

Animal Medical & Surgical Center

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Canine Total Health Care Program

At the Animal Medical & Surgical Center we recommend the highest quality of health care for your pet. The information below is designed to inform you of the specific recommendations and protocols that we believe will provide the best medical care for your pet. Together, we can decide on a health care plan to fit the needs of your pet.

Examinations:

We recommend having your pet examined at every visit when they are receiving their puppy vaccines, and at least once a year thereafter throughout your pet's life. An examination will provide an overall evaluation of your pet's condition and health. Since dogs age five to ten times faster than humans do, changes in their health can change faster as well. An annual examination for your dog is comparable to you having a routine physical by your doctor every five to ten years!

Heartworm Exams:

We recommend having your dog tested for heartworm disease once a year. Heartworms are spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. With mosquitoes being so prevalent in Georgia, there is a 90% chance that a dog will develop heartworms if they are not on preventive. Additionally, although the heartworm preventatives on the market are extremely effective, on a rare occasion we will find a dog that has been on preventative that is heartworm positive. Because it is far better to treat heartworm disease in its earlier stages, we require heartworm testing annually in order to purchase heartworm preventative, and strongly recommend that you keep your dog on heartworm prevention all year long.

Intestinal Parasite Exams:

We recommend having an intestinal parasite exam every six months on a stool sample from your dog. The infective stages of several intestinal parasites, including roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms, are frequently found in the soil of Georgia. Dogs can often become infected with these parasites from merely walking in contaminated areas. Although dogs may not initially show symptoms of parasite infection, over time these parasites will harm your pet's health. Additionally, many of these parasites are zoonotic and can pose a threat to humans, especially children, as well. For these reasons, we believe bi-annual intestinal parasite exams are very important for you and your pet.

Routine Blood Health Screens:

Blood Health Screens are tests run on a blood sample that will evaluate your dog's organ functions, such as kidney and liver function. By running a blood panel annually, we may pick-up subtle changes in organ function, which will allow us to make changes in your pet's healthcare (such as diet changes and/ or medications) to improve the quality and longevity of your dog's life. For dogs seven years and older, or if your dog is on certain types of medications, we recommend doing this blood panel every six months.

Dental Care:

As part of our physical examinations, our doctors will be examining your pet's gums and teeth. Periodontal disease and gingivitis can lead to bacteria seeding into the blood stream of your pet causing heart, liver, and kidney infection. Your pet may be painful from these infections, but not show any signs at home. Routine dental care and health are very important to not only your pet's quality of life, but also the longevity of your pet's life.

Vaccinations:

In previous years we have vaccinated your pet annually for certain diseases, however, research over the years has shown that some vaccines can provide protection for longer periods of time. For this reason we are recommending that certain core vaccines be given every three years.

Rabies Vaccine: We recommend the 3-year rabies vaccine although the 1-year is still available if an owner prefers.

Distemper, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza and Hepatitis Vaccine: We recommend that your pet receive this vaccine every three years.

Leptospirosis Vaccine: We recommend giving this vaccine annually. Reports show that the incidence of this disease is growing in the Atlanta area. This disease, which is caused by bacteria, can cause kidney failure.

Bordetella Vaccine: Bordetella is a very contagious air-borne virus. We recommend that this vaccine be given every six months to dogs that are boarded, groomed, or routinely exposed to other dogs (for instance, at a dog park).

Please feel free to ask us specific questions about our health care plan for your pet. We strongly believe that fine-tuning our new protocol for your pet's age and specific circumstances will provide the best overall care for your pet.