

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AN ANIMAL HEALTH TOPIC ARTICLE FOR THE ACVS WEBSITE

Large Animal Health Topics: www.acvs.org/large-animal
Small Animal Health Topics: www.acvs.org/small-animal

The ACVS Communication Committee (CC) continues to work to promote the ACVS, its members, and its programs for primary care veterinarians and animal owners. One of the ways the committee helps build the ACVS “brand” is by soliciting and reviewing articles for the Animal Health Topics section of the website. ACVS Diplomates and residents are encouraged to contribute to the database of articles.

Submissions do not undergo rigorous peer review; however, members of the CC serve as "editors" and have the final judgment about the topics, content, and images placed on the website. Animal Health Topics articles shall be reviewed and updated by the CC a minimum of once every five years.

Overview and Templates:

Each Animal Health Topic article should be *directed toward the animal-owning public who visit the site*. Topics should include current, basic, and essential content. The style of writing should be understandable by animal owners with minimal veterinary medical knowledge. The liberal use of visuals (illustrations and digital images) is highly encouraged.

Two templates have been developed:

- A. **Animal Health Topic article:** A paragraph or two briefly covering the following areas should be sufficient. Whenever possible bulleted/outline type format is encouraged.
- Title
 - Overview
 - Signs and Symptoms
 - Diagnostics
 - Treatment
 - Aftercare and Outcome

Treatment options should be general and cover the majority of treatment procedures, both medical and surgical, that are used for treatment of the animal health topic being discussed. Articles that encourage the use of the author's favorite procedure are likely to be edited to include other options. **In all cases, it is important to use wording that says that the treatment decisions should be made by the animal owner and the surgeon handling the case. It is important to avoid controversy, particularly when published literature on the same animal health condition is ambivalent in supporting a treatment option.**

For all articles, please keep in mind the animal owning public is not medically trained. Use language similar to what you would use to explain a health condition or surgical procedure to your clients. Avoid technical jargon and carefully explain any medical terms included in your article. The articles are meant to be simple and easy to understand.

If the article is written by a resident, it must be edited by a Diplomate, which can be a member of the CC. Residents receive a \$100 honorarium for each article posted on the website.

Format and Style:

1. All website submissions should be in Microsoft Word format (.doc). There should be single spaces between sentences. The font should be Calibri, 11 pt., with left margin justification.
2. Articles should be written in the **second person**, with the **Animal Owner as the target audience**. For example, “your pet may experience...,” “your veterinarian may prescribe...” When referring to animals, preference should be given to the term “pet,” or the individual species, e.g., “horse.” Clients should be referred to as “animal owners.” The first mention of the primary care practitioner should be primary care veterinarian; subsequent references may be shortened to “veterinarian.” The first mention of the surgeon should be written as “an ACVS board-certified veterinary surgeon;” subsequent references may be shortened to “veterinary surgeon.”
3. **Every paragraph should** catch readers’ attention in the first few words.
 - put the most important information first in the first one or two sentences, using keywords
 - start with the main point or conclusion, follow with details
 - one idea or main point per paragraph
 - use short, focused paragraphs when possible - readers should be able to safely skip a paragraph without missing a key point
4. **All articles should include images, when possible.** Consider the value of images to the average pet owner. Will the image enhance their understanding? Avoid intraoperative photos or other images that the lay public may consider excessively graphic. An animal owner may become uncomfortable with the sight of an animal under possible duress.
5. **Legends** explaining the figures, images, line drawings, and photos should accompany the article. Figures and so forth **must** be referenced sequentially within the body of the article text for proper placement within the article.
6. **Highlight keywords** in your text, but do so sparingly. Highlight only one or two per paragraph to not visually overwhelm the reader. A list of relevant keywords should be included at the end of the article to facilitate searches.
 - **Use bold.** Help focus on what is important throughout content.
 - **Use Italics.** Great to show emphasis
 - **Do not underline.** Underlining text indicates links.
7. When replacing or updating your existing photos, provide photos with 300 dpi.

Use of articles by ACVS and third parties:

1. By submitting an article, the author(s) confirms that the article and photos/images do not contain copyrighted material that violates any copyright or other personal or proprietary right of any person or entity. After submission, the article becomes the property of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, and the original author surrenders any claim to ownership of the article and its contents.
2. ACVS may grant permission for third parties to distribute or republish Animal Health Topics and their associated media. Third parties must include the following on the materials that are distributed or republished: *For more information on this topic and others, visit the American College of Veterinary Surgeons website (www.acvs.org) and click on Animal Health Topics. To locate an ACVS board-certified veterinary surgeon, visit “Find a Surgeon” on www.acvs.org.*

3. Permission for distribution or republication shall only be given to ACVS Diplomates, residents, veterinary practices and their employees, and veterinary schools and their employees. Permission shall not be given to corporate entities, non-profit organizations, or individuals not associated with a veterinary practice or school.

Contact Information:

For more information, including CC contacts, website topics, format, or logistics of submission, contact the ACVS office at acvs@acvs.org or (301) 916-0200.