

Canine and Feline RVS Exam Study Guide - 2025

This guide will help you prepare for your ABVP Recognized Veterinary Specialty (RVS) examination in November 2025.

The 350-item Combined RVS Exam given in two parts on the same day. The exams are mostly to exclusively multiple-choice type. There is the possibility of fill in the blank, short answer, essay, or matching for some exam items.

The AVMA best practices is that the examination items align with a Job Content Analysis (JCA) of current RVS Diplomates. The 2018 JCA identified tasks, diseases, etc. that Diplomates either saw frequently or expected a Specialist to have immediate knowledge of subject.

Additionally, it has been decided that some exam items can come from current journals and a small percentage can be at your Exam Committee's discretion.

Please note that items drawn from current journals (with a 5 year look back period) are 1) from a journal on the RVS Reading List, 2) the question is drawn from the abstract only, and 3) the journal abstract must be inexpensively obtained. The exception to this is Veterinary Clinics of North America (if applicable), where the exam taker is responsible for the whole article.

Exam Blueprint

For topics that are systems (such as Cardiovascular, etc.), questions can include anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, diseases (Including neoplasia), etiologies, diagnosis, and therapy.

Topic	Percentage on Exam
Behavioral B	4%
Cardiovascular CV	6%
Endocrine E	3%
Gastrointestinal GI	9%
Genetic G	up to 1%
Hemolymphatic HL	up to 1%
Immunologic I	1%
Infectious IN	18%
Integument/Mammary IM	20%
Management/Environment ME	up to 1%
Metabolic M	up to 1%
Musculoskeletal MS	9%
Nervous NV	5%
Nutritional N	1%
Oral/Dentition/Beak O	5%
Neoplasia - concepts, multisystem NP	up to 1%
Pharmacologic RX	up to 1%
Regulatory RG	up to 1%

Reproductive RP	2%
Respiratory RS	4%
Special senses SS	2%
Toxicologic T	8%
Urogenital GU	3%
Zoonotic Z	up to 1%

Specific conditions

Certain conditions were identified as important to Diplomates in your RVS. This list is meant to help guide your study and not meant to be an all-inclusive list. Conditions not on this list may be present on the exam.

Acne
Acral Lick Dermatitis
Anal Sac Disease
Atopic dermatitis
Aural Hematoma
Bilious Vomiting Syndrome
Bordetellosis
Brachial Plexus Avulsion
Brachycephalic Airway Syndrome
Campylobacteriosis
Canine Coronavirus Infection
Canine Distemper
Canine Influenza
Canine Parvovirus Infection
Capital physeal fracture (feline)
Cardiac blood flow defects - acquired
Cardiomyopathy - Dilated
Chlamydiosis
Chocolate Toxicosis
Cholangitis/ Cholangiohepatitis Syndrome
Clostridial Enterotoxigenesis
Cobalamin Malabsorption
Coccidiosis
Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome
Colitis, Histiocytic Ulcerative
Cranial/Anterior Cruciate Disease
Deciduous Teeth, Retained
Degenerative Myelopathy
Demodicosis
Dental Caries

Dermatoses, Erosive or Ulcerative
Dermatoses, Exfoliative
Dermatoses, Papulonodular
Dermatoses, Vesiculopustular
Diabetes Mellitus
Diabetes Mellitus with Ketoacidosis
Discolored Tooth/Teeth
Discospondylitis
Ehrlichiosis
Elbow Dysplasia - UAP
Elbow Dysplasia - FMCP
Electric Shock/ Cord Bite Injury
Entropion
Eosinophilic Granuloma Complex
Epilepsy
Epulis
Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency
False Pregnancy
Fears, Phobias, and Anxieties
Feline Calicivirus Infection
Feline Idiopathic Lower Urinary Tract Disease/FLUTD
Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)
Feline Panleukopenia
Feline Rhinotracheitis Virus Infection
Feline Tooth Resorption (Odontoclastic Resorption)
Fibrocartilaginous Embolic Myelopathy
Flea Bite Hypersensitivity and Flea Control
Food Reactions (Gastrointestinal)
Food Reactions, Dermatologic
Foreign Body Obstruction
Gallbladder Mucocele
Gingival Hyperplasia
Heartworm Disease
Hemotropic Mycoplasmosis (Haemobartonellosis)
Hepatic Nodular Hyperplasia
Hip Dysplasia
Histiocytoma
Hookworms (Ancylostomiasis)
Inappropriate urination/defecation
Interdigital Dermatitis
Legg-Calve-Perthes Disease
Lumbosacral Stenosis and Cauda Equina Syndrome
Malassezia Dermatitis

