

Wellness Care

Wellness Examination 101

What Is a Wellness Examination?

A wellness examination is a complete physical examination that may include diagnostic tests such as blood work, urinalysis, and checking a stool sample for parasites. In many cases, a wellness examination can help detect the early stages of disease. Often, we schedule wellness examinations when your pet is due for vaccinations.

What Does It Include?

Wellness programs vary depending on each pet's species, age, and health needs. We will start the examination by asking you some questions about the medical history of your pet, including questions about any issues that you may have noticed recently. For example, if you have noticed that your pet is losing weight, we may ask to perform special tests to help rule out specific diseases that can cause weight loss. If you think of questions about your pet's health



All pets should have regular wellness examinations to look for signs of disease that may not be obvious at home.

Wellness Examinations: How, When and Why

- A wellness examination is a general health assessment that may include blood tests, urinalysis, and parasite screening.
- A wellness examination is recommended for most pets at least annually.
- Senior pets and pets with chronic health issues may benefit from wellness examinations every 6 months.
- A wellness examination can help ensure your pet's health and detect early stages of disease.

before the appointment, please feel free to write them down and bring the list with you. This is the perfect time to ask!

Most wellness examinations include a complete physical examination, which is a nose-to-tail inspection. Equipment used during the examination may include a stethoscope to listen to your pet's heart and lungs, an otoscope to view the inside of the ears, and an ophthalmoscope to examine the eyes. We also feel all over your pet's body for lumps and bumps, check your pet's vital signs (like pulse and respiration), and record your pet's current weight.

We may also ask to test samples of blood, urine, or stool during a wellness examination. These tests can help determine if your pet has problems such as anemia, infection, or organ disease. Other tests, such as a thyroid evaluation, may be helpful, depending on the physical

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examination results and your pet's medical history.

Parasite tests are usually performed during wellness examinations, and we may request that you bring in a sample of your pet's stool for analysis. A fresh stool sample can be tested using special procedures to identify parasites. However, not all parasites are detected through stool samples. A test for heartworm disease may also be recommended. This type of parasite test involves taking a blood sample. Regular testing for parasites is important even if your pet does not go outside because parasites can be brought indoors by other pets, by insects, or on shoes or clothing.

Depending on your pet's age, current medical condition, and medical history, we may recommend additional tests as part of your pet's wellness examination. For example, examining a urine sample for the presence of bacteria, blood, and sediment (called *urinalysis*) helps us determine whether your pet's kidneys are working correctly and may also help diagnose certain conditions, such as diabetes and urinary tract infection.

Why Should I Schedule One for My Pet?

A wellness examination is an important part of preventive health care for pets in all stages of life, from puppies and kittens to senior

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pets. If your pet is young and seems healthy, a wellness examination is a good way to detect changes such as weight gain or loss, dental disease, or other subtle changes that may not be evident at home.

For any pet, especially senior pets, a wellness examination is a good way to detect early onset of disease. Early diagnosis and treatment of diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, can greatly improve the overall health and well-being of your pet.