

The Faces of Your Veterinary Health Care Team

Guelph, ON



The veterinary health care team at Fort Malden Animal Hospital in Amherstburg, Ontario.

As humans, we go into our doctor's office and have a good understanding of who we may see. We are greeted at the front desk by a receptionist, led to the exam room by a nurse, looked over thoroughly by a doctor, and sometimes revisited by a nurse if we need to have vaccines, bloodwork or have further questions about a procedure or medication.

It is similar in veterinary medicine, however "who is who" in a veterinary clinic is something most people aren't as familiar with. Let's break down the friendly faces you'll meet when you bring your pet to your veterinary clinic.

Receptionist – Just like in human medicine, the receptionist is usually the first person you see in a veterinary clinic. Sometimes referred to by other names such as Client Care Representatives or Front Office Staff, this team member is responsible for tasks such as booking appointments, triaging calls from clients, and processing payments.

Registered Veterinary Technician/Technologist (RVT) – RVTs, like veterinarians, are a regulated profession. They hold a legal license, and their role is to fulfill the medical orders given by the veterinarian. RVTs are formally educated and trained to perform both animal nursing duties and technical duties, such as intravenous (IV) placement, anesthesia delivery, surgical assistance, and obtaining and processing laboratory samples, diagnostic radiographs and ultrasounds.

Veterinarian – This is the one job we all recognize! The doctor. A veterinarian holds a legal license to practice veterinary medicine, and they oversee the medical care of your pet. By law, only a veterinarian can diagnose, prognose, perform surgery and prescribe drugs for your pet. A veterinarian has the authority to delegate or assign all other tasks to the appropriate team member, under varying levels of supervision.

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Veterinary Assistant – The role of a Veterinary Assistant is similar to that of a Personal Support Worker (PSW) in human health care. They care for your pet's basic needs, under the direction of the veterinarian. Responsibilities can include things like feeding, bathing and exercising pets, as well as restraining them during examinations and treatment. Veterinary Assistants may also be tasked with keeping kennels clean, however, many clinics have specific **Kennel Staff or Animal**

Care Attendants who work to keep kennels, bedding and litter boxes clean, making sure pets are kept clean and comfortable.

Together, these roles make up the **veterinary health care team**. Depending on the size of your clinic, you may see some crossover in responsibilities. For example, in a smaller clinic you may see the RVT also covering reception. Together, all members of your veterinary health care team work as a unit to provide your pet with the best care possible.

For more information:

Colleen McElwain
Canadian Animal Health Institute
(519) 763-7777