



Wellness Information For Dogs

Wellness Visit

As your dog ages, we recommend annual wellness visits. These visits are designed to help monitor them for any changes and to prevent disease. They are also required to continue to prescribe any ongoing medications your dog may need, including dewormers.

During the visit, your veterinarian will evaluate important things such as:

- History
- Body weight
- Dental disease
- Bones and joints
- Heart and lungs
- Skin
- Digestive system

Physical exam findings will allow us to make recommendations for treatments and preventative measures that will minimize disease transmission and prolong the health of your dog.

We will discuss your dog's individual needs for vaccines and parasite prevention based on their lifestyle and exposure. As your dog ages, the frequency of wellness visits may increase as we begin to monitor/treat specific conditions.

Obesity

Obesity is an epidemic in the dog population. It could lead to a number of health risks including diabetes, heart and respiratory disease, cancer, arthritis, urinary issues, and a reduced lifespan.

Your veterinarian can demonstrate how to body condition score your dog and discuss diets and methods of weight loss to help you develop a plan to increase your dog's lifespan.

Behaviour

Behaviour issues (aggression, separation anxiety, or accidents in the house) are among the common reason dogs are surrendered. Unwanted behaviour could sometimes be a result of underlying health issues. If your dog is expressing unwanted behaviour, please discuss with your family veterinarian so they can provide resources or treatments to help fix or reduce it.

Licensing Your Dog

All cats and dogs in Calgary must be licensed. If your dog is not already licensed, please visit the website www.calgary.ca or call 311. You may face a fine if your pet is not licensed.

Dental Care

Bad breath could be one of the first clinical signs your pet has dental disease. Dental disease could lead to a number of health issues. Dogs could begin to develop dental disease less than one year of age (presents as red and swollen gums). Early detection is the key to prevention. Brushing your dog's teeth daily with a pet-friendly toothpaste and a soft tooth brush will help prevent tartar build-up. Talk to your veterinarian if you have questions about dental disease in your dog or if you would like to book your pet for a dental.

Ticks & Lyme Disease

Alberta has a free surveillance program that monitors for the tick that carries the bacteria **Borrelia Burgdorferi** which is the cause of Lyme disease in both pets and people. If you find a tick on your dog, please place the tick in a plastic bag or container with a moist tissue and bring it into your veterinary clinic. The tick will be sent away to determine if it carries the bacteria.

Parasites / Worms

Dogs are exposed to a number of parasites, some of which are zoonotic (transmitted from animal to humans). Dogs often pick these parasites up outdoors (parks, on walks, or contact with other pets feces). Methods to minimize the spread of diseases from pets to humans include regular deworming and washing your hands after handling animals or their feces.

Dogs that hunt rodents, or ingest feces are at potential risk of becoming infected with **Echinococcus Multilocularis** (a tapeworm from coyotes). If your pet hunts or eats feces, please ask for our handout on Echinococcus and talk to your family veterinarian.

Pets Poisons

Be aware that many different products and medications could be toxic for your dog. For example:

- Xylitol is an artificial sweetener that is very toxic for dogs
- Ibuprofen will cause significant gastrointestinal issues

If you suspect your dog has been exposed to a toxin, please bring it to an emergency clinic. If you are unsure if the contaminant is poisonous, you can visit www.asPCA.org or call the National Animal Poison Control (ASPCA) 1-888-426-4435. **A consult fee applies; you will be assigned a case number for your veterinarian to follow-up.

Boarding & Daycare

Most boarding and daycare facilities require an up-to-date Bordatella (kennel cough) vaccine. This annual vaccine is given at the clinic to enhance immunity against one of the pathogens that cause kennel cough.

Several facilities also recommend preventative care for external parasites (fleas). Plan ahead and make sure you know what your dog needs prior to dropping them off.

Travelling With Your Dogs

If your dog is travelling outside of the province you should be aware that they may be exposed to viruses, parasites, fleas and ticks that are not found in Alberta. Vaccines and preventatives could be given to help protect your dog against some of the diseases/parasites they may be exposed to.

It is important to start looking into which viruses and parasites are prevalent in the areas you are travelling months prior to travel to allow your vet clinic time to arrange to have the vaccine available (and since some vaccines require a booster vaccine 4 weeks later). Please ask us for our handout on travel information and potential risks when travelling if you are planning on travelling with your dog.

Pet Insurance

Pet insurance is strongly recommended at every age. Emergencies are always an unexpected cost that can add stress to any situation. Having an insurance plan already in place will help ease your concerns when and if an accident or illness happens. Once a pet has a pre-existing illness/accident, the insurance company will not cover it under their health plan. For this reason, it is best to get insurance as soon as possible. Common insurance companies include Trupanion, Petsecure and Pets Plus Us.



Trusted Resources

Veterinary Partner: www.veterinarypartner.com

Pets Web MD: www.webmd.com

Worms & Germs: www.wormsandgermsblog.com

Indoor Pet Initiative: www.indoorpet.osu.edu

