be using during surgery?
- How will you provide heat support for my pet?



Contagious Disease

ADDITIONAL POINTS-BASED STANDARDS.

- A single-purpose isolation room is restricted to providing treatment to contagious patients.
- A formal protocol addresses how to handle contagious patients and their containment throughout the facility.

What's in it for me and my pet?

While there will likely be sick and potentially infectious pets in the veterinary hospital, the veterinary team will take precautions not to transmit diseases to your pet by following proven protocols.

Ask your veterinarian:

- Do you have a separate isolation room for contagious patients?
- How does your team avoid spreading diseases to healthy patients?

MANDATORY STANDARD

To prevent the spread of disease, veterinary hospital policies include frequent hand washing, use of antibacterial agents, and disinfection of all patient areas.

EMERGENCY and

MANDATORY STANDARD

To help save time in a critical situation, emergency services or referral to an appropriate hospital are always available.



ADDITIONAL POINTS-BASED STANDARDS

- Hospital staff is present 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide emergency care when needed.
- Practice team members are trained in the emergency use of oxygen, resuscitative equipment, and whole blood transfusions.

What's in it for me and my pet?

Knowing where to take your pet in an emergency can save time in a crisis. Trusting that your veterinary hospital is ready and equipped to help your pet in an emergency is paramount.

Ask your veterinarian:

- In an after-hours emergency, who should I call?
- How often do you see emergency cases?

CRITICAL CARE



Want to
know more?

Find additional resources
aaha.org/petowner





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aaha.org/petowner