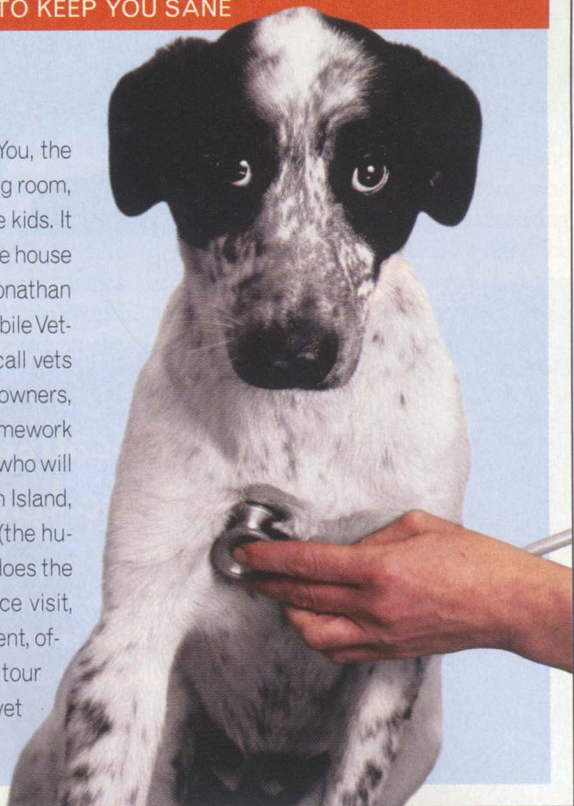


Gone to the Dogs

What do you do with a sick pet? Head to the vet, of course. You, the kids, the miserable animal—into the car, then into the waiting room, where nervous Fido strains at the leash while you yell at the kids. It seems unavoidable, but thanks to a new breed of veterinarians who make house calls, this particular logistical hassle can be bypassed—for a price. Jonathan Leshanski, president of the American Association of Housecall and Mobile Veterinarians, which has more than 200 members, says that most house-call vets tack on an extra charge, from \$10 to as much as \$75. But for busy pet owners, a house call not only saves time (you can make dinner and supervise homework after putting in the call) but keeps everyone calmer, including poor Fido, who will be in familiar surroundings. One convert, Marilu Staniszewski, of Staten Island, NY, says it was next to impossible to haul her three cats and four kids (the humans all under age 8) to the clinic. Now when a cat gets sick, her vet does the traveling. Surgical procedures such as neutering still require an office visit, says Leshanski. But some vets-on-wheels go beyond standard treatment, offering such things as herbalism and acupuncture. Maybe they can tour your doghouse and suggest a feng shui expert, too. For a house-call vet in your area, visit www.athomevet.org.—*Wilma Ann Anderson*



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