



# 7 Ways to Recession-Proof Your Pet

Times are tough for many of us. Many of us know some one who is having problems related to the economy, and most of us are reevaluating what is essential in our lives and what is not as important. But where we don't want to skimp, is with the care of our dear animal friends. How can we take care of our pets and maximize our animal health dollar? Here are some ideas:

## 1 Keep our animals trim.

Purina did a study that proved that dogs that were at their ideal weight lived on average 2 years longer. Obesity or being mildly overweight has been linked to increase risk of cancer, heart disease, arthritis, and endocrine disorders. **Ask our staff if your pet is at its ideal weight and if not, please speak to your veterinarian about starting a weight-loss program for your friend.** Sometimes just a simple healthy substitution of baby carrots for your dog's normal "milk bone" cookie can make all the difference. Helping your pet lose weight will lead to direct health benefits for your pet, and potential pocketbook benefits for you (you will eventually be saving money on food, treats and on chronic medications, like pain medications for arthritis).

If you have already tried to get your dog to lose weight with low fat food and exercise, but it is just not working, consider trying [Slentrol](#). It is safe and really works. Ask our receptionists for a brochure.



## 2 Keep our animals active.

Taking our dogs for daily walks is a simple way to keep our companions physically healthy and mentally balanced. **The "connection" we can have through a leash with our dogs can help heal behavioral problems and gives us insight into subtler signs of mental and physical issues that if left untreated grow into larger and more expensive issues.** If your dog has health issues that have made it difficult for you two to get out there and exercise, or your friend has become a "couch potato", talk to your veterinarian about medications and strategies to get you both heading out the door.

Cats, especially indoor only, can benefit from physical activity and environmental stimulation. We have known for awhile that, although in general indoor cats avoid many health risks, they can become ill from stress-related illnesses (like feline lower urinary tract diseases) if not provided sufficient **environmental enrichment**. Talk to your veterinarian about ways you can get your kitty playful and engaged!



## Win a year's supply of heartworm and flea medication

If you purchase a year's supply of Interceptor or Sentinel during December or January, you could win a year's supply of either product. At the end of January, one year's supply of Interceptor and one year's supply of Sentinel will be raffled! You could be the lucky winner. In addition to this, you can always find a rebate coupon for Interceptor and Sentinel on our website [www.pet-hospital.info](http://www.pet-hospital.info)



### 3 Brush their teeth every day!

It is a simple idea, but not such a simple thing to do. We know that if we commit ourselves to daily brushing we will help prevent our pets from experiencing a great deal of oral pain, and save ourselves a great deal of money by decreasing the need for frequent dental cleanings under anesthesia. We know that we should brush our pet's teeth, but maybe we don't do it because they struggle with us, or we just forget. There are simple techniques to overcome these roadblocks that your veterinarian can go over with you. Bring your pet's toothbrush with you to your appointment. We will help teach you the best way to use it!

And if you can't brush your pet's teeth, you can try Hills t/d food for dogs and cats. Most pets love it! And it can really make a difference in your pet's breath and dental health.

If you have a dental cleaning done, you can't brush, and there is gingivitis or gum recession, talk to your veterinarian about applying *Sanos* after the dental cleaning. It is a plastic polymer that lasts up to 6 months and prevents plaque and tartar formation.

Remember, gingivitis hurts. Even if your pet is not crying or complaining, gingivitis causes pain. It also shortens the life of your pet by spreading infection and toxins internally. If you want more information about gingivitis, check out our web site [www.pet-hospital.info](http://www.pet-hospital.info)



Hill's® Prescription t/d diet  
supplemental dental diet  
for dogs

### 4 Get back to basic, good nutrition.

Food companies know that food = love for many of us. They "bank" on us purchasing our pets' food based on this emotional connection we have to food. Don't choose your pet's food based on the cute packaging or the empty promise of "human" quality ingredients, but instead rely on science and testing to guide your choice. Look for "AAFCO feed trial tested" on the label. This label means that the company has gone that "extra mile" to test and guarantee food for the stage of life advertised on the bag. Another good tip is to choose a company that has a long history producing pet food.

Over the holidays, maintain your pet's regular diet. Treats of turkey, ham, gravy, and cookies can lead to gastro intestinal upsets. Dispose of all bones carefully so that the pet cannot get them. Keep chocolate, grapes, macadamia nuts, and alcoholic drinks out of the reach of your pets.



### 5 Don't forget the "monthlies" and the "annuals".

Your pet's annual exam and monthly preventative medications (heartworm and flea prevention) are very important in maintaining good health. The annual visit allows your animal to be examined by a familiar person, and gives you the chance to discuss preventative health strategies for your friend, with your veterinarian. Cost cutting by delaying or neglecting these important steps often backfires on us, resulting in expensive emergency visits, or stress-ful visits for our pets.

### 6 Practice "safety first"!

Many pets are like our children, and like our children can get into trouble very quickly. Unlike our children, they don't always "grow" out of their tendency to get into situations that can be dangerous for them. Prevention is the best strategy to avoid costly and scary accidents.

Over the holidays, it is especially good to be careful. Dogs and cats love to eat tinsel, and it can cut the intestines and cause very serious injury. Glass ornaments break easily and pets ingest the splinters, cutting their mouth or intestines. Ornament hooks and dough ornaments can also be very dangerous.

Learn about the indoor and outdoor plants that may be poisonous at [www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control](http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control) Avoid insecticides and rodenticides, which can be lethal to pets. For instance, an alternative for snail bait is copper tape around plants or "Sluggo", which contains iron phosphate. And if you do need to have toxic chemicals around the house, make sure they are kept in an area where your pet does not have access!

### 7 Tap into your veterinarian as your "health budget advisor".

Your veterinarian is a good resource and partner in maximizing the value of every dollar you spend on your pet. Ask about drug discounts, and rebates on medications promoted by the drug companies. (Check our website [www.pet-hospital.info](http://www.pet-hospital.info). You will find many rebate coupons. And remember the Sentinel and Interceptor raffle!) Or ask how to do simple treatments at home. Or ask for an idea of the costs of follow up tests so that you can budget in the expense in the future.

At first, it might feel strange or uncomfortable to discuss money issues with your veterinarian. But we all understand your love for your friend can stress the pocketbook, and we would rather know up front if there are issues that are holding you back from doing what we have recommended. In addition, your veterinarian, although not directly affiliated with insurance companies, may be able to supply you with information regarding the different companies and plans to help you pick the right pet insurance to fit your budget and needs.