

Alta View Veterinary Clinic

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Tips for Keeping Your Pet Healthy

1. At home monitoring is the first step to noticing when something is abnormal.

- At home monitor for changes in your pet's behavior, activity level, eating & drinking habits.
- Other things to watch for: coughing, sneezing, vomiting, diarrhea or other changes in stools, weight gain or loss, difficulty urinating (especially male cats). Please call to discuss your concerns.
- Sometimes in multiple pet households it is difficult to notice these changes in individual pets so separate and confine pets to a room or area of your house to monitor if you are suspicious of changes.

2. Testing and prevention of parasites & infectious disease is key.

- For cats and kittens, we recommend an FELV/FIV test initially to ensure you are not exposing other cats to these contagious diseases. A vaccination for FELV is recommended for outdoor cats & those exposed to other cats.
- Annual Heartworm/Lyme/Ehrlichia/Anaplasmosis testing for dogs starting with puppies at 8 mos of age is necessary for early detection of disease. These are parasites that travel through the bloodstream and so the test requires a small amount of blood.
- Puppies 8 weeks of age & older and all dogs should receive monthly Heartworm preventative. These oral medications are given once per month, year-round. Heartgard and Iverhart Plus are the products we recommend. They help prevent heartworm disease and help control two common intestinal parasites- roundworms & hookworms. The medication is based on your dog's weight so it is important to let us know of weight changes as your puppy is growing or if your adult dog gains or loses weight.
- A fecal exam is needed to identify intestinal parasites for both cats and dogs. Parasites are transmitted from pet to pet easily and can be transmitted to humans as well. It is important to have your pets stool checked regularly.
- Fleas and ticks are blood-sucking parasites that can transmit disease to your pet. Monthly topical flea and tick control will keep these pests off of your pet and out of your home. Parastar, Parastar Plus, Advantix and Revolution are products we recommend.
- Keeping your pet up to date with vaccinations is one of the best ways to help protect it from infectious disease. Please see the additional sheet on vaccine information for details about these vaccines. Rabies vaccine is required by law



for both dogs & cats. We can help you determine which vaccines your pet needs based on lifestyle and potential for exposure.

3. Diet & Exercise is an important factor in your pet's health.

- We can help advise you to choose a proper diet for your pet based on age/health status/nutritional needs.
- It's best for your pet to eat a measured amount of food, usually divided into two meals/day. Limiting the number and size of treats is important to avoid weight gain.
- Avoid bones & treats that may cause intestinal obstruction or broken teeth.
- Exercise is a great way to control your pet's weight and often times will help with behavioral problems – a tired dog is a good dog.

4. Dental Care is essential to maintaining your pet's health.

- Bacteria from dental disease can spread throughout the blood and cause damage to kidneys, liver and the heart.
- At home dental care is easy with our CET Hextra chews for dogs and treats for cats. We also have dental wipes, CET toothpaste & brushes designed for pets.
- A dental prophylaxis known commonly as a “dental cleaning” includes a full oral exam, ultrasonic scaling of the teeth both above and below the gumline, polishing the teeth and a fluoride treatment. This procedure is performed under general anesthesia.



5. Spaying and neutering pets can help decrease their risk for cancer and other diseases.

- We recommend spaying and neutering puppies and kittens at 6 mos of age. There are multiple benefits including eliminating risk of unwanted puppies or kittens, and decreasing risk of mammary or ovarian cancer in females and testicular and prostate cancer in males. In-tact male cats are more likely to spray or mark around your house and in-tact male dogs are more likely to develop aggressive behaviors.

6. Remember that you are constantly “training” your pet –whether you realize it or not you are either enforcing wanted or unwanted behaviors.

- When your pet does something you don't want it to do – how do you react? If you eventually give-in you are reinforcing this behavior (i.e. feeding table scraps if your pet begs or giving attention to a pet that jumps up) Instead you should ignore behaviors you don't want and praise or reward welcome behaviors.
- It is important to be consistent with your pet – all members of your family should use the same commands (i.e. “Down” vs “Off”, “Drop it” vs “Release”)
- Please ask us about your specific behavior questions – we are happy to help as we want your experience with your pet to be rewarding.