

Pitts Veterinary Hospital, P.C.

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Canine Wellness and Geriatric Examination Information

We feel it is very important for your dog to receive a physical examination annually. A doctor will examine several body systems including ears, eyes, nose and throat, dental health (mouth, teeth, and gums), heart, lungs, abdomen, legs and paws, and body condition (coat, skin, and weight). Performing a thorough examination allows us to detect any potential health risks at an early stage.

We recommend that your dog be vaccinated annually for Distemper/Parvo (a combination vaccine that includes Distemper, Parvo, Parainfluenza, Adenovirus Type 2, and Leptospirosis). The Rabies vaccine is given every third year and is required if you live within the city of Lincoln. A Kennel Cough or Bordetella vaccine is recommended if your dog goes to a boarding, daycare, or grooming facility, attends training classes, or goes to the dog park. This vaccine is most effective if given two weeks before potential exposure. The intranasal vaccine will maintain immunity for 6 months. A Lyme vaccine is suggested for dogs with tick exposure. Flea and tick preventives are suggested and are available in a topical form to be applied monthly from spring to late fall.

We recommend all dogs be on monthly heartworm preventive year round, beginning at the first visit. Heartworm testing must be done before starting preventive if your dog is greater than 6 months old when starting preventive, after giving preventive for 9-12 months, or if doses have been missed after starting preventive. The current recommendation by the Heartworm Society is annual testing to verify negative status.

We also recommend that a fecal sample be tested from your dog annually or more frequently if exposed to ground contaminated by dog or cat feces. Intestinal parasites are very common and can be transmitted to people and other animals. Please bring a fresh sample to your annual examination or as recommended to help diagnose gastrointestinal problems.

A urinalysis is suggested to help us determine bladder and kidney health. The first urine of the morning is the best for urinalysis. Please bring the urine in a clean container as soon as possible, but no later than 4 hours after catching it. A urine sample is recommended every 2-3 years until age 7 or 8, then annually or as needed if bladder or kidney problems are suspected.

If you are transferring to us from a previous veterinary clinic, please bring a copy of your dog's medical history to your first visit, including vaccinations, blood work or other lab work, and digital radiographs if applicable. This information can also be faxed to us by your previous veterinarian.

If your dog is 7 years or older:

Our doctors encourage a more thorough work-up be done annually to monitor the health of your senior animal.

Blood work is highly recommended and will help us detect early signs of disease. Blood work helps us determine the status of important bodily organs such as kidneys, liver, and pancreas. We also look at the health of the blood cells to make sure there are no signs of infection or anemia. It is important to detect the disease process early and start treatment before major damage occurs.

After the age of 7 we also recommend checking a urine sample annually. Checking urine along with bloodwork gives us a good idea of how well the kidneys are functioning. We also look for signs of infection, blood, protein loss, and diabetes.

Ours doctors may also suggest radiographs and ultrasound based on your dog's physical exam, breed, and genetics.

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