

Q&A with a Vet

It's Twinkl's Pet Month and we are celebrating pets and animals!

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be a vet or to work with animals?

Well you're in luck! Dr Andrew Monchar, a vet in London, has answered questions about what it is like being a vet. He shares his experiences and insights.



Photo: Dr Andrew Monchar.

What is a vet?

A veterinarian, or a vet, is someone who gives medicine or medical treatment to animals. They are animal doctors.

How long does it take to train as a vet?

To train as a vet takes five years at university or sometimes six.

I qualified as a veterinary surgeon from the Royal Veterinary College, University of London and also achieved a BSc Honours [degree](#) in Veterinary Conservation Medicine from the University of Liverpool.

All together it took **6** years.

What skills are important to become a vet?

The most important skill is communication as most of the day is spent speaking with owners who can sometimes be worried or upset.

You also have to be good at working in a team. The vet cares for the [pet patients](#) and works together with the nurses and [reception](#) team to do this.

You also have to work hard and make sure you are on time for the appointments.

Finally, you need to have good hand to eye coordination as vets have to perform surgery, often on very small animals.

Do you ever wish you worked with other animals, for example in a zoo?

I have worked with many zoo animals in the past as a student.

I see [exotic](#) [animals] in my practice and people come from all over London with their birds, reptiles and small mammals like ferrets and gerbils for me to see them, which I love!

What tools do you use?

The best tools in a vet's toolkit are the senses. Eyes, ears, smell and touch are important in finding out what could be wrong with an animal.

On a day-to-day basis we use nail clippers, an otoscope to examine eyes and an ophthalmoscope to examine ears, a [fluorescent lamp](#) to check for [fungal infection](#) of the skin.

We use a wide array of surgical tools such as [scalpel](#) blades, clamps to stop bleeding and electric drills and saws to mend bones.

How are animals put under anaesthesia? How do you provide oxygen?

Animals are usually injected with a **sedative**. When they're drowsy from the sedative drugs, we inject an anaesthetic drug directly into the vein and then we put a breathing tube into the windpipe. This provides oxygen to the animal



Photo: A dog being checked out with a otoscope.

What is the best and worst thing about your job?

The best thing is the wide variety of animals I'm able to treat from dogs, cats and rabbits to lizards, parrots, hedgehogs, wildlife and zoo animals.

The worst thing about the job is where there's no treatment to make a pet better and I have to tell the owner.

How do you deal with stressed animals? How do you handle them?

There are many strategies for dealing with stressed or aggressive animals.

These range from giving treats and cuddles to simply using a thick towel or protective gloves and gauntlets to protect ourselves.

Sometimes we may need to sedate an animal so they don't bite.

What do you do when an animal has a rare disease that you don't know? How can you help?

Vets are trained to recognise lots and lots of diseases and **abnormalities** and so mostly, we can figure out the cases of illness.

We are also lucky that in London we are very close to the Royal Veterinary College so there are specialist vets on hand who will accept case referrals and investigate those rare diseases in the animal hospital.

What other jobs are there at a vet clinic?

The jobs that you can do at the vets are Veterinary Surgeon, Veterinary Nurse, Animal Care Assistant, Receptionist, Practice Manager, Marketing and Bookkeeping.

Glossary

degree A qualification showing you studied at a high level.

pet patients Animals receiving care or medical treatment.

reception The place where owners and pets are greeted.

exotic An animal from a different country to where it lives.

fluorescent lamp A special light used to observe specific things.

fungal infection An infection on the skin that can lead to rashes and itching.

scalpel A small sharp knife used by surgeons.

anaesthesia Medicine to make it comfortable during surgery.

sedative Medicine to help an animal feel calm or to send them to sleep.

abnormalities When things aren't how they usually should be.

Questions

1. Using information from the article, fill in the missing words to complete the sentence.

Dr Andrew Monchar studied for _____ to become a _____ . To keep them calm, vets might give animals _____ and _____ .

2. Find and copy one skill it is important to have to become a vet, according to Dr Andrew Monchar.

3. In the sentence **When they're drowsy from the sedative drugs...**, what is meant by the word 'drowsy'?

4. Why do you think it is important to be on time for appointments if you are a vet? Explain your answer.

5. Complete the sentences by matching up the letters in the boxes.

Smell and touch are

A. university.

Some animals may need a

B. senses.

To become a vet, you have to go to

A.

C. stressed.

Some animals can be

D. specialist vet.

6. **Dr Andrew Monchar likes caring for a range of animals.** Find evidence in the text that supports this statement.
