

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

Large Animal Health Topics [www.acvs.org/large-animal](http://www.acvs.org/large-animal)

Small Animal Health Topics [www.acvs.org/small-animal](http://www.acvs.org/small-animal)

Surgical Procedures: [www.acvs.org/surgical-procedures](http://www.acvs.org/surgical-procedures)

The ACVS Public Outreach Committee 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 Public Outreach Committee 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 Public Outreach Committee 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.**

B. **Surgical Procedure article:** Same as above – a paragraph or two briefly covering the following information and bulleted/outline type format is encouraged.

- Title (Surgical Procedure, e.g., Laparoscopy in Horses )
- Overview/Description of the Procedure
- Conditions Commonly Treated Using Procedure
- Advantages
- Disadvantages

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 Public Outreach Committee. Residents receive a \$100 honorarium for each article posted on the website.

*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. There will be no acknowledgement of authorship of the article on the web page.*

### **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 Times New Roman, 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 “pet owners” or “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 may be considered excessively graphic by the lay public. As an animal owner, the sight of their animal under possible duress could make them uncomfortable. We recommend photos be at least 300dpi.
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. Do so sparingly – 1 or 2 per paragraph, as 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’s important throughout content
  - **Use Italics.** Great to show emphasis
  - **Do not underline.** Underlining text indicates links.

### **Contact Information:**

For more information, including Public Outreach Committee contacts, website topics, format, or logistics of submission, contact the ACVS office at [acvs@acvs.org](mailto:acvs@acvs.org) or via telephone at 301-916-0200.