



BLUE DOG BAKERY™



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forgoing vet care or quality food, read on for some more cost friendly options.

This month, we have two weekends packed with events. I have included a list below, with events and locations, and if they are in your neighborhood we'd love for you to stop by! We will be passing out On-the-Go packs, coupons and maybe even a Blue Dog T-Shirt!

Give those dogs a big hug from me.

Lara

**Photo courtesy of Beryl, her Airdale Hannah*

Congratulations to Porcini!

Congratulations to Porcini -- our May Blue Dog of the Month! To see his winning photo and read more about him, check out our [Blue Dog of the Month](#) feature.

Thank you to everyone that submitted photos for Blue Dog of the Month - May! We think every dog is a winner, so find your photos on our [website](#) or our [Facebook page](#).

Submit your dog to be the Blue Dog of the Month by e-mailing us a photo, your first name, hometown and a few sentences telling us what makes your dog special. (*Note: Dogs only please*) Even if your dog isn't chosen, we will post your photo on our website to show the world how cute s/he is!

We chose from each pool of photos submitted on a monthly basis -- so please re-send your photos each month if your pooch is not chosen.

Tips on containing costs for pet care

by Walecia Konrad
The New York Times

Deborah Nocella, a 43-year-old mother in Brooklyn, says she feels as if she takes the family's two dogs to the vet almost as often as she takes them to the neighborhood dog run.

Last year the Nocella family adopted two puppies, a pit bull mix named Pokie and a "puggle" named Brownly. Since then, Nocella estimates, the family has spent as much as \$5,000 on veterinarian bills.

The dogs have had routine checkups and shots, of course. But then there were unexpected costs: Pokie arrived with a bad case of worms and kennel cough; some strange bumps on her paws turned out, after \$700 worth of tests, to be warts. Brownly has severe allergies and requires frequent trips to the vet.

In November, Pokie swallowed Advil pills, which are toxic to dogs. She went into renal failure and required emergency treatment overnight in a nearby animal hospital. The treatment was successful and Pokie is fine, but the incident set the Nocellas back \$2,300.

Pet owners like Nocella are spending more on veterinarian bills than ever before. The American Pet Products Association estimates that Americans will spend \$12.2 billion on veterinary care this year, up from \$11 billion last year and \$8.2 billion in 2006.

Advances in veterinary medicine mean more extensive, and expensive, treatments are available for

animals, but even ordinary costs like flea and tick protection can add up quickly. Here are some ways to curb those costs while still giving your pet the best of care.

LOW-COST ALTERNATIVES

Local shelters often offer free or low-cost spaying and neutering for dogs and cats, said Louise Murray, vice president of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal's Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital in New York and author of "Vet Confidential." To find a shelter near you, check the ASPCA website at www.asPCA.org/pet-care/spayneuter.

Shelters where pets can be adopted may offer low-cost vaccinations and checkups. Mobile clinics, usually sponsored by local governments or animal protection agencies, also provide routine pet care for far less than a traditional vet would charge.

Veterinarian schools are another good source of low-cost care. Students are carefully supervised by qualified veterinarians, so pets receive quality care - everything from heartworm tests to major surgery, often for as little as a third of the price at a veterinarian's office.

THE RIGHT VACCINES

Keeping up with a pet's shots will save money, not to mention misery, in the long run by preventing many serious illnesses. But that does not mean a pet needs every vaccine available.

"A corgi who lives on the Upper East Side doesn't need the same protocol as a Labrador in Connecticut," Murray said. "Your veterinarian should customize a vaccine plan that fits your pet."

A HEALTHY DIET

Many vets sell prescriptions and high-quality pet food, but the same brands are sold for much less at many pet supply stores or websites. Still, do not skimp on quality.

"Cats, for example, are carnivores and aren't meant to eat carbohydrates," Murray said. "Feeding them only the cheap dried food can lead to diabetes or blockages that will cost you a lot more in the long run than the price you'll pay for the right food."

