



# Exams & Vaccinations

At Arroyo Veterinary Hospital we feel the most important part of your pet's health care is the Annual/Semi-Annual Wellness Exam. Every pet should have an exam twice a year. Animals age 3 to 7 times faster than we do, therefore problems can occur much sooner than you may expect. We also need to remember that pets can't tell us when they're hurting so the veterinarian is trained to look for problems that may not be obvious. We are committed to preventive medicine. We want to prevent illnesses before they happen and to do that we need to examine your pet on a regular basis.

Many people feel that their pets are fine if they receive their annual vaccinations, but this is simply not true. Vaccinations provide important protection for your pet. But, in addition to the vaccines that control viruses and bacterial diseases, your pet's examinations assure early detection of other illnesses and this may be even more important in extending your pet's life span.

There is also new research that indicates that we may not need to vaccinate older animals as often as we have in the past. The decision whether to vaccinate can be made at the time of the exam.

At Arroyo Veterinary Hospital we do not hold "shot clinics" for these very reasons. If you ask us how much vaccinations cost, we would simply tell you that vaccinations come in what we call our "Wellness Program", and that the cost of a vaccinations varies according to the needs of your pet.

The wellness exam is a thorough exam from head to toe. We will weigh your pet, then the doctor will carefully examine all of the body systems starting with the eyes, ears, teeth, throat and skin. The doctor will then listen to the heart and lungs. The abdomen, muscles, lymph nodes and skeletal structure are also examined.

The doctor will be looking for many things including the start of cataracts, dental disease (which is not only painful but can cause some very severe illnesses), lymph node enlargement (which can signify infection or early cancer), heart murmurs, increased or decreased lung sounds, abnormal masses in the abdomen, under the skin or on the skin, external parasites (fleas, ticks, etc.), and many other signs which left undetected may shorten your pet's life and cause him pain.

Routine tests recommended at this time include a fecal exam (which requires a stool sample) to look for internal parasites, and a heartworm test to make sure your pet is free of heartworm. Additional tests the doctor might recommend include a comprehensive blood panel, which includes blood chemistries and a complete blood count; radiographs which will help to identify problems internally; a urinalysis which helps to tell the health of the kidneys, and an EKG to evaluate the heart rhythm .

After the physical examination, the doctor will then decide which vaccinations should be given, based on your pet's individual needs and risk factors.

The decision to conduct any additional tests will also be made at that time.

Please feel free to ask one of our staff, or the veterinarians, if you have any questions about the Annual Wellness Exam or vaccinations.

Remember: Your pet cannot tell you when something is wrong. A good health exam can help keep your pet happy and healthy!