

Give Your Pet a
Longer, Healthier Life



Wellness Exam

A wellness exam starts with a comprehensive physical examination by your pet's veterinarian. Once the exam has been completed, further services such as vaccination or the tests described in this brochure may be recommended.

Why Does My Pet Need a Wellness Exam?

Although your pet may appear well, the natural instinct of animals is to disguise or hide any outward appearance of illness. This behavior has obvious benefits in the wild but can be harmful, if not life-threatening, in domesticated companion animals. A regular wellness exam can ensure this happens.

It's important to identify the early signs of illness in order to begin treatment or take measures to prevent further injury or progression of disease.

Animals age at an accelerated rate compared to people, roughly seven years to each one year of our lives. We recommend annual wellness exams for your pet; some pets, for example older pets, may need exams twice a year. Your veterinarian may also recommend a wellness exam before a surgical procedure (spay/neuter, dental cleaning, etc.).

Tests May Include:

- ✓ Hematology Tests (evaluation of blood cells)
- ✓ Blood Chemistry Tests (evaluation of organ function and electrolytes)
- ✓ Urinalysis
- ✓ Heartworm Test
- ✓ Intestinal Parasite Check
- ✓ Other Tests Based on Age, Breed, and Existing Medical Conditions

Pre-Anesthetic Screen

Why We Recommend Pre-Anesthetic Health Screening

Use of sedatives and general anesthesia for procedures is common and considered safe, but there are potential risks even for a young, healthy animal. Age, pre-existing medical conditions and the stress of surgery and anesthesia increase the risk of complications. Therefore, knowledge of a patient's complete health status prior to any procedure requiring sedation or anesthesia is not just good medicine, it is critical to help ensure a successful outcome. Identifying underlying conditions will enable your veterinarian to select the best combination of drugs, fluid therapy, and monitoring tools ultimately reducing the risk of complications to your pet.

Hematology Tests

Complete Blood Count (CBC)

A CBC evaluates a patient's red cells, white cells, and platelets. Prior to surgery it is important to determine if a patient is anemic (low red cells), has an infection or inflammation (high white cells), would be unable to fight an infection (low white cells), and has the ability to form blood clots if bleeding (platelets).

Microscopic Review of Blood

Microscopic review of a blood smear provides information the CBC does not. This exam can further distinguish white blood cell types and identify shape and structural changes (internal and external) to the cells. In addition, blood parasites, bacteria, and immature cell types can be found.

Blood Chemistry Tests

Signaling the possible presence of disease, screening tests identify abnormal levels of the substances listed on the following page.

Liver Tests

Alanine Aminotransferase (ALT)

Diseases and trauma that damage the liver can cause an increase in ALT.

Alkaline Phosphatase (ALP)

ALP is an enzyme which can be increased with diseases of the liver, gall bladder, adrenal gland, as well as secondary to certain medications.

Albumin (ALB)

Albumin is a large protein in blood responsible for the transport of nutrients, hormones, and metabolic waste products. Changes in albumin levels can indicate a wide range of abnormalities including dehydration, and liver, kidney or intestinal disease.

Total Protein (TP)

As with albumin, changes in TP can occur with dehydration, blood loss, liver or kidney disease as well as many other conditions.

Total Bilirubin (TBili)

TBili is a by-product from the destruction of red blood cells (normal or abnormal) which is cleared by the liver. Elevations can indicate disease of the liver and gall bladder, as well as certain blood disorders.

Kidney Tests

Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN)

A protein by-product of normal body processes, BUN is cleared from the blood primarily by the kidneys. Elevations in BUN indicate a decrease in filtering of the blood by the kidneys due to either less blood reaching the kidneys or damage to the kidneys.

Creatinine (Crea)

Like BUN, creatinine is a by-product of normal body processes. Creatinine is cleared from the blood almost exclusively by the kidneys. Abnormal levels can indicate kidney damage or other disease.

Calcium (Ca^{2+})

Numerous diseases can affect calcium levels. The most common include parathyroid and kidney disease as well as some cancers.

Other Tests

Glucose (Glu)

An essential source of energy present in the blood, increased glucose levels can indicate stress or diabetes while decreased levels can occur with many disease states.

Electrolytes Tests

The electrolytes Sodium (Na^+), Potassium (K^+), and Chloride (Cl^-) are essential in maintaining proper fluid balance. They are especially important in patients with heart disease, diarrhea, vomiting, and metabolic disease.

Urinalysis

Complete Urinalysis (UA)

Urine is produced by the kidneys which constantly filter the patient's blood. The circulating blood contains metabolites and waste products (normal and abnormal) from all organ systems. Performing a complete UA will evaluate the physical and chemical properties of the urine. Abnormal UA results may suggest disease from one or several body systems.

Early Kidney Damage Screening

An in-hospital test that detects low levels of albumin (a protein) in the urine can now identify diseases affecting the kidneys much earlier than traditional methods. If the test is positive, your veterinarian will search for conditions that affect the kidneys and can potentially treat the cause before irreversible damage occurs.

Heartworm Test

Heartworm larvae (immature heartworms) are transmitted from an infected animal to non-infected dogs and cats by mosquitoes. Adult heartworms generally live in the heart and major arteries of the lungs but they can be found in other areas of the body. Heartworm disease can be prevented but all patients should be tested before beginning the once monthly medication. In endemic areas (areas of high incidence of heartworm disease), testing may be recommended as part of the annual wellness exam.

Intestinal Parasite Check

Certain gastrointestinal (GI) parasites are common to animals and humans and our increased mobility (pets and owners) has increased the spread and risk of GI parasitic disease. To ensure the health and well-being of your pet, a stool sample check for parasite eggs and cysts may be recommended by your veterinarian.

You Can Help Reduce Your Pet's Risk of Disease

Your veterinarian or a qualified member of their staff will be happy to discuss correct frequency of health exams and appropriate tests for your pet based on breed, medical history and lifestyle.

Ask for a wellness exam and pre-anesthetic testing today.

Confirm your pet's good health or identify signs of disease early and intervene to give your pet a longer, healthier life.

This information is provided to you by your veterinarian and Heska Corporation.

Notes from Your Doctor:



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