

Monitoring for Potential Health Problems in Your Dog

Preventive care not only helps to detect disease in its early stages, when it is most likely to respond to treatment, but it also can help you avoid significant medical expense and risk to your pet's health.

Routine preventive care also helps your veterinarian establish normal baseline laboratory values when your pet is young and healthy. Even subtle changes from baseline values can help identify disease as your pet ages, long before they become apparent to you or your veterinarian.

Organ/System	Potential Health Risks	Possible Result If Left Untreated
Teeth and mouth	Gingivitis, periodontal disease, oral cancer	Oral pain, tooth abscesses, tooth loss, systemic infection, cancer progression
Nose and throat	Inflammation/infection, bleeding, tumors	Progression of local infection, systemic infection, breathing difficulty, nosebleeds, cancer progression
Liver and gallbladder	Inflammatory liver disease, reaction to certain drugs and toxic substances, cancer, Cushing's syndrome, stones of the gallbladder and bile ducts	Jaundice, liver failure, anemia, bleeding disorders, neurologic signs, cancer progression, death
Kidneys	Acute and chronic kidney diseases, kidney stones, kidney infection, cancer	Irreversible kidney damage, kidney failure, high blood pressure, blindness, anemia, death
Heart and lungs	Heart muscle disease, leaky heart valves, irregular heart rhythms, heartworm disease, bronchitis, pneumonia	Poor circulation, fluid buildup in lungs and/or belly, congestive heart failure, pneumonia, sudden death
Joints and bones	Arthritis, hip dysplasia, torn cruciate ligament in knee, degenerative back disease, immune-mediated disease, infectious disease (e.g., Lyme disease), cancer	Pain, reduced mobility, progressive disease, paralysis
Glands/endocrine system	Diabetes, thyroid disease, adrenal disease	Cataracts, blindness, wasting, hair/coat changes, hair loss, excessive thirst/urination, skin infections, collapse, death
Eyes and vision	Corneal ulcers, cataracts, dry eye, glaucoma, deformation and/or infection of eyelids	Pain, progressive blindness, loss of eye
Digestive/gastrointestinal system	Intestinal parasites, intestinal blockage, other intestinal infections, inflammatory bowel disease, colitis, pancreatitis, cancer	Malnutrition (inability to absorb nutrients from food), wasting, chronic diarrhea, gas, abdominal pain, cancer progression, death
Skin	Allergies, fleas, mites, ticks, lumps, skin infections, ear infections	Hair loss, foul odor, vector-borne infections, worsening infections, hearing loss, cancer progression, death

For more information about preventive care, talk to your veterinarian—your best resource for information about the health and well-being of your pet.



Charlie & Ziggy

Preventive Care for Your Dog

Preventive Care for Your Canine Friend

Your pet's health changes with age, just as yours does. But our pets age much faster than we do.

age	weight			
	0-20	20-50	50-90	>90
1	7	7	8	9
2	13	14	16	18
3	20	21	24	26
4	26	27	31	34
5	33	34	38	41
6	40	42	45	49
7	44	47	50	56
8	48	51	55	64
9	52	56	61	71
10	56	60	66	78
11	60	65	72	86
12	64	69	77	93
13	68	74	82	101
14	72	78	88	108
15	76	83	93	115
16	80	87	99	123
17	84	92	104	131
18	88	96	109	139
19	92	101	115	
20	96	105	120	
21	100	109	126	
22	104	113	130	
23	108	117		
24	112	120		
25	116	124		

Chart courtesy of Fred L. Metzger, DVM, DABVP

Color Key

- Adult
- Senior
- Geriatric

Do you know how old your dog is relative to you, or in "people years?" Use the chart (at left), based on your dog's age and weight, to find out!

Regardless of your pet's age, you play a key role in helping him combat illness and remain as healthy as possible. Remember, your dog cannot describe symptoms to you, but he will show you signs of disease or illness. Awareness of the signs of the most common diseases is one way to help reduce your pet's risk. It's a little scary to consider that 10% of pets that appear healthy to their owners and veterinarians during their annual visits have underlying diseases.¹

The 10 Signs Your Dog May Be Sick Are:

- 1 Bad breath or drooling
- 2 Excessive drinking or urination
- 3 Appetite change associated with weight loss or gain
- 4 Change in activity level (lack of interest in doing things they once did)
- 5 Stiffness, difficulty getting up, or trouble climbing stairs
- 6 Sleeping more than usual or other behavior and attitude changes
- 7 Coughing, sneezing, excessive panting, or labored breathing
- 8 Dry or itchy skin, sores, lumps, or shaking of the head
- 9 Frequent digestive upsets or change in bowel movements
- 10 Dry, red, or cloudy eyes

Testing Can Uncover Hidden Health Problems in Your Dog

Blood
CBC is used to screen for:

- Anemia (low red blood cells)
- Inflammation
- Infection
- Stress
- Leukemia
- Bleeding problem
- Inability to fight infection
- Hydration status

Kidneys
Blood and urine tests can indicate:

- Early renal disease
- Renal failure
- Infection
- Stones
- Cancer
- Abnormalities resulting from long-term medications

Pancreas
Biochemistry tests can indicate:

- Pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas)
- Diabetes mellitus
- Abnormalities resulting from long-term medications
- Cancer

Liver
Biochemistry tests can indicate:

- Liver disease
- Cushing's syndrome
- Certain cancers
- Dehydration
- Obstruction of the bile ducts
- Abnormalities resulting from long-term medications

Teeth
Dental exams uncover abnormalities in teeth and the soft tissue of the mouth. Oral disease may indicate secondary health problems.

Thyroid
Biochemistry and serum T₄ tests can indicate thyroid disease.

Heart and Lungs
Immunoassay tests can detect heartworm disease. Biochemistry tests can indicate cardiac damage.

Early detection. Reduced risk. Peace of mind.

While the physical exam is important, the picture of your pet's overall condition is not complete without these diagnostic tests. Blood testing can frequently

detect illness in your pet before any outward signs of disease can be seen. Testing gives veterinarians immediate insight not otherwise available.

Preventive Care May Include:

- Chemistry tests** to screen for kidney, liver, and pancreatic disease, as well as to check sugar levels
- Blood parasite screening** to identify if your pet has been exposed to vector-borne (e.g., heartworm) or other infectious diseases
- Fecal tests** to rule out intestinal parasites
- Complete blood count (CBC)** to rule out blood-related conditions
- Electrolyte tests** to ensure your pet isn't dehydrated or suffering from an electrolyte imbalance
- Urine tests** to screen for urinary tract infections and other diseases, and to evaluate the kidneys' ability to concentrate urine
- Thyroid test** to determine if the thyroid gland is producing too little thyroid hormone
- Cardiac tests** to rule out heart-related issues
- Electrocardiogram (ECG)** to screen for an abnormal heart rhythm, which may indicate underlying heart disease

¹ Rehm M. Seeing double. Veterinary Economics. 2007;48(10):40-48.