

Veterinarians play a major role in the healthcare of pets, livestock, and zoo, sporting, and laboratory animals. Some veterinarians use their skills to protect humans against diseases carried by animals and conduct clinical research on human and animal health problems. Others work in basic research, broadening the scope of fundamental theoretical knowledge, and in applied research, developing new ways to use knowledge.

Most veterinarians perform clinical work in private practices, treating small animals. Small animal practitioners usually care for companion animals, such as dogs and cats, but also treat birds, reptiles, rabbits, and other animals that can be kept as pets. Some veterinarians work in mixed animal practices where they see pigs, goats, sheep, and some non-domestic animals, in addition to companion animals. Veterinarians in clinical practice diagnose animal health problems; vaccinate against diseases, such as distemper and rabies; medicate animals suffering from infections or illnesses; treat and dress wounds; set fractures; perform surgery; and advise owners about animal feeding, behavior, and breeding.

Veterinary Technologists and **Technicians** perform medical tests in a laboratory environment for use in the treatment and diagnosis of diseases in animals. They prepare vaccines and serums for prevention of diseases; prepare tissue samples, take blood samples, and execute laboratory tests, such as urinalysis and blood counts; and clean and sterilize instruments and materials and maintain equipment and machines.

Veterinary Assistants and **Laboratory Animal Caretakers** feed, water, and examine pets and other non-farm animals for signs of illness, disease, or injury in laboratories and animal hospitals and clinics. They clean and disinfect cages and work areas, and sterilize laboratory and surgical equipment. They may provide routine postoperative care, administer medication orally or topically, or prepare samples for laboratory examination under the supervision of veterinary or laboratory animal technologists or technicians, veterinarians, or scientists.

Transfer Information:

- Prospective veterinarians must graduate from a 4-year program at an accredited college of veterinary medicine with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree (D.V.M. or V.M.D.) and obtain state licensure to practice. Veterinary Technicians complete a 2-year accredited Veterinarian Technology program and acquire appropriate state certification. Veterinarian Assistant positions generally will require hands-on experience and post-secondary education is recommended, particularly in the science and biology area.

Additional Information:

- Preparing for a Career in Veterinary Medicine: <http://www.aavmc.org/>
- Veterinary Career Resources Center: www.avma.org/vcc

