



Pickens Animal Hospital

WHY DOES MY PET NEED AN ANNUAL PHYSICAL EXAM?

At Pickens Animal Hospital we strive to provide high quality pet health and wellness services to assist your pet in living a longer, happier and healthier life. Often owners have questions about the need for a physical exam in order to administer vaccines, provide treatment or prescribe medication. There are several reasons why an exam is essential:

Our pets age faster than we do. The unfortunate truth is that our pets do not live as long as we do. A yearly exam for a pet is equivalent to a human visiting the doctor every 6 or 7 years.

Pets can't tell us when they feel sick. Most animals (and especially cats) excel at hiding health problems. Their instinct is to hide pain so they do not appear weak to others. Often issues are found during an exam that the owner was totally unaware of. Problems that go undetected can be much more difficult and expensive to treat later on.

Pets change as they age. Many pet owners mistakenly believe that senior pets need very little if any veterinary care. A thorough check-up, however, will provide an assessment of your pet's health status and give you the opportunity to discuss how your pet's care might need to change over the year ahead. Geriatric animals often need foods that are more easily digested or may have different calorie needs to maintain an appropriate weight. Older pets' immune systems are not as strong as younger pets, so they may not fight off diseases or heal as fast as they once did.

Routine exams help establish a baseline of what is normal for your individual pet. Knowing what is normal makes it more obvious when something is abnormal. For example, it is important to know if a pet is losing weight, or if his/her blood chemistry levels are changing. Finding these trends can be key to a diagnosis.

A Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) is legally required before a Veterinarian can provide treatment or prescribe medication to an animal. The VCPR is based on the veterinarian having examined the animal within the past calendar year.

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