VOCABULARY

**At the vet’s**

Do you have a pet? If so, you will be familiar with some of the situations described on this page. ANNA HOCHSIEDER presents language to talk about going to the vet’s.

**All in a day’s work**

Polly is a veterinary surgeon. Here, she describes her work at a veterinary practice in south London.

Most of our patients are dogs or cats, but we also treat other small animals, such as pet rabbits, tortoises, birds and even fish.

Before the surgery opens at 8 am., the nurses feed our inpatients and clean out the kennels and cages. The waiting room is always full, but not all our patients are sick. Our work involves preventive health care, such as giving pet owners advice on nutrition, hygiene, worming, flea treatment and other forms of parasite control. People bring their pets for dental check-ups, vaccinations or to have them microchipped or spayed (also called neutered). We also perform more complex surgery, but some of our patients have to be referred to a specialist.

There’s only one thing I don’t like about my job: telling people that their beloved pet will have to be put down. But it’s all in a day’s work.
PRACTICE

Now try the following exercises to practise vocabulary you might need at the vet’s.

Exercise 1

Cross out the word or phrase in each line that does not match the others.

A. cabinet | cage | kennel | pet carrier
B. nurse | pet | specialist | vet
C. budgie | kitten | puppy | trolley
D. neutering | vaccination | waiting room | worming

Exercise 2

Complete definitions A–D with the words from the list.

Elizabethan collar | parasite | syringe | tortoise

A. A(n) ___________________________ is a small animal or plant that lives in or on another animal or plant and feeds on it.

B. A(n) ___________________________ is a reptile with a hard round shell on its back that lives on land and moves very slowly.

C. A(n) ___________________________ is a needle fitted to a plastic tube, used for injecting drugs or drawing blood from a body.

D. A(n) ___________________________ is a plastic cone worn around the neck by a cat or dog to stop it from scratching or licking wounds.

Exercise 3

Match the problems described by pet owners (A–E) to the vet’s responses (1–5).

A. We don’t want our cat to have any more kittens.
B. I think our dog may be overweight.
C. I’m worried my cat might run away.
D. My dog has had diarrhoea for several days.
E. What can I do to protect my cat against cat flu?

1. When did you last have it wormed?
2. You should have it vaccinated.
3. You should have it spayed.
4. We can give you nutritional advice.
5. Have you considered having it microchipped?

Exercise 4

Look at the last sentence in the text on page 46 and choose the best answer to this question: What is the meaning of the idiom “all in a day’s work”?

A. A particular activity takes no more than one day to finish.
B. A particular job consists of only one activity.
C. A particular activity is part of your job and therefore must be done.

“Surgery” and “surgeons”

- In British English, a surgery (countable noun) is a place where a doctor, dentist or vet sees his or her patients. The American word for this is office.
- Surgery (uncountable noun) is medical treatment in which a doctor cuts open a person’s or animal’s body — in other words, an operation.
- A surgeon is someone who is trained to perform surgery.
- In formal British English, a veterinary surgeon is a doctor who treats animals. In American English, the usual term is veterinarian. But in spoken language, the more common word is vet.