

## Annual Physical Examination versus Vaccines

We are often told by pet owners that they are not coming in for their pet's annual physical examination because their pet isn't due for any vaccines. This worries us and so we thought we'd address it as there seems to be a misunderstanding over what our annual recommendations for pet health actually are.

As your pet ages, just like in people, changes within the body will occur. From lumps and bumps, to tartar accumulation and gingivitis, and stiffening joints to the deterioration of internal organs – there are many things that can happen over time. While some conditions can be easily noted by pet owners, others, like tumors growing internally, periodontal disease and swollen lymph nodes, require the experience of a veterinarian to properly note and assess. It is not uncommon for disease to be present without physical symptoms right away. Pets are good at hiding things from us and so there is a level of pain and discomfort that they may not show right away. Unfortunately, by the time a pet owner notices signs of illness, the disease has often already significantly progressed.



There is also value that comes from our history taking – you know your pet best and discussing any changes you have observed, no matter how insignificant they may seem – helps us to put together the story of how your pet is doing. From changes in eating and drinking habits, to changes in urination, mobility or mood, we want to hear about all of it! When we combine these changes with abnormalities on a physical exam, we are more likely to proactively identify the onset of health issues.

This is a big deal. The earlier we can diagnose issues, the more likely we are to successfully treat or even cure them. Isn't this what every pet owner wants? Okay - so we can't speak for every pet owner, but we can speak for ourselves

both as pet owners *and* veterinary professionals. It's what we would want!

Vaccines are awesome. They allow us to give pets in our care immunity to common diseases, preventing them from spreading or, in some cases, emerging within the domestic pet population. With advances in medicine, we have seen the evolution of vaccines in that they are safer and also more effective at providing longer term immunity. The result? Your pet can be vaccinated less frequently and still have the same level of protection!

We are so pleased to be able to offer you the latest vaccines with these capabilities but also want to bring to your attention that, even if your pet is not due for a vaccine, they still require their annual examination. These two things do not go hand in hand. So, while the frequency of your vaccination schedule has changed, their full physical examination is still a necessity every year.



We hope this helps to clear things up and cannot wait to see you soon!

# Happy Family Day

From all of us here at Napanee Veterinary  
Hospital!