

Taking Your Pet to the Vet for the Annual Health Check

Your pet's Annual Wellness Check is not just about those vaccinations!

Pets are an important part of your family.....

But unlike your children or your siblings, they cannot tell you when they don't feel good. It is up to you to take care of your pet's health, because they are a part of your family.

Preventive care takes a proactive approach to your dog's health care, but sometimes, knowing what is best for your pooch or puddy-tat is not easy.

Pet care is complex, especially for new pet owners. Sometimes, it's hard to follow the right plan and know what they need next.

Sometimes it gets expensive, and the expense means things get left undone. But **there's a quick and easy way to minimize that expense and that's by a routine annual health check and visit.**

Annual vet visits for pets are an important part of your pet's overall healthcare, and they are also the best way to minimize your long term pet-care expenses.

Here's a closer look at why it is so important for your pet to have the right preventive care and how it gives you peace of mind as well as saving you money.

Annual Check-ups: Why Are They Important?

Your pet should visit the vet at least once per year. These annual check-ups are very important for a number of reasons.

Pets Age More Quickly Than Humans

The old adage that every year of human life equals seven years in a pet's life is not quite accurate, but dogs do age **much more** quickly than humans.

The first year of a pet's life is equal to about the first 15 years of a human life. In year two, your pet develops about as much as a human does in nine years. After that, each human year equals about five years of ageing for your pet.

By the time a dog or a cat is ten years old, s/he is more like a 60-year-old human adult than a 10-year-old child.

Why does that mean annual vet visits are important?

Because a pet is going through that much change in just one year, this means that there's a lot going on in that body.

If we go back to the 7 years to 1 as a rough guide. Think of how much your body has changed in the last 7 or 14 or even 21 years. The change is extraordinary – especially when looking BACK.

For your pet, that same amount of change has occurred in just one or two or three human years – wow!!

You need to give your (us) vet the chance to check things over, ensure that ageing has occurred ‘gracefully’, that there’s nothing that needs ‘fixing’ or ‘managing’ and ensure your pet is as healthy as possible.

Preventive Health Care

An annual visit to the vet gives the vet the chance to look at and manage any needed ‘illness’ care as well as recommend preventive health care measures.

As you know from your own life, PREVENTION beats ‘illness care’ hands down, every time.

In this 21st Century, there are so many easy and inexpensive illness preventative strategies for pets. These strategies will help your pet live as long and as well as possible.

Everything from dental care to joint health, to parasite control, weight management and regular exercise are important as your pet ages.

Create Positive Memories for Your Pet

Some pets may be anxious or even fearful when they come and visit us (at the vet). And that’s not surprising if the pet only visits the vet when that pet is sick or hurt; s/he will begin to associate the location with negative experiences.

When you go to the vet when there’s nothing wrong, to check on his/her weight, to pick up some pet food, parasite preventative or for an annual visit and use lots of positive reinforcement (in other words – feed lots of treats!!) while you are there, your pet will start associating the vet with more positive memories.

This in turn, will make it easier to have a calm and relaxed visit when something is wrong.

Your Pet’s Health Check: What to Expect at the Hospital

First, you will be asked a number of questions. You can expect questions about:

- Diet
- Exercise
- Water consumption/thirst
- Behaviour and habits
- Bowel movements
- Overall lifestyle, including whether the dog spends much time outdoors
- Wellness
- General health
- Parasite control (internal and external)

After collecting that information, the vet will perform a comprehensive physical examination, looking at the joints, eyes, ears, teeth, ears, skin, coat, anal sacs, mouth, lymph glands and other areas of your pet for signs of any disease or health problems.

Then s/he will make recommendations.

The most important is the vaccinations that your pet needs at this particular point of time. Vaccinations keep your pet from contracting dangerous, potentially fatal diseases, like parvovirus, distemper, hepatitis and leptospirosis..

Most vets will also discuss flea and tick prevention or other parasite control measures like heartworm and scabies if these are problems in your area.

If your pet has a weight management or dental care need, we will discuss these with you and recommend the steps to take to help.

The unfortunate statistic is that if your pet is over 2 years of age, then there is an 8 in 10 change that s/he has significant dental disease or is overweight.

These two problems (dental disease and obesity), are the two biggest killers of the modern dog and cat. And what's IMPORTANT about that is that these two diseases are TOTALLY manageable / treatable.

Hence – getting these under control is the BIGGEST step that you can take in helping you fur baby live healthily for longer!

We will also take the time to walk you through lifestyle recommendations that will help your pet live a healthier life.

This is valuable information that can help you prevent future medical problems that would lead to costly bills.

Average Cost of an Annual Health Check

One of the reasons many pet owners skip their annual pet health check is the perceived expense.

These visits are important and while they may appear costly, because there is no such thing as pet 'Medicare'...

When looked at in the overall picture of early diagnosis and disease prevention, that annual health check is a very inexpensive investment indeed in your pet's long term health and wellness.

You can now also take advantage of our senior annual wellness or health care programs. Joining your pet in with such a plan will allow you to factor this expense into an inexpensive monthly subscription like program.

While saving you stacks of money to boot!!

This makes that annual health exam very affordable for almost anyone.

The exact cost of your pet's annual care will depend on specifically what services and products you need. But according to ASIC's [MoneySmart](#), you can expect to pay these averages for your dog each year:

- Vet care: \$497 (specifically purchased at a vet – things like vaccinations, annual health checks and illness visits)
- Health products: \$248 (normally purchases on line or through a pet store)
- Grooming: \$129

Clearly, that is a considerable chunk of money.

One of the ways you can help reduce this cost is with a pet wellness plan – as mentioned above.

A pet wellness plan makes it easier than ever to care for your dog or cat and you get better value.

The specifics of our plan plans are available on our website; www.highlandsveterinaryhospital.com.au – why not check them out!

To make it super easy for you, you can even join up on line.

The plans include an annual vet visit with dental checks, vaccinations, blood and urine testing, as well as blood pressure and glaucoma testing and then professional recommendations. they are VERY comprehensive indeed.

And BTW – they also have quite a few FREE visits to the practice and nail trims.

Love Them from the Nose to the Tail

Getting an Annual Health Check and maybe even a wellness plan for your pet makes it super easy to keep him/her healthy and happy.

I hope that this quick overview has reinforced the importance of regular veterinary visits for the longevity, health and happiness of your cat or dog

Warmly

Diederik Gelderman