

Give Your Pet a  
Longer, Healthier Life



## Wellness Exam

A wellness exam starts with a comprehensive physical examination by your pet's veterinarian hoping to find no abnormalities. Once the exam has been completed, further services such as vaccination or the tests described in this brochure may be recommended.

## Why Does My Pet Need a Wellness Exam?

Although your pet may appear healthy, the natural instinct of animals is to disguise or hide any outward appearance of illness. This behavior has obvious benefits in the wild but can be harmful, if not life-threatening, in our pets.

Wellness exams and screening tests can help your veterinarian determine the true health status of your pet. It's important to identify the early signs of illness in order to begin treatment and to prevent further injury or progression of disease.

Our pets age at an accelerated rate compared to people. Consequently, annual or bi-annual wellness exams are recommended, depending on age and health history. Your veterinarian may also recommend a wellness exam before surgery or other procedures that require sedation/anesthesia.

### Tests May Include:

- ✓ Hematology Tests
- ✓ Blood Chemistry Tests
- ✓ Urinalysis
- ✓ Heartworm Test
- ✓ Fecal Exam
- ✓ Other Tests Based on Age, Breed, and Existing Medical Conditions

## Value of Diagnostic Screenings

In addition to wellness exams, annual diagnostic screening is also important for our pets. Your veterinarian may recommend screening diagnostics such as imaging, blood work, urine tests, or fecal exams to further assess your pet's overall health status. Identifying underlying conditions before your pet is outwardly ill will enable your veterinarian to select the best course of action going forward. Screening diagnostics are especially important for our pets prior to anesthetic procedures or starting new medication regimens. Screening allows veterinarians to make informed decisions, reducing the chance for complications or reactions.

## Hematology Tests

### Complete Blood Count (CBC)

A CBC evaluates a patient's red cells, white cells, and platelets. Abnormal levels can indicate the presence of anemia, infection, inflammation, and even reflect the ability to fight infections or form clots. Normal levels can help give us the reassurance of a better prognosis.

## Blood Chemistry Tests

Signaling the possible presence of disease, abnormalities in blood chemistry parameters can be incredibly valuable to your veterinarian. Common tests are listed below.

### Liver Tests

#### Alanine Aminotransferase (ALT)

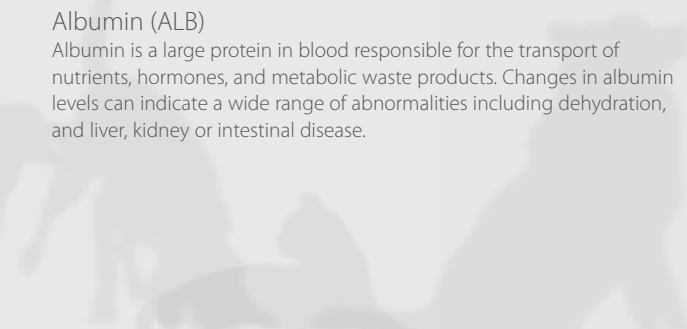
Diseases and trauma that damage the liver can cause an increase in ALT.

#### Alkaline Phosphatase (ALP)

ALP is an enzyme which can be increased with diseases of the liver, bone, gall bladder, adrenal gland, as well as secondary to certain medications and more.

#### Albumin (ALB)

Albumin is a large protein in blood responsible for the transport of nutrients, hormones, and metabolic waste products. Changes in albumin levels can indicate a wide range of abnormalities including dehydration, and liver, kidney or intestinal disease.



## Total Protein (TP)

As with albumin, changes in TP can occur with dehydration, blood loss, liver or kidney disease as well as many other conditions.

## Total Bilirubin (TBIL)

TBIL is a by-product from the destruction of red blood cells (normal or abnormal) which is cleared by the liver. Elevations can indicate disease of the liver and gall bladder, as well as certain blood disorders.

## Kidney Tests

### Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN)

A protein by-product of normal body processes, BUN is cleared from the blood primarily by the kidneys. Elevations in BUN indicate a decrease in filtering of the blood by the kidneys due to damage or decreased blood flow.

