

Facts + Statistics: Pet Ownership and Insurance

Homeowners

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Pet insurance



The pet insurance industry got its start almost a century ago in Sweden where about half that country's pets are now insured. In North America, Veterinary Pet Insurance Co., a subsidiary of Nationwide, sold its first pet insurance policy in 1982 to cover the dog playing Lassie on television.

The [North American Pet Health Insurance Association](#) (NAPHIA) reported that the [pet health insurance sector](#) for the United States posted gross written premiums of \$1.99 billion in 2020, up 27.5 percent from \$1.56 billion in 2019. The market has been rising at an average annual growth rate of almost 24.2 percent from 2016 to 2020. The total number of pets insured

reached 3.1 million at year-end 2020.

Dogs represented 83 percent of in-force gross written premium in 2020. In 2020 average annual premiums reported by NAPHIA for dog insurance were \$218 for accident-only coverage, which includes care for foreign body ingestion, lacerations, motor vehicle accidents, poisoning and other injuries. Average annual premiums for accident and illness were \$594, which covers accident-only benefits, plus illnesses such as cancer, infections, digestive problems and other illnesses. For cats, annual premiums for accident and illness coverage are about 40 percent less.

According to NAPHIA, there are 20 pet insurance companies in North America, ranging from Nationwide, the first insurer to offer pet insurance and the top writer of pet insurance, to insurtech Lemonade. According to the Society of Actuaries, policies are not standardized as some plans include routine health maintenance, diagnostic tests, lab fees or prescriptions. Deductibles vary as well, and many plans exclude preexisting conditions but some add exclusions for congenital conditions, cancer treatments or other issues. Insurers may offer discounts for service dogs or multiple pets insured.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly one in three (30 percent) of Americans adopted a pet, according to the Insurance Research Council's October 2020 report, *Consumer Responses to the Pandemic and Implications for Insurance*. Many pet owners decided to forgo pet insurance, according to Liberty Mutual Insurance. The company's survey found that almost three-quarters of animal owners do not have pet insurance.

Pet ownership in the United States



Sixty-seven percent of U.S. households, or about 85 million families, own a pet, according to the 2019-2020 National Pet Owners Survey conducted by the American Pet Products Association (APPA). This is up from 56 percent of U.S. households in 1988, the first year the survey was conducted.

Number of U.S. Households That Own a Pet, by Type of Animal

(millions)

Pet	Number
Bird	5.7
Cat	42.7
Dog	63.4
Horse	1.6
Freshwater fish	11.5

Pet	Number
Saltwater fish	1.6
Reptile	4.5
Small animal	5.4

Source: American Pet Products Association's 2019-2020 National Pet Owners Survey.

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Total Number Of Pets Owned In The United States, By Type Of Animal

(millions)

Pet	Number
Freshwater fish	139.3
Cat	94.2
Dog	89.7
Bird	20.3
Saltwater fish	18.8
Small animal	14.0
Reptile	9.4
Horse	7.6

Source: American Pet Products Association's 2017-2018 National Pet Owners Survey.

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Total U.S. Pet Industry Expenditures, 2010-2019 (1)

(\$ billions)

Year	Expenditure
2010	\$48.35
2011	50.96
2012	53.33

Year	Expenditure
2014	58.04
2015	60.28
2016	66.75
2017	69.51
2018	72.56
2019	75.38 (2)

(1) Includes food, supplies and over-the-counter medicine, veterinary care, live animal purchases and grooming and boarding.
(2) Estimate.

Source: American Pet Products Association's 2019-2020 National Pet Owners Survey.

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Basic Annual Expenses for Dogs and Cats (1)



Expense	Dog	Cat
Surgical vet	\$426	\$214
Routine visit	212	160
Food	259	228
Food treats	76	58
Kennel boarding	229	120
Vitamins	58	54
Groomer/grooming aids	73	43
Toys	48	31

(1) APPA does not ask survey participants how much in total they spend on their dog or cats annually. The expenses listed above are not all inclusive and each category was asked separately of the survey participant.

Source: American Pet Products Association's 2019-2020 National Pet Owners Survey.

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