

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

The physical examination is also an opportunity for you to discuss important wellness issues with your pet's doctor. It's one of the best ways to help your pet keep healthy and around as long as possible.



The main benefits for:

- **Puppies and kittens** — to make sure they're growing properly and getting the right vaccinations and medications, as well as to spot any inborn abnormalities or parasite infestations.
- **Adult pets** — to help you catch health problems before they can become more serious.
- **Older pets** — to prevent or manage the onset of many age-related chronic diseases, such as arthritis, cancer, dental problems, diabetes, kidney disease, or heart trouble.

Q & A

When should I bring in my pet for a physical exam?

New pets of all ages should be examined immediately. This not only ensures that your new friend is healthy, but also that he or she cannot transmit any health problems to you or your family.

Puppies and kittens need to be examined more frequently than adults up until about one year of age on a schedule recommended by your veterinarian.

Adult pets, one year and older, should be examined at least once every 12 months.

Senior pets (over 7 years), or any pet suffering from a chronic health problem, should be seen at least twice a year. One adult dog or cat year equates to approximately 4 human years. So examining a senior pet every 6 months is similar to an older person getting a check-up every 2 years.

In addition, any pet that may be facing a potentially stressful event, such as air travel, a long road trip, or a physically demanding new training program or activity (obedience trials, field trials, long-distance hiking, etc.), should also be examined by a veterinarian.

1-800-VCA-PETS

www.vcapets.com

VCA 1560C



Physical Examinations

The key to helping your pet stay healthy and live longer



Physical Examinations



Because they can't tell you when something's wrong

Your VCA veterinarian is trained to recognize the subtle signs that can indicate an animal is having a problem. He or she can use all the same diagnostic tools as your own physician — blood tests, urinalysis, X-rays, ultrasonography, ECGs and more — to help pinpoint or rule out problems.

Your pet's routine annual veterinary visit usually includes the following:

- **A health consultation**, where your veterinarian will ask questions about your pet's daily routine and make health care and nutritional recommendations appropriate for your pet's lifestyle.
- **A hands-on examination**, during which your veterinarian will check your pet's musculoskeletal system, abdomen, and head and neck areas, listen to your pet's heart and lungs with a stethoscope, and examine your pet's eyes, ears, and mouth.

- **Vaccinations** appropriate to your pet's age and disease risk level.
- **A fecal examination** to check for intestinal parasites.
- **Additional diagnostic tests**, such as blood work, urinalysis and radiographs, as needed.
- **Recommendations on routine wellness care**, such as flea, tick, and intestinal parasite control, heartworm testing and prevention, and dental cleanings.

Senior pets typically should be examined twice yearly and may require more comprehensive diagnostic testing.

Warning signs

In addition to an annual exam, your pet needs to be examined if you notice:

- Unexplained weight loss or loss of appetite
- Excessive drinking and/or urination
- Lethargy or other changes in activity level
- Behavior changes
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Skin lumps, bumps, or irritations
- Dry, thin, or otherwise poor haircoat
- Bad breath, plaque on teeth, or bleeding gums
- Ear odors, residue in ears, or redness
- Irritated or weeping eyes
- Lameness in a leg or pain in any area of the body

VCA Pet Tip:

Pets age 4 to 7 times faster than we do, so their health problems can progress much more rapidly. Have your pet examined at least every 12 months, and don't put off a veterinary visit if you suspect a problem.



What your VCA veterinarian looks for:

Eyes, Ears, Nose, Mouth

- Discharge
- Inflammation or redness
- Swelling or growths
- Cloudiness (eyes)
- Respiratory sounds (nose)
- Gum color and Capillary Refill Time (mouth)
- Condition of teeth and gums

System

- Pain on palpation of the abdomen
- Organ enlargement or irregularity
- Presence of any bloating or gas
- Evidence of any inflammation or discomfort in the anal area

Heart and Lungs

- Breathing pattern
- Lung sounds
- Heart rate and rhythm
- Heart sounds (murmurs, extra beats, missed beats, or unusual sounds)

Musculoskeletal System/Gait

- Lameness, pain, or weakness in the spine or any limb
- Muscle tone
- Joint function