

# Gordon Vet Hospital: Pet Insurance

At Gordon Vet Hospital we understand that pet insurance cover, like any insurance can be invaluable to help with unexpected veterinary fees if your pet has an accident or develops a serious illness. As a pet owner, providing proper health care for your pet is one of the expenses you must be prepared for. However as a new pet owner, the amount of information you are bombarded with can be overwhelming! Pet insurance is often overlooked and forgotten until the animal is older or unwell. The Australian Veterinary Association strongly supports pet insurance and at Gordon Vet Hospital we believe that pet insurance is important too. It provides peace of mind for pet owners. We have compiled some important points for you to consider:

## Choosing the right policy

- Choosing suitable pet insurance can be daunting as there are so many companies to choose from. In fact, many of the policies are underwritten by the same company. Therefore the cover offered is often similar. There are a few stand-alone companies
- We can discuss some options with you, but it is important that you also do your own research, based on your individual pet's species, breed and age
- All policies are different and it is important to read the fine print so that you know what to expect from each policy
- The cover provided by different policies varies considerably, ranging from accident-only to lifetime cover policies. Some have separate accident and illness policies. It is advisable to insure your pet for both accident and illness
- Many policies are advertised as providing lifetime cover. Unfortunately this often means they will insure your pet for life but not always cover chronic or recurring conditions for life. They often cover these conditions up to a maximum amount in one policy period after which they are excluded. Many conditions we treat are chronic in nature, so it is important to choose a policy that will pay for these for the life of your pet
- The three main companies we recommend are Petplan, PROSURE and RSPCA Pet Insurance

## Insurance exclusions

- All pet insurance policies have exclusions. It is important to investigate what these are as exclusions vary between companies. Some examples include:
  - a. Pre existing conditions
  - b. Routine teeth cleaning (some companies cover the extraction of teeth)
  - c. Routine, preventative treatments (e.g. desexing, vaccination)
  - d. Diseases caused by ticks and fleas (important in the Gordon / Pymble area)
  - e. Diseases for which there is a vaccine, even if the pet is vaccinated
  - f. Diagnostic testing if no conclusive diagnosis is achieved

## **Percentage cover & your pet's age**

- The percentage of claim varies between pet insurance companies. Some companies cover 100% of the claim minus any fixed excess, while others only pay a percentage of the claim (70-80%) with or without a fixed excess also
- Most companies will not insure older pets for the first time for illness cover. The cut off age varies but is usually 8-9 years of age or younger for certain breeds
- Often the level of cover changes once your pet reaches a certain age and you may have to pay a percentage of the cost of treatment as well as a fixed excess.

## **Annual Maximum Benefit**

- This is the maximum amount the company will pay in each policy period. Some companies also apply annual or lifetime sub limits for certain conditions such as tick paralysis and cruciate ligament disease.
- Bilateral Conditions are conditions affecting a body part of which your pet has two (eyes, ears, knees). However they are often classed as one condition. Therefore only one annual maximum limit may apply.

## **Waiting period**

- This is the time between starting the insurance policy and cover commencing. Accident cover is often immediate. The waiting period for illness cover is often 21-30 days. Others can be longer, such as cruciate ligament cover which is often 6 months.