

Terms & Conditions – What to Know & Expect

We aim to educate you on our policies, expectations, and commitments to our patients, their owners, and referring veterinarians. To be familiar with our expectations and processes, we encourage you to also read our [Client Preparation Guide](#).

TIMELY SERVICES

We make every effort to provide each patient with the quality care they require in a timely manner. However, it is important to understand that, like a human hospital, urgent cases must take priority when we are organizing our patient care. The urgency of care required can change as a patient's condition changes – which is often suddenly. We continuously adjust our schedules and provide the urgent care as required.

We understand wait times can be frustrating to you and your pet. However, we ask that you respect and be supportive of other pet owners, their pets, and our staff. Your patience is greatly appreciated. Depending on circumstances and current caseload at the hospital, your pet may:

- Go home after the initial consult to return for diagnostic tests and/or treatment at a later date.
- Be hospitalized for further diagnostics and/or treatments to be carried out on that day or over a few days.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Owner Approval and Commitment: Once your pet has been assessed, we will provide you with a written estimate outlining the recommended diagnostics and/or treatments and associated costs. By signing the estimate, you:

1. Acknowledge that the estimate is not an invoice and that medical conditions can change resulting in changes in the final/complete invoice.
2. Agree to pay an initial payment of ½ of the higher-end of the estimate prior to diagnostics, treatments, and/or hospitalization.
3. Commit to pay the remaining balance when your pet is discharged.
4. Acknowledge that some costs associated to medical care provided to your pet may not be recorded in VSCNL's accounting system prior to discharge. If so, you:
 - understand and accept VSCNL will issue a subsequent invoice within ten (10) business days of discharge, and
 - commit to pay costs on the subsequent invoice.

Note: Estimates can change due to the unpredictable nature of medical work. The final invoice may be below or above the original estimate, depending upon clinical circumstances. Fees are determined by the time spent on a patient's case and according to the drugs, materials, and consumables used. Where possible, we will keep clients updated if costs are likely to exceed the current estimate, although in an emergency this may not always be possible.

Forms of Payment: VSCNL accepts cash, debit, and all major credit cards.

Inability to Pay: You will be expected to pay any legal or other reasonable fees/expenses incurred by VSCNL in connection with or in contemplation of any non-payment of your account (by you).

Daily Financial Updates: If your pet is hospitalized, our Customer Service Representatives will provide a financial update via email. We aim to issue these email notifications at 6:30 am daily. Therefore, it is important that you provide an email during the registration process. We can provide the updates via phone if requested; however, you must be willing to accept the phone call around 6:00 am.

Note: We make every effort to provide you with a complete bill at the time of discharge. However, in rare circumstances, some fees may not be posted to your account prior to discharge. If there are any additional fees, we will personally contact you within 10 business days after your pet is discharged to inform you of these charges.

CANCELLATIONS AND NO SHOWS

We have implemented a Cancellation and No Show policy to better utilize appointments for patients in need of medical care.

Scheduled Services: Our Customer Services Representatives will contact you to schedule the required service (consultation, in-patient procedure, or surgery). When possible, we will issue a reminder of the scheduled service 24-hours in advance via email or phone. The reminder will include our Cancellation and No Show policies. The record of the reminder will be documented in the patient file.

Late Cancellation and Missed Appointment Policies: VSCNL is available 24/7, 365 days a year to receive calls. **VSCNL requires a client to provide 48-hour advance notice to cancel and/or reschedule an appointment.** Services are in high demand and early cancellation will give another pet the possibility to have access to timely medical care. Clients who reschedule multiple times may see limitations to access future appointments.

When a client has not cancelled within the 48-hour advance period or arrives more than 15 minutes after the scheduled appointment time.

1. A phone call alerting the client will be issued and recorded in the patient file.
2. The applicable "late cancellation/missed appointment" fee will be charged to the client as identified below.
 - a. Consultation Appointment: \$75.00
 - b. Recheck Appointment: \$40.00
 - c. Diagnostic and/or Procedure Appointment: 20% of the procedural estimate
 - d. Surgical Appointment: 20% of the surgical estimate
3. Temporary suspension of services will be applied until the fee has been paid. **These suspended services exclude walk-in emergency care.** Cancellation fees may not be covered by an insurance policy. VSCNL understands unavoidable circumstances may cause a client to cancel with short notice. In these instances, the fee may be waived on a case-by-case basis.

PET INSURANCE

We request you read your full insurance policy and our [*Pet Insurance Fact Sheet*](#) prior to attending your appointment. When possible, we will submit your insurance claims for you. However, please keep in mind any costs incurred are approved by you; therefore, are primarily your responsibility.

PRESCRIPTIONS

In line with primary care veterinary practice protocols, we will not prescribe medication to an animal who has not had a physical examination and consultation conducted by one of **our** veterinarians. A current veterinary/client relationship is required for the condition being treated.

Refills: If one of our veterinarians approved a prescription refill for a patient under our care, we request you provide us **48 hours'** notice for repeat orders of medication. If a medication is ordered in for the sole treatment of your pet, we will require payment in full, even if the medication is not collected or used. **VSCNL will not refill medications for patients not under our care.**

Written Prescriptions: You may ask for a written prescription and obtain medications from another veterinary practice or pharmacy. A prescription may not be appropriate, however, if your animal is an in-patient or immediate treatment is necessary. A \$10.00 fee is applied for formulating and supplying a written prescription.

MEDICAL ADVICE

VSCNL's medical team is available for clients to contact us if they have a question about a diagnosis and/or treatment regarding a patient that we have discharged. As a best practice standard in any medical field, VSCNL does **not** provide medical advice for patients and/or conditions **not** treated for by our medical team.

CLIENT DATA AND CONFIDENTIALITY

We collect and use your personal information to comply with federal, provincial, local law and by-law requirements. We may also use it for internal auditing and administration, billing and insurance claims, analysis to improve services, or assist in operational planning. We may disclose your personal information if required by law.

Medical Records: Medical records are the property of the pet owner and will be shared externally only as requested and approved by the pet owner identified on our records. In circumstances where two or more owners are recorded on a patient medical record, a request to remove one or more of the owners must be obtained in writing from all of the owners.

Client Information Changes: Clients are responsible to inform us if information (i.e., phone numbers, emergency contacts) have changed.

Client Consent: Consent may be provided by signing a specific document. Verbal or implied consent may also be obtained during an appointment or during a telephone call with one of our doctors. Your consent can also be provided by persons authorized by you.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

We will seek to understand your concerns and then work with you to provide the best possible outcomes for everyone. We are constantly assessing our processes and procedures to see if we can improve them, and developing protocols or policies to maximize the consistency of our care and services. Our Quality and Referral Services Manager can be reached anytime via email at qccontrol@vscnl.ca

AVIAN AND EXOTICS MEDICAL CARE

If you require avian or exotic pet medical care, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with which primary care veterinary practices will treat avian or exotic species. Currently, this province doesn't have an avian or exotic board-certified specialist. However, we do see avian and exotic patients, and often consult with the required specialists on challenging cases. If you are dealing with a chronic issue or illness in an avian or exotic species and feel that VSCNL may have more to offer in regards to diagnostic/treatment capabilities, we recommend contacting your family veterinarian or VSCNL to discuss whether this is the case and what might be arranged.

DISCLAIMER

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