

Walk in ready. Walk out clear.

From the book "Why Are Vet Bills So Expensive?" by Dr. Steve Pelton, DVM · Hearthstone Animal Clinic, Cypress, TX

Questions that get a straight answer

1. What will this test or scan change about what we do next?
2. What's essential versus optional here?
3. If this were your pet, on a real budget, what would you do?
4. Is there a generic version of this medication?
5. If money is tight, what is the one thing you would NOT cut?

Go now, or wait for your vet?

Go now, don't wait

- Trouble breathing or panting at rest
- Swollen, tight belly (big dogs)
- Repeated retching that brings nothing up
- Collapse or can't stand
- Seizures
- Male cat straining, nothing comes out
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Ate a known toxin
- Hit by a car, even if "fine"

Usually OK to wait (still call)

- One vomit, otherwise bright and active
- Mild limping that improves
- A small lump that's been there a while
- Slightly low appetite under a day, no other signs

A male cat straining with nothing produced can be fatal within a day. That one, go now.

The phone call costs nothing. The waiting is the expensive part.