

## How to Make More Money From Reminders

*Are you reminding clients of every product and service their pets need?*

By Wendy S. Myers



During a consultation with a hospital in suburban Chicago, I discovered that clients only received one reminder postcard and notices were limited to vaccines. What if a client didn't respond to the first and only mailing? What medical opportunities were doctors missing for heartworm and intestinal parasite testing, senior wellness screens, medication monitoring and more? Besides traditional postcards, what additional communication tools could the practice use to increase response rates and provide better medical care for pets?

The first step in improving this practice's reminder system was expanding it. You can do the same. Audit your veterinary software to make sure you remind for specific products and services. Create a table to identify key products and services that need reminded and then automate your follow up with reminder cards and callbacks for better patient care. Here is a sample to get you started:

Service / Product	Reminder Interval
Wellness exam	6 months
Heartworm test for dogs	12 months
Grade 1 dental cleaning	12 months
Grade 2 dental cleaning	9-12 months
Grade 3 dental cleaning	6-9 months
Grade 4 dental cleaning	4-6 months

Ask you search your practice-management software for service and product reminders, examine these categories:

- Vaccines, including distinguishing codes such as "Pediatric Rabies" to indicate one-year duration of immunity compared to a three-year Rabies vaccine given to adult pets. Also code vaccines so you know where the pet is in the booster schedule such as "FVRCP 1," "FVRCP 2" and "FVRCP 3" for a kitten series and "FVRCP Adult" for a three-year

adult cat vaccine. Check each vaccine's administration interval because some may be given annually, every three years or every six months such as Bordetella.

- Spay or neuter, reminding at four months so the client has two months to schedule the surgery before the pet is 6 months old
- Intestinal parasite test
- Heartworm test
- Wellness blood and urine screen
- Diagnostics for senior pets such as blood pressure check, EKG, glaucoma test, x-rays, senior blood test and urinalysis
- FIV/FeLV test
- Blood tests for pets on long-term medications
- Parasite preventatives
- Dentistry
- Therapeutic diets, including entering a staff member callback two days after a therapeutic diet is prescribed for the first time or whenever a diet change is made to ensure the pet is eating the new food
- Microchipping
- Grooming

### **Don't Forget Product Reminders**

During a consultation at a Las Vegas hospital, I asked whether the practice manager sends reminders for preventatives. Research from Veterinary Metrics in Atlanta shows 25 percent of practices remind clients to repurchase preventatives. Preventatives are a consumable item, and clients must to be reminded to repurchase them. You don't want pets to go out of compliance from year-round protection. When I questioned the practice manager about what the hospital charges for an intestinal parasite test, she replied \$19. When I inquired about the price for 12 months of preventatives, the price was \$88. So I asked the manager, "Why do you send a reminder for a \$19 service, but not for an \$88 product?" She instantly understood my point, and we set up reminders for parasite preventatives the same day.

Set up individual product inventory codes based on the number of doses. For example, enter one 12-pack of Product A at \$XXX, one 6-pack of Product A at \$XXX and a single dose of

Product A at \$XX. The quantity on each item is one. Do not create a catch-all Product A code where staff members enter the number of doses sold each time because then reminders must be entered manually, which may not happen consistently. When you create the inventory item of “12-pack of Product A” you automatically generate a reminder in 11 months to repurchase.

Product purchased	Reminder interval
12-month supply of parasite preventative	Remind in 11 months
6-month supply of parasite preventative	Remind in 5 months
Single dose of parasite preventative	Callback in 20 days

Sample reminder message for preventatives:

Dear (pet's name):

It's now time to refill your prescription for Product A, which provides monthly protection from (list specific parasites). An annual heartworm test is required to ensure your pet can safely take ongoing medication. Our hospital's protocol is year-round protection from parasites. Please call (phone number) to request your pet's refill of Product A. We'll also tell you about savings and rebates for purchasing a 12-month supply.

Your friends at (your hospital name)

P.S. Call us at (phone number) today before you run out of Product A. We want constant protection for your best friend!

### Use Several Communication Tools

Go beyond traditional postcards, employing multiple communication tools to remind clients. Pet Portals, [www.petportals.com](http://www.petportals.com), can enhance your existing website or create a website if your hospital doesn't have one. Pet Portals works with your veterinary software to send clients e-mail reminders and lets them view upcoming services and products that are due on your website. Clients also can get an e-mail on the day of the month they need to administer preventatives or other medications. At [www.remindmypet.com](http://www.remindmypet.com), clients can sign up for text messages or e-mail reminders about when to give any medication.

Increasing client contact and reminding for more services and products works. Following my consultation in suburban Chicago, the hospital implemented reminder strategies that I recommended. Within six months, practice revenue increased 14 percent. Standards of care were the same, we simply reminded clients of every service and product their pets needed. See if your hospital can achieve the same results!

### About the Author:



Wendy S. Myers owns Communication Solutions for Veterinarians in Denver. Her consulting firm helps teams improve compliance, client service and practice management. Communication Solutions for Veterinarians has provided mystery phone shopper training to more than 2,600 receptionists nationwide. Wendy is a partner in Animal Hospital Specialty Center, a 13-doctor AAHA-accredited referral practice offering internal medicine, surgery, neurology, oncology, specialty dentistry, and emergency care in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. She is the author of four books and five videos. Subscribe to Communication Solutions for Veterinarians' e-newsletter on our website at: [www.csvets.com](http://www.csvets.com). E-mail Wendy at: [wmyers@csvets.com](mailto:wmyers@csvets.com).