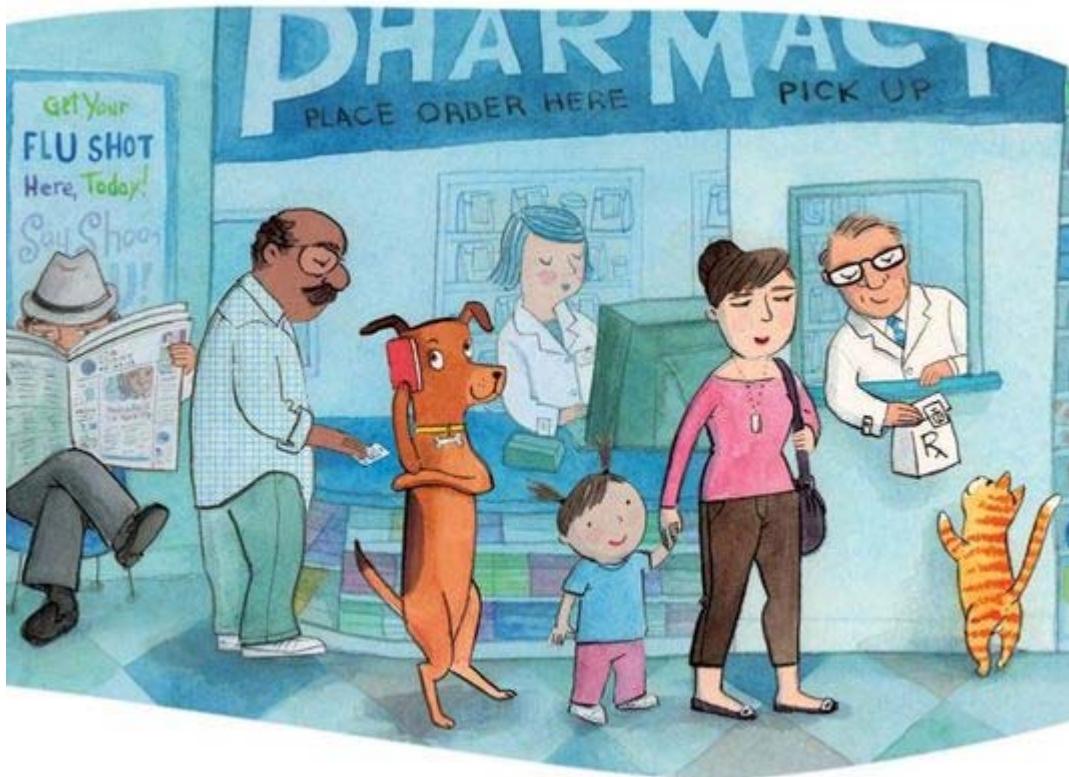


Retail pharmacies fill Rx for pets

Cindy Kuzma, USA TODAY Pet Guide Published 6:01 a.m. ET May 24, 2014



(Photo: Illustration by Violet Lemay)
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Chicago attorney Stephanie Reinhart was fostering a litter of Shiba Inu puppies and their mom a few years ago when several of them became infected with the parasite giardia.

For a while, the whole crew needed daily doses of two medications. "When I realized I was running low late one evening, my vet restocked me by calling in a prescription to my local **Walgreens**," Reinhart says.

Not only did she get a refill, she also paid only \$20 for a large bottle of the antibiotic metronidazole — less than half of what she would have spent at the vet.

Walgreens is just one of many commercial pharmacies now filling valid prescriptions from veterinarians.

CVS/pharmacy will fill a pet prescription if the drug is also prescribed for humans (many treatments for digestive troubles, itching, infections and high blood pressure are the same between species).

Walmart, **Target** and **Rite-Aid** have begun special programs in the past few years to stock animal-specific medications; Target carries hundreds.

"We're focused on providing our customers with affordable healthcare solutions for their families — and that includes their pets," says Walmart spokesperson Danit Marquardt.

Some programs also extend people perks to pets. Target's ClearRx program features a personalized color-coded ring around the neck of each person's — or pet's — prescription bottle to cut down on confusion at home.

And then there are the savings. Walmart's program began in 2012 with the launch of PetTrust Plus, a generic heartworm prevention that costs half as much as a brand-name version. Target offers the same \$4 generics program to pets as it does to people, says spokesperson Jamie Bastian.

At Target and Walgreens, your pets can also join rewards programs that add up to big discounts over time.

Reinhart now has a Prescription Savings Club card for her dog, Shino. It reads: "Shino Reinhart."