# Pet Health Checkups Enhance Your Care

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Now is the perfect time to re-evaluate your current pet healthcare regimen. If you have not already, incorporate a "Wellness Checkup" as part of routine care. With greater emphasis on preventive medicine for pets, a biannual wellness checkup plays an important role in early diagnosis of preventable illnesses and diseases. Learn how to get the most out of your regular wellness checkups and minimize unexpected expenses.

## Schedule wellness checkups every six months

A wellness checkup, also called a "wellness exam", is a modified version of the traditional annual veterinary examination. Updated to reflect the changing nature of pet care, wellness checkups take into account 1) pets age faster than humans and 2) are living longer lives. Notable health changes in dogs can develop in a relatively short period. Also, as dogs live longer, the risk of potential health conditions steadily increases. Reducing the interval between examinations increases your veterinarian's ability to detect, diagnose, and propose treatment options in a timely fashion. In this way, regularly-scheduled wellness checkups play a significant role in improving the quality of your pet's life.

## What to expect - questions your veterinarian may ask you

A wellness checkup will generally consist of fundamental examinations including: identifying vaccination status, weight and general body condition, heart and respiratory rates, intestinal parasites (fecal examination), behavior and personality traits, as well as dental care needs. Your veterinarian will ask you questions to create and maintain an accurate medical history. A current medical history is one of the main tools your veterinarian uses to determine if a disease process is occurring in your dog.

**EXAMPLES OF BASIC HEALTH QUESTIONS** include topics such as nutrition or exercise regimen. Be prepared to answer questions such as: What does your dog eat and how often? What is the portion size of each meal? How active is your dog? How much exercise does your dog receive? Does your dog demonstrate signs of stiffness after exercise?

If your veterinarian detects something out of the ordinary, specific questions regarding a symptom may include: When did this symptom or sign first appear? Is it getting better or worse? Is the sign or symptom always present, or is it intermittent? Be prepared to assist your veterinarian. Monitor your pet and keep records of signs or atypical behavior. This information is valuable in making a proper diagnosis early in the course of a disease.

### WHAT'S NORMAL FOR DOGS?

| | Adult | Newborn Puppy |
|---|---|---|
| Normal Temperature(°F) | 99.5°-102.5° | 96°-97° |
| Normal Heart Rate (beats per min) | 70-180 | Over 200 |
| Respiratory Rate (breaths per min) | 20-40 | 15-35 |

## Engage in dialog - ask questions

Don't hesitate to ask questions. A notable benefit of the wellness checkup is the opportunity to develop and strengthen relations with your veterinarian. Simply put, biannual wellness checkups mean greater contact with your veterinarian and staff. So why not take an active role in providing and maintaining the best care for your pet? Ask your veterinarian which tests are appropriate for your dog. If you are not sure whether a certain behavior or observation is indicative of a disease, ask your veterinarian.

Discuss and determine if additional or more specialized tests are appropriate for your dog. Help your veterinarian create an individualized examination regimen by providing information specific to your pet. For example, tell your veterinarian about



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environmental or living conditions of your pet. Is your dog an indoor or outdoor dog? What kind of plants and wildlife are your pets exposed to? Does your dog socialize or interact with neighboring dogs or dogs with unknown vaccination history? Inform your veterinarian of recent travel destinations. Open the lines of communication to offer your veterinarian important clues to properly assess specific potential risks your pet may have been exposed to.

Work closely with your veterinarian and empower yourself with knowledge and confidence. Schedule regular wellness exams every six months and resolve to provide the best care for your pet

## RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS

Drs. Foster & Smith Canine Health Record

Drs. Foster & Smith Dry Adult Dog Food Chicken & Brown Rice Formula

Drs. Foster & Smith Walk-n-Lead®

Drs. Foster & Smith Joint Care Premium 3 with MSM



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