

Examination/Consultation

One of the critical aspects to any appointment with the veterinarian, be it for yearly vaccinations or for a specific health problem, is the complete physical examination.

The physical examination begins as soon as Dr. Leah enters the room. She is constantly observing your pet, noting his alertness, how he moves around the room, and how he reacts to people. You will be asked very important questions about your pet - the doctor needs to know if there are any changes in your pet's behavior, appetite or water consumption, if there is any unusual vomiting or diarrhea, if there are any new lumps or bumps and if your pet is on any medication for any current problems. She will want to know what diet you are feeding your pet, and if there are any other animals in the house. Dr. Leah will also ask you if there are any particular concerns or questions you might have regarding your pet and his care - this is your chance to "pick her brain" for helpful hints on any subject from nail trimming to weight loss.

The hands-on part of the physical examination is a full "nose-to-toes" using (nearly) all of the senses. Dr. Leah checks for any abnormal discharges from the eyes or nose, the teeth and gums are looked at for gingivitis and tartar build-up, and the mouth is sniffed for bad odor. Smell can be used to detect ear infections as well - a healthy ear should have essentially no odor - maybe just a little "doggy". Your pet's heart and lungs will be listened to, ensuring there is no heart murmur, abnormal rhythm or

unhealthy lung sounds. The entire body is felt ("palpated") both on the surface checking for lumps and other problems, and more deeply in the tummy region to make sure the kidneys, liver, intestines and bladder are normal.

Sometimes Dr. Leah will need to perform a rectal examination of your pet, checking the size of the prostate gland in dogs, or to empty the anal glands.

All findings during the physical examination will be explained to you - both the normal and the abnormal. Recommendations will be made for further diagnostic and treatment plans for the abnormalities, such as a dental cleaning or removal of a lump.

If your pet is healthy, he will be given the vaccines required and Dr. Leah will make suggestions as to how to keep him healthy for the following year.