

## What is the best pet insurance plan?

There is no one answer for this because the “best” insurance plan for one owner and one pet isn’t the same for the next. Ask yourself the following questions to help narrow down your options:

1. How much am I willing to pay each month for pet insurance?
2. What kind of coverage do I need?
3. Would I rather pay more each month or pay more if my pet had an accident or was diagnosed with an illness?

## How much does pet insurance cost?

Cost depends on several variables, including: where you live (determined by your zipcode), type of pet you have (dog, cat, or exotic), number of pets you want to insure, age of pet, pet’s breed, whether or not your pet has an existing illness or diagnosis, and the type of coverage you want (accident-only, complete coverage, wellness packages).

Some plans give discounts for pets that are spayed/neutered, pets that are microchipped, owners with certain affiliations (currently enlisted or a veteran of the armed forces, member of certain banks, current customer of insurance company, etc.).

Your plan is likely to be cheapest if you have a pet that is young, healthy, spayed/neutered, and you are only interested in basic coverage. However, the cost of insurance can change over time as pet insurance companies change their policies, economic factors adjust, and your pet ages. You may also decide later on that you want more or less coverage, which can change your monthly or yearly payment. The best way to determine cost is to get a quote by going online or calling the company.

## What does pet insurance cover?

Each company has a detailed list of what is and is not covered, usually in the “Sample Policy” document on their website. Many companies have also offer “add-ons” that can widen your coverage, such as wellness plans that cover preventive treatments such as yearly vaccines, monthly heartworm medications, and screening for infectious diseases such as Lyme disease.

## My pet is already being treated for an illness, is he/she covered?

Currently no pet insurance companies cover “pre-existing conditions”: any health issue that your pet has already been diagnosed with or shown signs of before your coverage begins.

For example, if your pet already has cancer, any care related to her cancer won't be covered by the insurance company. However, this doesn't necessarily mean that she won't be covered for other illnesses. She may still be eligible for pet insurance, but the insurance company will likely need more information from you and your veterinarian to determine what is covered. Make sure you're clear on what is and is not covered to avoid any surprises in the future.

Also, be honest with your pet insurance company. Hiding the fact that your pet has an illness or disease may disqualify you from future coverage and leave you with high bills.

## Is there any alternative to pet insurance?

If you don't have pet insurance, or are ineligible, you can still plan for the future. Start a “pet care fund” and contribute a set amount to it each month. If your pet ends up needing medical care, you'll have money set aside to ease the financial burden. If your pet ends up living a long, healthy, happy life, then you can use this money for yourself or to help another animal in need.

There are also discount programs to help offset costs, but these require your veterinarian to agree to accept the discount and have not been reviewed as thoroughly as pet insurance plans. Before enrolling, do your research on the program to see if it offers significant benefits and confirm that your veterinarian's office accepts the discount.

## Some helpful resources:

**Pet Insurance U:** [www.petinsuranceu.com](http://www.petinsuranceu.com)

This website explains the different aspects of pet-insurance in-depth and provides a useful chart to compare different plans.

**Pet Insurance Review:** [www.petinsurancereview.com](http://www.petinsurancereview.com)

This website allows you to input your information once and receive multiple pet insurance quotes. You can then compare and sort by various types of coverage. You can also read thousands of reviews from pet owners who have personal experience with insurance plans.