



Students learn surgical skills under faculty guidance by performing spay-neuter and other procedures for shelter animals that return to local shelters for adoption.



Hemodialysis for companion animals is available at both the William R. Pritchard Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, UC Davis, and the University of California Veterinary Medical Center—San Diego.

Career Opportunities in Veterinary Medicine

Veterinarians are highly trained medical professionals who provide for the health and quality of life of all kinds of animals. They use problem-solving skills and in-depth knowledge of biological, physical and social science to diagnose, treat and prevent animal diseases. Their expertise enhances the productivity of animals and assures the safety of animal products used by people.

Most veterinarians in the United States work in private practice. Others work in a wide range of fields including public health, animal disease control, environmental protection, biotechnology, higher education and research. The profession becomes more complex as trade barriers fall, new zoonotic diseases emerge, human travel increases, and production and distribution of food products take place in more concentrated, large-scale operations.

Private Practice

The United States animal health care system is based on the private practice of veterinary medicine. Private practitioners provide primary health care to livestock and companion animals on a case-by-case, fee-for-service basis. More than 70 percent of practices deal with small companion animals. Practitioners may specialize in one medical area, such as surgery or dermatology. Others emphasize a group or species, such as food animals, exotics, birds or horses. Whatever their interests, all DVM students learn to provide basic care to the general animal population and prevent disease and other health problems.

Public Practice

Veterinarians may work for federal or regional agencies that watch over the health and welfare of domesticated animals or monitor populations of free-ranging wildlife. These experts diagnose diseases, inspect meat and poultry, oversee communicable disease programs (West Nile virus, rabies, BSE, avian flu, etc.) and conduct research. Specialists also handle fish, wildlife, laboratory animals and other animals regulated by federal law. Such careers can include working with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, National Institutes of Health, Army or Air Force Veterinary Corps, and others.

Research

Research veterinarians investigate scientific problems and develop strategies and new technologies. They develop new diagnostic tests, vaccines and products that prevent human and animal disease and enhance food quality. For instance, veterinary pathologists and toxicologists working in public institutions or private companies test the safety and efficacy of new treatments, monitor environmental conditions and evaluate the effects of environmental pollutants.

Teaching

Veterinarians have excellent opportunities to teach at veterinary schools or colleges. Instructors teach courses that encourage professional-level students to develop the problem-solving skills and strategies that promote animal health. Faculty members also conduct basic and clinical research and provide various services to the public.

The mechanical strength of an equine bone is tested using biomedical engineering.



Trends

Surveys of state population growth and UC studies of health workforce needs indicate a growing demand for sophisticated veterinary services. Corporations and private practices will provide specialized opportunities in nutrition, dentistry, behavior and other services.

Society's concerns about food safety and health mean that veterinarians will be increasingly called upon to fill positions in food animal health, zoonotic disease control and preventive medicine. Veterinary experts in genetics, pathology and toxicology are needed to fill biotechnology positions. Laboratory animal specialists will contribute more than ever to comparative medical investigations relevant to animal and human health.

Opportunities

- Environmental and ecosystem health
- Biosecurity and emergency preparedness
- Veterinary public health and infectious disease control
- Population medicine
- Laboratory animal medicine
- Food safety and security
- Food animal medicine and research
- Toxicology
- Pathology
- Academia

A student examines a client chicken in the hospital's Companion Avian and Exotic Pet Medicine Service.



Expected Salary Level

As in most professions, salaries are based on career option, time since graduation and job location. According to the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine Graduate Salary Survey of 2008, the mean base salary for a first-year associate veterinarian is an estimated \$72,800 to \$73,500. Graduates from 2006 report that their total compensation—salary plus benefits—in all practice types except internships is about \$93,000. For more information, download the 2008 salary survey (www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/placement-services/2008_Compensation.pdf).

Licensing in California

The Board of Examiners in Veterinary Medicine regulates the practice of veterinary medicine in California, including the issuance of licenses to practice. Veterinarians must be licensed before they can practice veterinary medicine in California. To be eligible for licensure in California, candidates **MUST** have passing scores on the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE), and the California State Board (CSB). The application form includes the following question: "Have you ever pled nolo contendere or been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, other than a minor traffic violation—if so, give details." The Board has the right to request and receive the police record of any applicant.