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More Bark For Your Buck

Get an estimate from your vet. If the numbers make you queasy, have an honest discussion about your finances. Your vet may be able to suggest treatments that make better financial sense or creative options for paying your bill, such as a line of credit (offered by CareCredit™ and several banks). You might also consider pet health insurance (for details, go to spryliving.com/pets).

Kick the annual vaccine habit. Vaccinations for the more common and serious infectious diseases (distemper, parvovirus) provide at least three years of protection. Ask your vet whether all recommended shots are really necessary.

Put Spot on a diet. If you and your vet agree that your pup or kitty could lose a few pounds, try putting less food in the bowl. Not only will you save money on kibble, but a slimmer pet will mean fewer vet bills.

Comparison-shop for prescriptions. If the medication prescribed is a human drug, compare the human pharmacy price to what your vet charges. For things like heartworm preventive and flea and tick control products, you might find the best savings at online pharmacies. You'll still need your vet's OK; if she refuses, ask if she'll match the online pharmacy's price.

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