

Keep Your Best Friends Healthy with Regular Checkups!

Preventive care is key to pet health too.

The key to a long and healthy life for your pet is regular veterinary checkups. Visiting your veterinarian at least once a year for preventive care can catch any serious conditions early, helping keep your pet healthier and avoiding costly bills.

Checkups

Get your dog or cat a veterinary checkup at least once a year. It's the key to helping them live as long as possible. Your veterinarian can tailor a preventive care plan based on your pet's life stage—there's a big difference in how to care for a puppy or kitten versus an adult or a senior, for instance.

Bring up any behavior issues too, your veterinarian can help determine if there is an underlying medical cause.

Test annually for dangerous diseases

Every dog and cat should have an annual test for heartworm and internal parasites, and cats should be tested at least once for feline immunodeficiency virus and feline leukemia virus, which can shorten their life spans and be transmitted to other cats.

Watch their weight

Pet obesity is reaching epidemic proportions—an estimated one out of every two pets is overweight or obese. Being a fat cat or plump pup can have disastrous health effects, such as increasing the risk of diabetes, heart and respiratory disease, cancer, and arthritis. A slight adjustment to your pet's diet or exercise regimen can make a huge difference, so ask your veterinarian for your pet's target weight.

Keep those whites pearly

By the time they turn three years old, 70 to 80 percent of dogs and cats have signs of dental disease. Left untreated, dental problems can cause pain, infection, and inflammation, and take years off your pet's life. So, smile when your veterinarian checks your dog or cat's teeth and gums—it's a vital part of their care.

Battle the bloodsuckers

Every dog and cat should receive year-round parasite control to prevent against heartworms, intestinal parasites, fleas, and when appropriate, ticks. Even if your pet spends most of his time indoors, he can still pick up diseases from these sneaky pests that can fly, crawl, or hitchhike on you to get inside your house. These bugs spread serious (even fatal, in the case of heartworms) diseases that are easily preventable with monthly medications.



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Keep your best friends healthy - continued



Tailor vaccines to your pet

While some vaccines, like rabies, are required by law because of the risk to humans, others may be necessary for your pet's lifestyle. In some scenarios, a titer to previous vaccines can be measured to help decide if a booster vaccination is necessary. Your veterinarian will recommend what's best for your pet.

Check the chip

Every dog and cat should be microchipped — even indoor cats and fenced-in dogs can escape and get lost. Make sure your contact information is current with the microchip manufacturer, and ask your veterinarian during your pet's annual exam to "check the chip" by scanning it to make sure it is still reading properly.

Discuss when to spay or neuter

Spaying and neutering provides several health and behavior benefits. If it hasn't already been done, talk to your veterinarian about the best time to perform this procedure.

Should my pet have insurance?

Pet insurance can help make costly treatments more manageable. Learn more about pet insurance and if it's right for your pet at go.osu.edu/petinsuranceinfo and go.osu.edu/petinsurancetips.

Questions about your pet's care?

Talk to your local veterinarian or contact Ohio State's Veterinary Medical Center.

Source: www.aaha.org/your-pet/pet-owner-education/aaha-guidelines-for-pet-owners/preventive-healthcare/