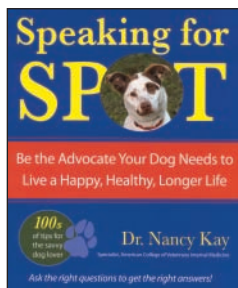


Book Reviews: *For Your Client's Library*

Speaking for Spot: Be the Advocate Your Dog Needs to Live a Happy, Healthy, Longer Life

Reviewed by Susan M. Cotter, DVM, DACVIM



If a dog owner could have only 1 book for health information, this is it. The author explains that owners are the best observers and advocates for their dogs. This is not a do-it-yourself medical text; rather, it explains how to find the right veterinarian and become a partner in the decision-making process.

Veterinarians who schedule 10-minute office visits and do not enjoy answering questions might not like this book. The rest will welcome clients who are good observers; provide a succinct, relevant history; and ask questions to understand what has been said. Somewhat humorous examples of histories are provided by hypothetical owners: Ms. Succinct, Ms. Talkative, and Mr. Wanderer. Chapters on billing, second opinions, cancer, and euthanasia will help owners know what to expect in these situations.

A unique problem-based approach to 43 common clinical signs helps owners know what to look for and

what information a veterinarian needs. For example, for seizures, the veterinarian will ask when it occurred, if consciousness was lost, duration and description of what happened, and any behavior changes or recent environmental exposures. The next chapter provides short explanations on > 200 diseases, with questions an owner might ask. Both of these chapters are up-to-date and clearly written.

The issue of texts and Internet searches includes a caution to find reputable ones (ie, those ending in .com, .org, or .edu). A list of recommended references and Web sites is provided.

I searched hard to find problems or errors in this book. In my opinion, a bit too much emphasis on adverse effects of vaccinations may frighten owners who might overlook the comment that benefits of vaccination outweigh risks, assuming proper vaccines and intervals are used. The author recommends owners and veterinarians determine optimal individualized vaccination protocols. One small error is confusion between grading (histologic degree of malignancy) and staging (extent of spread) of malignancies. Overall, this is an excellent book at a reasonable price. I highly recommend it.—By Nancy Kay. 388 pages; illustrated. Trafalgar Square, PO Box 257, Howe Hill Rd, North Pomfret, VT 05053. ISBN 978-1-57076-405-9. 2008. Price \$19.95.