

**D**on't take your adult pet's health for granted!

By following your VCA veterinarian's advice, you can help your pet live the longest, healthiest life possible.



## What you should know about your adult pet:

- **Your pet should be examined at least once a year.**  
Your veterinarian will perform a complete physical exam and health consultation, and a review of vaccine requirements (vaccine needs can vary from pet to pet).
- **Many diseases are easily prevented or managed.**  
Some are 100% preventable with the proper preventive care, and many can be successfully managed if detected early enough.
- **Make sure you provide proper nutrition.**  
The right food and a sensible, regular exercise plan are very important to your pet's health and longevity.

## Q & A

### How often should my pet be vaccinated?

Your pet's vaccination schedule will vary based on age, individual risk of contracting certain diseases, and type of vaccine. In general, once immunity is established, adult pets will receive vaccine boosters once every 1 to 3 years. During your pet's annual exam, your veterinarian will recommend any vaccines that are considered necessary.

### How can I prevent heartworms?

Pets contract heartworm disease through the bite of a mosquito. Thankfully, there are excellent preventive products which can be given orally or topically on a monthly basis to prevent heartworm disease.

### My pet is ruining our furniture. What should I do?

If you experience training or behavior problems with your pet, ask your veterinarian's advice on how to resolve them. If necessary, he or she can also give you a referral to a reputable animal behavior specialist or pet trainer.

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## Adult Wellness

Keeping your grown pet in top health



**VCA**  
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# Adult Wellness

## The importance of regular physical examinations

All healthy adult pets need to be examined at least once a year in order to prevent or detect health problems.

Regular examinations for adult pets will, at the very least, let you know that your seemingly healthy pet really is healthy or, in other cases, help catch health problems before they can become more serious.

In general, your pet's routine annual veterinary visit should include the following:

- **A health consultation**, in which your veterinarian will ask and answer questions about your pet's daily routine and make health care and nutritional recommendations that are appropriate for your pet's lifestyle.
- **A hands-on physical examination**, during which your veterinarian will make sure everything "feels" right, listen to the heart and lungs, and look into your pet's eyes, ears, and mouth to check for signs of disease.
- **Age- and risk-appropriate vaccinations** to protect against diseases that your pet may be susceptible to.

- **A fecal examination** to check for the presence of any intestinal parasites.
- **Additional diagnostic tests**, such as blood work, urinalysis, or radiographs, as indicated by the findings of the physical exam.
- **Recommendations regarding routine wellness care** for your pet, such as flea, tick, and internal parasite control, heartworm testing and prevention, and dental cleanings.

### Parasite protection

Here's how you can keep your pet safe from parasites:

#### Intestinal Parasites

You can keep your pet safe from intestinal worms with routine fecal examination tests of your pet's stool and by following your veterinarian's advice regarding deworming methods and preventive medications.

#### Fleas and Ticks

Many pets are highly allergic to fleas and can suffer miserably if left untreated. In addition, fleas and ticks can transmit disease. Fortunately, there are many safe, effective products available from your veterinarian that protect against fleas and ticks.

#### Heartworm Disease

Heartworm infection is a serious problem for dogs and cats in all 50 states. The key to avoiding heartworm disease in your pet is through prevention. Ask your veterinarian about today's safe, effective heartworm preventive medications.



### Visit your veterinarian if you notice:

- Unexplained weight loss
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Loss of appetite or lethargy
- Behavior changes
- Skin lumps, bumps, or irritation
- Lameness
- Excessive drinking and/or urination
- Bad breath, plaque on teeth, or bleeding gums
- Ear odors, redness, scratching, or head shaking

### Potential signs of a parasite infestation:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Distended abdomen
- Lethargy
- Scratching
- Visual signs of fleas near the ears, neck, tail, and tummy regions
- In some animals with intestinal parasites, no abnormal signs are evident. Routine microscopic exams of fecal samples will help detect these infections.

### Feeding your adult pet

Feeding your pet a premium diet especially formulated for adulthood will lay the foundation for a lifetime of good health. Your veterinarian will match the food type (for example, active, high fiber, tartar or weight control) with your pet's lifestyle, body condition, and health needs.

### VCA Pet Tip:

Pets age four to five times faster than we do and, as a result, health problems can progress much more rapidly. Have your adult pet examined regularly, space exams no more than 12 months apart, and don't put off a veterinary visit if you suspect a problem.