

THERE'S A PLACE FOR EVERYONE IN VETERINARY MEDICINE



Veterinary medicine has many different career opportunities for you to explore.

If you're interested in a career that blends your love for animals with science, technology, and even human health, the veterinary profession could be a great fit for you. Use this list as a starting point as you begin to consider a future in veterinary medicine.

Clinical medicine

Clinical veterinarians are the doctors who provide care for pets—like dogs and cats—as well as various other species: large animals (cows, horses, pigs, etc.), exotics like reptiles and birds, zoo animals, fish, and more. And just like doctors who treat people, clinical veterinarians can specialize in many different areas of medicine—like dermatology, neurology, cardiology, dentistry, etc. A majority of veterinarians in the United States (about 65%) work in clinical practice.

What they do

Veterinarians in clinical practice spend most of their time seeing patients for wellness exams or due to illness or injury.

Where they work

Where clinical veterinarians spend their days varies, and often depends on the types of animals they treat. They might practice in a private clinic, emergency room, animal shelter, farm, zoo, aquarium, mobile practice, or even in the wild.



Industry and research

Veterinarians are crucial to the development of new drugs for both people and animals. Their work is an important part of finding new ways to diagnose, treat, and prevent health disorders in all species.

What they do

They provide care to laboratory animals and other animals living in research facilities. They also may be involved in developing products, collaborating with veterinary practices, and promoting and marketing products.

Where they work

Industry or research veterinarians usually work for and with larger companies such as pet food manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies, diagnostic technology firms, and other animal health-related organizations.

Education

Veterinary educators teach current and future generations of all types of veterinary professionals—including veterinarians, veterinary nurses or certified veterinary technicians, and others.

What they do

They provide instruction to students in colleges and universities, veterinary schools, vocational or technical programs, and even some high schools.

Where they work

Depending on who and what they're teaching, educators will spend most of their time in a classroom, laboratory setting, or in the field.

Government/Regulatory/International health

You might be surprised by the many positions that veterinarians hold in uniformed services, government and regulatory agencies, and international health services.



Uniformed services

Veterinarians in uniformed services—including in the U.S. Army Corp, Air Force, etc.—serve as health care providers for military animals. They also might treat the pets of other servicemembers living on base. Many veterinarians in uniformed services also contribute to food safety and public health (see below).



Food safety and public health

Veterinarians are crucial to protecting the country's food supply and public health. As key members of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and other regulatory agencies, they oversee meatpacking plants and agricultural facilities. Why? Both to ensure that food is free of banned substances and safe for human consumption, and to protect the health and welfare of the animals. These veterinarians also prevent and control zoonotic diseases (diseases spread between people and animals, like rabies and avian flu), and make certain that animals entering the country are healthy and don't pose a threat to public safety.



Public policy

Veterinarians work closely with government officials to develop policies and laws on critical issues that can impact food safety, public health, and national security. These include topics in animal production and agriculture, animal welfare, and zoonotic disease, among others.



Aerospace

Veterinary astronauts conduct important research on the effects of space travel and zero-gravity on people and animals. In addition to planning and conducting experiments, these veterinarians are responsible for the health and welfare of all animals at NASA—whether in space or on the ground.



International health

Veterinarians do crucial work to improve animal, human, and environmental health across the globe. This might mean providing animal care and education to underserved populations, or working with local communities to prevent exposure to—and control—diseases that humans can get from animals and animal products.

What's next?

The possibilities of what a rewarding veterinary career can look like for you are limitless. Ready to learn more? Visit avma.org/VetSchool101 to find out the steps to becoming a veterinarian.