

# **Twice A Year For Life! - Importance of 6 month wellness exams.**

## **Why should you bring your pet in for 6 month wellness exams?**

- **Dogs and cats age faster than people. Significant health changes can occur more rapidly.**
  - 1 human year = 7 pet years (on average). Imagine only going to your doctor once every 7 years.
  - The risks of cancer, diabetes, obesity, arthritis, heart disease, and other serious conditions all increase with age.
  - Today's pets are living longer, so chances are many will experience a potentially serious illness during their lifetime.
- **An ounce of prevention really is worth a pound of cure – a widely accepted idea in other areas of our life, such as:**
  - Taking our cars in for regular oil changes and tune ups.
  - Scheduling our own health screenings and dental visits

Why not for our pets? We can help them live longer, healthier, happier lives. The old adage "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is outdated.

- **Pet owners often think in terms of "my pet is due for his vaccines". While vaccinations are very important, this is a common misconception.**
  - Vaccinations protect against specific contagious disease like Rabies, Leptospirosis, and Parvo.
  - But there are no vaccines for Arthritis, Diabetes, Cancer, and similar non-contagious, but very serious illnesses and conditions. These problems can only be diagnosed and treated during a wellness exam.
- **Pets can't talk, & they are good at hiding their pain. Clients who wait until they see a problem have often waited too long.** The underlying disease or illness may have progressed to the point where treatment may be difficult, lengthy, & expensive. Possibly even impossible.
  - Twice yearly exams help the veterinarian diagnose & treat (or ideally *prevent*) problems before they become serious.
  - Here are 2 examples. Both owners are loving care-givers, but timing proved to be a critical factor:
    - **Pet A** was due for his annual exam in June, but chose to come in for a 6 month exam in December. During the exam, the veterinarian felt masses too small to be seen by the owner. They were surgically removed, & tested positive for an aggressive form of cancer. This may have ended Pet A's life prematurely if it had not been detected when it was.
    - **Pet B** was due for her annual exam in October. Even though she seemed outwardly healthy, one day in early September, Pet B suddenly died while playing in the owner's yard. A necropsy revealed similar tumors to the ones Pet A was diagnosed with, but this time at a fatal size. It's possible if Pet B had been diagnosed 6 months earlier, mass removal may have extended her life.
  - Cases like Pet B have prompted us to start recommending 6 month exams.

(More On Reverse Side)

## What should you expect at your pet's semi-annual exams, & how this can benefit your pet?

We perform the following services:

Which could have the following possible benefits to your pet:

- Fecal Screening  
Coccidia discovered. Deworming medication started to minimize risk of your whole family becoming infected.
- Medical History discussed  
Repetitive symptom patterns noticed sooner with more frequent visits. Treatment started sooner, reducing discomfort & aggravation.
- Heart & lungs checked  
Heart murmur detected early. Medications started to lengthen life.
- Weight Check - Pet gained 5lbs  
Calorie control food started & exercise regiment scheduled, reducing chances of future weight related illnesses.
- Weight Check - Pet lost 5lbs  
Bloodwork run which discovers hidden condition. Medication started to prolong life.
- Nutritional Consult  
Feeding habits have lead to Pancreatitis. Recommendations lead to fewer incidences, and fewer "surprises".
- Aural (Ear) Examination  
Excess hair plucked to deter yeast infection, hematoma surgery, etc.
- Ocular (Eye) Examination  
Dry Eye Condition diagnosed. Treatment started to prevent future enucleation (surgical removal of the eye).
- Temperature Reading  
Hidden fever found. Antibiotics started to prevent major illness requiring hospitalization.
- Abdominal Palpation  
Small mass felt. Surgical removal saves life.
- Dental Exam  
Broken rear tooth discovered. Extraction performed to prevent painful abscess. Dental cleaning performed to inhibit tooth decay.
- Dermatological Exam  
Staph infection diagnosed. Start antibiotics to ease pet's comfort, prevent secondary complications.
- Musculoskeletal Evaluation  
Hip pain discovered. Put on joint supplements & pain medications making pet more comfortable. Possible surgery to correct years of unrealized pain.
- Blood Screenings (senior & "at risk" breeds)  
Cushing's Disease diagnosed. Medication started to avoid needless suffering, potentially extend life.
- Environmental Assessment  
Admission that owner's female cats are "indoor only", but the male cat is allowed to roam one night each month "to be a boy". Vaccine plan altered to compensate for possible diseases. Neuter performed to reduce population growth.
- Medication Assessment  
Symptoms changed, new dosage prescribed to ease suffering.
- Parasite Prevention discussed  
Winter "dry skin" itch revealed to actually be flea infestation. Year round prevention eradicates problem.

## "Twice A Year For Life!"

(More On Reverse Side)