



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

VETERINARY MEDICAL CENTER

# Frequently Asked Questions About Clinical Nutrition Appointments

## *Nutrition Service*

### **What can I expect from a nutrition appointment at the Veterinary Medical Center?**

During every appointment, whether in-person or by telephone, we will review your pet's medical and diet history, evaluate his or her current diet, discuss specific feeding strategies appropriate for your pet, answer your nutrition questions and provide written recommendations to you and your veterinarian for commercial diets, treats and supplements (if applicable) to meet your pet's nutritional needs. During in-person appointments, we will also perform an exam on your pet, paying particular attention to body condition and other factors related directly to nutrition. After your appointment, we will prepare a report of our recommendations for you and your referring veterinarian. To schedule an appointment or for pricing information, please call 612-626-VETS (8387) and ask to speak with the nutrition technician.

### **How do I make an appointment with the Clinical Nutrition Service?**

To set up a phone or in-person appointment with the nutrition service, call 612-626-VETS (8387) and ask to speak with the nutrition technician. You will need to fill out a diet history form and your veterinarian will need to provide current medical records (especially blood work) for your pet, prior to the appointment.

### **How do I prepare for my appointment with the Nutrition Service?**

Please have your primary veterinary clinic send us your pet's medical records. We specifically request any laboratory results (blood work, chemistry or other diagnostic lab work). Medical records can be sent via fax to our Nutrition Service (612-624-8779). A diet history form is essential for us to review before your pet's appointment. The more specific information you provide (food brand(s), forms, treat names and amounts) helps us in determining your pet's nutritional needs. To complete our online diet history form go to <http://www.cvm.umn.edu/vmc/specialties/nutrition/diet-history/index.htm>. When you submit the diet history form at least 2 business days prior to your appointment, we can prepare for your consultation. If you have any questions, please let us know.

### **How can I purchase a home-cooked diet recipe from the Veterinary Medical Center?**

If your pet's medical conditions require a home-cooked diet or you prefer to feed one, we can formulate a custom home-cooked diet recipe for your pet. To purchase a recipe, you and your pet must have a phone or in-person appointment with the nutrition service or your veterinarian must submit a consult requesting a diet formulation. The diet recipe(s) may take up to a week to finalize after the appointment or consultation, once we receive all of the information that we need, and will be mailed, faxed or emailed to you (appointments) or your veterinarian (veterinary consults). As with all of our appointments and consultations, we will also provide comparable commercial diet recommendations if appropriate for your pet's health concerns as well as information on treats and/or supplements. Because home-cooked diet recipes are often prepared for specific medical conditions, it is very important that substitutions of ingredients are not done. Patients on these diets benefit from more frequent recheck evaluations, recommended every 6 months, to ensure that the diet is still meeting nutritional needs.

### **What if I have more than one pet?**

As you know, each one of your pets is unique. We also treat each pet as an individual and carefully review medical records and their diet history before making specific diet recommendations, whether for commercial diets or

home-cooked recipes. For this reason, if you would like to have specific diet recommendations for each of your pets, there will be a separate fee for each pet to cover the time required to review medical records and diet history, discuss options, and follow up with you. Evaluating each pet is particularly important when one or more pets in the family has health concerns and the diets that they require may not be appropriate for other animals in the household. Without reviewing each pet's medical records, we can only advise you as to whether any commercial diets recommended for the pet that we discuss in the appointment are generally appropriate for healthy pets. Home-cooked diet recipes are more difficult to adjust to meet the needs of pets of different sizes and one of the main benefits of home-cooking is being able to customize the diet to the needs of the individual pet. Therefore, review of additional pet's information and adjustment of the diet recipe to meet each pet's needs is strongly recommended.

**What if I have a question about my pet after my appointment?**

Our nutritionist will continue to support you and your pet after your appointment via brief telephone conversations or emails. To ensure that we have adequate time to communicate with all of our clients, we limit communications to 6 months after your initial appointment. After 6 months if your pet's condition changes dramatically (for example, another disease is diagnosed), you may need to schedule a follow-up appointment which will incur an additional charge.