DRUG DISCOUNTS

If a pet needs regular medication, discount chains such as Costco can be cheaper than a regular drugstore or the vet's office, said Sharon Friedman, a veterinarian at the Berkley Animal Clinic in Berkley, Mich. But consult a veterinarian first, she advised, to be sure to buy the right medicine at the right dosage.

On the other hand, do not assume that tick and flea treatments or heartworm medications are cheaper at the big discount chains. Manufacturers want to distribute these medicines through veterinarians' offices, so they often offer promotions and discounts there that are not available elsewhere.

"One company recently offered two free tick and flea treatments if you bought six doses. That worked out to be less expensive than PetMeds, a popular online store, or Costco," Friedman said. "It often pays to ask."

Many websites sell high-quality pet medications at good prices, but a recent Food and Drug Administration investigation caught some sites selling counterfeit, unapproved or expired drugs. (<http://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm048164.htm>) Beware of any site that sells medications without requiring a veterinarian's prescription.

The FDA also recommends that consumers look for sites accredited as a Veterinary-Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Site, part of a voluntary accreditation program.

CONSIDER INSURANCE

Pet health insurance is a booming industry, growing more than 20 percent every year, although only an estimated 3 percent of pet owners have bought policies. While Nocella has never seriously considered buying pet insurance, she does acknowledge it might have come in handy the day Pokie ate the Advil.

But like health insurance for humans, pet insurance can be complicated and highly restricted. Some policies will not cover older pets or genetic conditions that certain breeds are known to have, such as hip dysplasia in retrievers.

Others limit coverage to only one treatment per illness. So if your dog develops asthma, for instance, some policies will cover just the first trip to the vet even though treatment will require multiple visits.

Prices for pet insurance can range from \$12 to \$50 a month, depending on the type and age of the pet and any pre-existing conditions. In almost all cases the pet owner pays up front, then files a claim for reimbursement.

Costs are higher to insure older, sicker pets, or for policies that cover preventive care, such as vaccines and veterinarian office visits.

Many pet owners prefer to save for unexpected vet expenses in an emergency fund instead of paying premiums for coverage they may not use. Murray suggested putting away a little each week until savings reach \$2,000 to \$3,000.

"That's the minimum you'll need if a serious situation arises and your pet needs lifesaving care," she said.

Where in the world is Blue Dog?

Coming up in May, Blue Dog Bakery plans on attending a few different events.

You can find Blue Dog Bakery at the following events this month:

May 7th:

[Barkin' Beach Bash](#) - San Diego, CA (San Diego Humane Society)

[PetWalk by Petsmart Charities](#) - Philadelphia, PA

[Furry Scurry](#) - Denver, CO (Denver Dumb Friends League)

May 14th:

[Oregon Humane Society's Doggie Dash](#) - Portland, OR

May 15th:

[Durham Pet Fair](#) - Durham, CT (Help Willy's Friends)

Next month, our newsletter will be packed with photos from these events! Be sure to check it out in June.

If you or your local shelter/organization have an upcoming walk, run or gathering, let us know. We'd love to donate treats and add you to our [community calendar](#). E-mail me at lara@bluedogbakery.com.

Doggie Cremes

Hip & Joint Formula



The [Doggie Cremes](#) are now live on our website! Order them by [clicking here](#) or using the "Buy from amazon.com" button below.

[Doggie Cremes - Hip & Joint Formula](#). Our

special formula includes a glucosamine creme, that isn't degraded by heating or baking . **Doggie Cremes** are great for dogs of all sizes with 250mg of glucosamine to help support healthy hip & joint function. These treats will help put that puppy-spring into any dog's step.

Available at select Walmarts.

Blue Dog Bakery Doggie Cremes -- Hip and Joint Formula, 9-Ounce (Pack of 3)

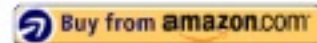
by Blue Dog Bakery

Grocery

List Price: \$19.44

Our Price: \$16.82

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