



Veterinary Care for Your New Pet!



Just like people, animals should see their medical team annually to make sure they're staying healthy! Unlike people, many of the vaccines that our pets require to stay healthy need to be administered annually, so it's a bigger deal when we put off making that appointment. We recommend establishing a relationship with a veterinary practice so that the same practice is seeing your animals annually and can make more informed recommendations about their care.

Vets consider your pet's whole health, so your input is really helpful to them. If you're noticing any changes in their behavior, their eating habits, their energy levels, or the frequency that they're going to the bathroom, make sure you communicate that to your veterinarian.

What you can expect from your vet visit:

Physical exam:

- The veterinarian will take a look at your pet's ears, eyes, nose, mouth, skin, and body condition as well as listen to their heart and their lungs to look/listen for any changes since their last visit or abnormalities.
- Based on their findings, they may say your pet looks healthy and they're not concerned, or they may recommend further diagnostics, treatment, or monitoring.
- Always make sure to ask for clarification on anything if you need it, and don't be afraid to seek a second opinion before following through with any recommendations your veterinarian makes.

Budgeting for an Emergency

Hopefully you never have an emergency with your pet, but since emergencies are unpredictable, try to plan in advance for the possibility. Care can range from a few hundred dollars to thousands.

One great way to budget for expenses is with pet insurance (MetLife offers discounts to our adopters and is one of many good options), which will usually cover at least some of the cost if your pet is insured before they need emergency care. CareCredit provides interest-free credit for 6-24 months depending on the bill total. Or you can set aside money on your account in case your pet needs emergency care.

Preventative care:

- **Flea (& tick) preventative:** talk to your veterinarian about which preventative would be best suited for your pet. Because fleas and ticks are constantly evolving, the medications that work to prevent them from causing harm to your cat or dog have to evolve alongside them!
- **For dogs:** Your pup should be **tested annually for heartworm** so that they can be prescribed a heartworm preventative. Heartworm is a very dangerous parasite carried by mosquitoes, and most **heartworm preventatives** are given monthly.
- **For cats:** We recommend that you get your cat **tested for FIV/FelV 60 days after their last possible exposure**. Usually, that's their intake date to PAWS. This is when the test is most accurate, so even though it can be tempting to get it done sooner, there is a chance that the test will give you a false negative.

Vaccinations for dogs:

- There are quite a few vaccinations that your dog could be getting, depending on if your dog has frequent interactions with other dogs, visits dog parks, doggy daycare, or spends time in boarding facilities.
- The two vaccinations that your dog should stay up-to-date on regardless are the **rabies vaccination** (which comes in 1-year or 3-year vaccines) as well as combination vaccine (or vaccines) that protects your dog against **distemper, parvovirus, and leptospirosis**, all of which are diseases that your dog can catch from the environment.
- Other vaccines your dog may need depending on your lifestyle are to protect from **bordetella** and **canine influenza**, which are transmitted via contact with other dogs.

Vaccinations for cats:

- Cats should stay up to date on two vaccinations, both of which are available in one-year or three-year versions (though some veterinarians may only stock one version of each vaccine). The first is the **rabies vaccine**. The second is a combination vaccine that protects your cat from **rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and panleukopenia**.
- There are other vaccinations for cats, including one to protect your cat from FeLV, that your vet may or may not recommend, depending on your household and your cat's immune system.