### Creatinine (Crea)

Like BUN, creatinine is a by-product of normal body processes. Creatinine is cleared from the blood almost exclusively by the kidneys. Abnormal levels can indicate kidney damage, dehydration, or other diseases.

### Calcium ( $\text{Ca}^{++}$ )

Numerous diseases can affect calcium levels. The most common include parathyroid and kidney disease as well as some cancers.

### Phosphorus (PHOS)

Whether providing structural integrity to bones or the membranes of cells, phosphorus is vital to normal organ function. Changes in phosphorus levels occur with a variety of systemic diseases including diabetes, endocrine disorders, and kidney disease.

## Other Tests

### Glucose (GLU)

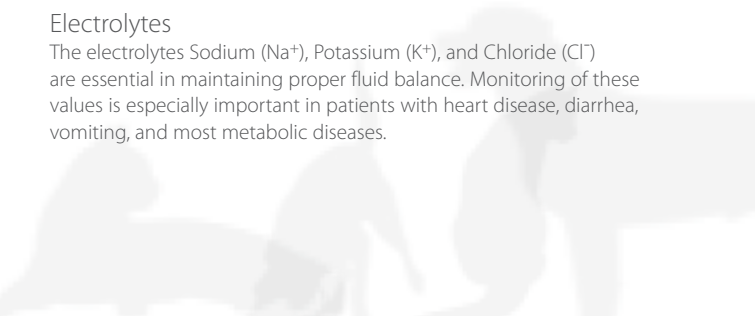
An essential source of energy present in the blood, increased glucose levels can indicate stress or diabetes while decreased levels can occur with many disease states.

### Magnesium ( $\text{Mg}^{++}$ )

Magnesium is another important electrolyte involved in various functions throughout our pets' body systems. Changes occur with many disorders including kidney disease, intestinal disorders, pancreatitis, thyroid disease and more, leading to lethargy, decreased appetite and even seizures.

### Electrolytes

The electrolytes Sodium ( $\text{Na}^+$ ), Potassium ( $\text{K}^+$ ), and Chloride ( $\text{Cl}^-$ ) are essential in maintaining proper fluid balance. Monitoring of these values is especially important in patients with heart disease, diarrhea, vomiting, and most metabolic diseases.



## Urinalysis

### Complete Urinalysis (UA)

Urine is produced by the kidneys which constantly filter the patient's blood. The circulating blood contains metabolites and waste products (normal and abnormal) from all organ systems. Performing a complete UA will evaluate the physical and chemical properties of the urine. Abnormal UA results may suggest infection or disease from one or several body systems.

## Fecal Examination

Our increasing mobility and globalization has also impacted the prevalence of certain GI parasites, common in pets, some of which can infect humans. To ensure the health and well-being of your pet, a stool sample check for parasite eggs and cysts may be recommended by your veterinarian.

## Endocrine Tests

Depending on your pet's age, breed, or activity level, *etc.*, your veterinarian might also choose to test certain hormones, *i.e.*, thyroid and adrenal levels, in your pet's blood. Fluctuations in these hormone levels start with subtle changes in thirst, appetite and energy level, so be sure to alert your veterinarian to any modifications in your pet's routine or habits.

## Heartworm Test

Heartworm disease, often fatal in our cats and dogs, is transmitted via mosquitoes, but luckily preventable and treatable if diagnosed early. These worms migrate throughout the body silently damaging tissues and organs along the way until they reach the heart and its vessels, leading to irreversible and life threatening changes.

# You Can Help Reduce Your Pet's Risk of Disease

Your veterinary care team will be happy to discuss correct frequency of health exams and appropriate tests for your pet based on breed, medical history and lifestyle.

*Ask for a wellness exam and screening tests today.*

Confirm your pet's good health or identify signs of disease early and intervene to give your pet a longer, healthier life.

This information is provided to you by your veterinarian and Heska Corporation.

## Notes from Your Doctor:

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