Mammary Gland Hyperplasia
Mammary Gland Tumors
Marking and Roaming Behavior
Mast Cell Tumors
Megaesophagus
Nail and Nailbed Disorders
Nasal Dermatoses
Nasopharyngeal Stenosis
Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug Toxicity
Ovarian Remnant Syndrome
Pancreatitis
Parvovirus
Patellar Luxation
Patent Ductus Arteriosus
Pectus Excavatum
Pediatric Behavioral Problems
Perianal Fistula
Peritoneopericardial Diaphragmatic Hernia
Pododermatitis
Prolapsed Gland of the Third Eyelid (Cherry Eye)
Puppy Strangles (Juvenile Cellulitis)
Pyrethrin and Pyrethroid Toxicity
Salivary Mucocele
Sebaceous Adenitis
Thunderstorm Phobias
Tracheal Collapse
Transmissible Venereal Tumor
Unruly Behaviors: Jumping, Digging, Chasing, Stealing
Vaccine- Associated Sarcoma
Vacuolar Hepatopathy
Zinc Toxicity

Canine & Feline Reading List

Core Textbooks:

General Medicine:

- Cote E: *Clinical Veterinary Advisor: Dogs and Cats*, 4th ed., Mosby, 2020
- Tilley LP, Smith FW, et al: *The Five-Minute Veterinary Consult: Canine and Feline*, 7th ed., Wiley-

Blackwell, 2021

Internal Medicine:

- Ettinger, S. J., Feldman, E. C., & Cote, E.: *Ettinger's Textbook of Veterinary Internal Medicine*, 9th ed., Elsevier, 2024.
- Nelson RW, Couto CG: *Small Animal Internal Medicine*, 6th ed., Elsevier, 2020.

Surgery:

- Fossum TW: *Small Animal Surgery*, 5th ed., Elsevier, 2019.
- Monnet, E: *Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2023.

Supplemental Textbooks:

Behavioral:

- Ackerman L, Landsberg G: *Behavior Problems of the Dog and Cat*, 4th ed., Saunders, 2023.

Integument/Mammary:

- Coyner KS. *Clinical Atlas of Canine and Feline Dermatology*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2020.
- Rhodes KH, Werner AH: *Blackwell's Five-Minute Veterinary Consult Clinical Companion: Small Animal Dermatology*, 3rd ed., Wiley-Blackwell, 2018.

Nervous:

- DeLahaunta A, Glass EN, Kent M: *Veterinary Neuroanatomy and Clinical Neurology*, 5th ed., Elsevier, 2021.

Oral/dentition:

- Lobprise HB, Dodd JR: *Wigg's Veterinary Dentistry Principles and Practice*, 2nd ed., John Wiley and Sons, 2019.
- Lobprise HB: *Blackwell's Five-Minute Veterinary Consult Clinical Companion: Small Animal Dentistry*, 3rd ed., Wiley-Blackwell, 2021.

Pharmacologic:

- Budde JA, McCluskey DM: *Plumb's Veterinary Drug Handbook*, 10th ed., Wiley-Blackwell, 2023.

Special Senses

- Gelatt KN, Plummer CE: *Essentials of Veterinary Ophthalmology*, 4th ed., Wiley-Blackwell, 2022.

Journals

- *Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association*
- *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*
- *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*
- *Journal of Small Animal Practice*
- *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*
- *Veterinary Clinics of North America Small Animal Practice*