

Routine Health Care and Vaccinations

Routine health care is at the center of maintaining your pet's good health. Whether one year to a dog or cat is equal to seven years for a person is true or not, the fact is that our pets age faster than we do. Annual examinations, especially for middle aged and older pets, are vitally important for your pet. Many times we can identify underlying symptoms during routine physical exams that would otherwise not be found until they progressed to much more serious medical problems. Heart murmurs, dental disease and broken teeth, skin problems, tumors, and joint problems are just a few examples of the many things that are often undetected and come to light during the annual physical. This is also the time when we can discuss questions and address potential problems that may have developed at home since the last visit. Changes in behavior, energy level, body weight, appetite, water consumption may be normal, or could be subtle signs of underlying disease. We can also evaluate changes in your pet's lifestyle or stage of life that might suggest changes in vaccine schedules or other preventative measures. Evaluating the health of your pet and discussing all of these issues during the annual physical exam allows us to work together with you in providing the best individualized health care plan for your pet.

Vaccination against contagious disease remains an important part of keeping your pet healthy. Recent research has shown that we are able to lengthen the intervals between some vaccines for some pets. Age, lifestyle, health status, and previous vaccine history are all evaluated when we make the individualized vaccine recommendations for your pet. Keeping up with new and emerging disease in our area, like Lyme Disease in dogs as an example, might necessitate changes in vaccine choices. Dogs that go to boarding kennels, changes in lifestyle (camping, hiking, hunting, new vacation spots, etc), a family move, cats that spend more (or less) time outside, are all a few examples of lifestyle changes that might change the vaccines recommended for your pet. Each situation is a little different, and taking the time to discuss these changes, as well as the risk factors in each situation, will help us to develop the individual vaccine schedule that is right for your pet.