

What do the Letters After My Vet's Name Mean: A Guide to Vet Specialist Credentials

Developed by the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM)

What is a veterinary specialist?

As pet owners, finding a veterinarian that has medical knowledge relevant to your pet's specific medical condition is important. When you are referred to a veterinary specialist to treat your pet, you may notice that instead of seeing "Dr." in front of your veterinarian's name, you might instead see a collection of initials following your veterinarian's name which indicates the level of training and knowledge that your veterinarian has in their field. These titles can be confusing to those not in the veterinary profession, so we have listed the meaning of a few of these initials as a way to help animal owners better understand their veterinarian's credentials.

DVM: Doctor of Veterinarian Medicine. This indicates that the veterinarian has graduated from an American veterinary school with a Doctorate degree, which is required to practice veterinary medicine in the United States.

VMD: Veterinary Medical Doctor (Latin: Veterinariae Medicinae Doctoris). A VMD is the same as a DVM except it shows that the veterinarian has graduated from veterinary school at the University of Pennsylvania.

DACVIM: Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine. This credential shows that your veterinarian has a Board-certification degree from the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM) and is earned after a veterinary doctorate degree. For this certification, the candidate must be graduate from a veterinary college that has been certified by American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), or be licensed to practice veterinary medicine in the United States. These credentials will also be followed by the area of specialty of that veterinarian.

DACVIM (Cardiology)

DACVIM (LAIM)

DACVIM (Neurology)

DACVIM (Nutrition)

DACVIM (Oncology)

DACVIM (SAIM)

VTS: Veterinary Technician Specialist. This credential shows that the veterinary technician is qualified in one specialty within veterinary medicine, such as our affiliated counterparts in AIMVT or AVNT in the same specialties as ACVIM Diplomates. VTS can also be found in emergency and critical care, anesthesia, clinical practice, equine, surgery, dentistry, and more.