

PRESS RELEASE

SOCIAL OBSESSION PUTS PETS IN PERIL

MORE TH>N & vetfone say pet owners could harm their pets by giving them human supplements and medicines

- **MORE TH>N research reveals that pet owners are reliant on the internet with 35% using it to diagnose their pets**
- **Nearly half (48%) then administer treatment based on online advice**
- **One in twenty pet owners give their pets protein shakes, bars and diet pills in a bid to improve body shape**

Pet owners are turning to the internet and social media instead of seeking professional advice for the health and wellbeing of their cats and dogs, research from [MORE TH>N](#) has revealed.

More than a third¹ (35%) of dog-owners rely on search engines to diagnose pet problems rather than seeking professional advice, with nearly half (48%) of those pet owners administering treatment based on articles they had read online.

According to the findings from the pet insurance specialists, pet owners are also making dangerous decisions to change their pet's body shape to fit with Instagram ideals.

One in 20² (5%) cat and dog owners in the UK have given their pets protein shakes and bars, as well as diet pills, vitamins and exercise supplements. When quizzed as to why they were giving bodybuilding and human health products to their pets:

- 40% felt it was a good idea to help the pet lose weight more quickly
- 35% believed it would make their pet more healthy
- 21% believed it would help their pets get in shape and improve their stamina

It is not recommended to supply over-the-counter human medicines, supplements and health products to pets. Aside from the finding that 15% reacted negatively to being given protein powder, diet and caffeine pills and vitamins, experts warn against giving health products not found in nature due to the potential health implications.

¹ Research conducted by OnePoll on behalf of MORE TH>N, 2,000 dog-owners were surveyed

² Research conducted by OnePoll on behalf of MORE TH>N Home Insurance. 1,000 cat and dog owners were surveyed.

To make it even easier for pet owners to find professional advice when they need it, MORE TH>N offers the 24-hour-a-day vetfone service to its pet insurance customers, allowing them access to free, professional advice from a Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) registered vet nurse at any time.

Andrew Moore, Director of Pet Claims for MORE TH>N said: "Pet owners risk significant harm to their pets by turning to the internet and social media when problems arise. Giving pets medicines or supplements designed for humans can lead to liver failure and kidney damage among a litany of health complications that arise from seemingly harmless over the counter products.

"Ensuring the correct dosing and delivery of pet treatment is essential in ensuring a pet's health and wellbeing – a simple internet search can bring up confusing, incorrect and contradictory advice that could easily prove fatal to a pet if followed. This is why we urge pet owners to always seek advice from a veterinary professional if their pet appears unwell, upset or injured."

- ENDS -

For more information, please contact Cow PR - morethan@cowpr.com / 020 7234 9150

Notes to Editors

About MORE TH>N

MORE TH>N is the direct financial services arm of RSA. Established in 2001, the company offers car, home, pet, business and travel insurance.

About vetfone

Vetfone is a brand name of Vetsdirect, which was set up in 2003 as a way for pet owners to get pet advice when they need it most.

Vetsdirect is the UK's biggest helpline, with expert vet nurses working throughout the UK. Vetfone works with a number of the UK's leading charities and insurers.

All vetfone nurses are registered with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), and are available to talk to 24/7/365.

The vetfone team and the service they provide is not designed to replace a vet, but provides customers with additional support and advice regarding their pets health and wellbeing - at night, while they are on holiday or otherwise unable to travel to their local vet.