Turn Your Love of Animals into a Career as a Veterinarian

More than Just Dogs and Cats

Most youngsters see veterinarians as the persons who take care of their pet when it is sick. However, becoming a vet is more than just giving shots to dogs and cats. Even if you decide to specialize in pets, there are still rabbits, gerbils, guinea pigs, birds, and lizards that you might be called upon to care for. There is also the much overlooked area of farm animals and cattle, all of which also require veterinary care. Vets can also specialize in exotic animals and find a position as a doctor in a zoo. No matter what kind of animal you are working with, remember that the work of veterinarians is often messy, smelly, and can be heartbreaking, especially in the case of administering animals with euthanasia in case of incurable diseases.

Veterinarians Stay in School

Becoming a veterinarian means being a good student. The competition is fierce for slots in veterinary medicine. Getting good grades in high school and college are keys to a successful veterinary career. In high school, you should also work or volunteer at a local animal clinic or shelter to get first hand experience. In college, you are required to major in biology or pre veterinary medicine if your school offers that major. However, you will still need four more years of schooling to get a doctor of veterinary medicine degree as well as your national and state licenses.

Kindness, Patience, and a Strong Stomach

While you learn diagnostic and surgical skills in veterinary school, you need to sport a certain type of personality to be a successful veterinarian. It is impossible to explain to animals why you have to perform certain procedures, so you must show them through your actions and tone of voice that you don't want to hurt them. You need to be patient with animals; losing your temper won't help to heal them. Finally, any kind of medical procedure is not for the faint of a heart. Helping a cow give birth is messy task that requires a long shower afterward.

Local Vets are Still Going Strong

Veterinarians are found where there are animals. So whether you want to work in a rural or urban setting, there will be work for you. However, as most veterinary clinics are run by private practice, it is best to start your career as an assistant until you have enough funds to go into business yourself.

Big Paybacks in Veterinary Medicine

Even though the work is tough, the hours long, and schooling expensive, veterinarians generally make about $80,000 a year. This salary is in addition to doing what you love.

While becoming a veterinarian is hard and practicing day in and day out can get tiring, working with the animals you love and being handsomely compensated for your efforts are great reasons to become a veterinarian.