



Whatcom Road Veterinary Hospital

Pet Health Information Series

The Comprehensive Senior Wellness Exam

What is Involved in the Senior Wellness Exam?

History: The history you provide is very important to assessing the health and well-being of your pet. They can't talk. You need to be their advocate. Even the little changes you see and may ignore could be important. We will provide you with a questionnaire that may help you remember some history details. Don't assume the changes you are seeing are not important.

Physical Exam: Next, your pet will receive a complete nose to tail examination. The findings here, along with your history, will direct the next step.

Laboratory Testing: A baseline laboratory screening is extremely valuable. Many times, underlying health issues are detected early when regular lab screening is performed. Bring in a first morning urine sample to help with accurate kidney health evaluation.

Radiographs: These may be recommended depending on the history and physical exam findings. Screening radiographs for early detection of heart disease, neoplasia and arthritis can be helpful.

Blood Pressure: Establishing your pet's normal blood pressure in a hospital situation can be very valuable when it becomes necessary to start monitoring blood pressure.

STT Testing: This determines if dry eye is a problem in your pet. Just as with us, some dogs will develop dry eyes that can be very uncomfortable.

Tonometry: This tests the eye pressure. Even dogs develop glaucoma. Older dogs with red sclera (eyes) should be checked for early glaucoma.

Fecal Test: Parasites can interfere with digestion and are an ongoing issue throughout a pet's life.

After a full physical exam and history, your veterinarian will make some recommendations regarding further diagnostic testing. This testing will be done

to either detect and further define current medical problems or to establish a normal baseline for your pet.

Blood Tests

Complete Blood Count: This test examines the red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. Changes to the red blood cell numbers and shape can indicate certain disease processes. Changes to the white blood cells can help detect inflammation, infection and cancer. Platelets must be adequate in number to permit normal clotting.

Chemistry: This test examines numerous electrolytes, enzymes and chemicals in the body.

Proteins: changes in albumin and globulin may suggest problems with the kidneys, liver, or intestines. They may also change if inflammation or cancer are present.

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Electrolytes: changes in electrolytes may suggest problems with the kidneys, liver, intestines or endocrine system (hormones). Changes in calcium may also indicate a potential problem with bone disease or the pancreas.

Glucose: changes may indicate diabetes, stress, or insulinoma (pancreatic tumours).

Liver enzymes: changes may indicate liver disease or changes in the endocrine system hormones.

Blood Urea Nitrogen: helps assess the liver and kidney function.

Creatinine: helps us assess the kidney function.

Amylase and Lipase: help assess the pancreatic function.

Bilirubin: helps assess the liver and anemia.

Thyroid: this hormone may be decreased due to hypothyroidism or may suggest the body is fighting a battle somewhere in the

body (euthyroid sick syndrome). Elevations are common in the cat.

Urinalysis: The urine concentration, about 5 key tests, and microscopic analysis for cells and bacteria are key to helping interpret the chemistry values obtained. A low urine concentration is one of the first indicators of kidney disease.

Fecal Analysis This checks for parasites that may be causing problems with digestion and may be affecting some of the lab values.

Radiographs: provide a black and white image of the structures in the body. The denser the item, the more white it appears. Radiographs of the chest allow us to assess the heart size & shape and look for changes in the lungs. Radiographs of the abdomen help us locate masses of different densities from the abdominal organs. Radiographs of the bones helps us to identify arthritis or bone cancer.

After radiographs are interpreted, a referral for an ultrasound may be needed.

Blood Pressure & Eye Pressure: Yes, pets can suffer from high blood pressure and can get glaucoma too!

Senior Pet Exams—How Often?

Annually: Comprehensive history and physical exam, complete blood count and chemistry, urinalysis, fecal analysis, blood pressure and other tests as required based on physical examination results. Possible radiographic screening.

Biannually: Comprehensive history and physical exam, urinalysis, and blood pressure. Fecal analysis if regular deworming is not done.

Is Your Pet Showing Signs of Aging and Age Related Health Issues? Start with Our

[Senior Wellness Questionnaire](#)