



Tama Veterinary Hospital

4 N Abel St., Milpitas, CA, 95035

Phone: 408-719-8554

Fax: 408-273-6543

Email: tamaveterinaryhospital@gmail.com

Website: tamavethospital.com

Wellness Testing for Senior Dogs

What is wellness testing?

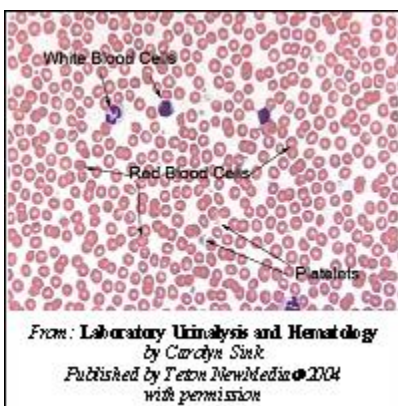
Wellness testing is a program of check-ups and blood tests designed to detect early or hidden disease in pets that appear to be healthy. In older pets, it is also used to monitor animals that feel well but have stable ongoing health problems.

Why do wellness testing?

Dogs are very good at masking illness and disease may be present even in animals that do not appear to be sick. If a disease can be detected early on, before a pet shows signs of illness, then steps can often be taken to manage or correct the problem before permanent damage occurs. Wellness testing is particularly important in senior (geriatric) dogs, since there is a greater chance that an older animal will develop disease or have an ongoing but stable condition that needs to be monitored.

When is wellness testing done?

Wellness Testing should be done on a regular basis, and many pet owners combine wellness testing with their dog's annual visit to the veterinarian for physical examination, vaccination, and heartworm testing. Your veterinarian may recommend more frequent testing depending on your dog's age or specific health concerns. Monitoring your older dog's health on a regular basis makes it easier for the veterinarian to detect minor changes that signal the onset of disease or deterioration of an existing condition.



What is involved in wellness testing?

There are four main categories of wellness testing for senior dogs: **complete blood count (CBC), biochemistry profile, urinalysis, and thyroid hormone testing.** Comprehensive testing is recommended for senior dogs, due to the higher risk of underlying disease.

Complete Blood Count –

This simple blood test gives information about the different cell types in the blood. These include *red blood cells*, which carry oxygen to the tissues, *white blood cells*, which fight infection and respond to inflammation, and *platelets*, which help the blood to clot. The CBC provides details about the number, size, and shape of the various cells types, and identifies the presence of any abnormal cells. It is a routine test used in all stages of health and illness and can indicate the presence of many forms of disease (See article Complete Blood Count).

Biochemistry Profile –

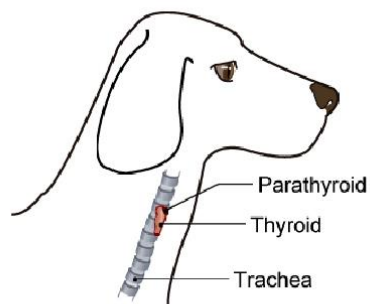
This is a panel of tests that provides information about the organs and tissues of the body, and helps to detect diabetes and various other disorders. (See handout *Serum Biochemistry*).

"In some cases, a more extensive diagnostic workup may be recommended."

If minor abnormalities are found on the biochemistry profile, the veterinarian may ask you to repeat the tests in a few days, weeks, or months. If the abnormalities are more serious a more extensive diagnostic workup may be recommended, including an expanded biochemistry profile and special tests including X-rays or ultrasound.

Urinalysis –

Urinalysis is a routine test that reports the physical and chemical properties of a pet's urine (see article *Urinalysis*). Urinalysis provides information about how well the kidneys are working and identifies inflammation and infection in the urinary system; it also helps to detect diabetes and can be useful in the diagnosis of cancer within the urinary system. Urinalysis is part of a complete assessment of the kidneys and urinary system and should be included in routine Wellness Testing. It is particularly important for senior dogs because of the higher occurrence of kidney disease in older animals.



Thyroid testing

The thyroid gland acts like a thermostat and "sets" the metabolic rate of the whole body (See article *Thyroid Hormone Testing in Dogs*). The most common thyroid disease in the dog is *hypothyroidism*, which occurs when the thyroid gland fails to produce enough thyroid hormone. Hormone levels should be tested routinely in older dogs, especially if there is unexplained weight gain, lack of energy, recurring skin or ear infections, or hair loss on the body and tail.

Summary

Wellness Testing is a simple and effective way of monitoring your older dog's health. Early detection and correction of medical problems help to ensure that your pet will be healthy and active for as long as possible.

This client information sheet is based on material written by: Kristiina Ruotsalo, DVM, DVSc, Dip ACVP & Margo S. Tant BSc, DVM, DVSc

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Senior Wellness Plans

(For Ages 7+ Years)



- 1 Chest radiograph view
- 1 Thyroid Screen
- 2 Nail Trims
- 1 **In House** Urinalysis

Enhanced

\$810 Prepaid

\$850 Yearly

Monthly \$40

After \$410 down payment

(Discount starting at ~15% off original price of services)

5 **Scheduled** Exams & Rechecks (No Emergency Exams)

20% Off Exams & Rechecks Thereafter

All recommended core vaccines

- Canine: Rabies, Bordetella, and DHPP Vaccines

- Feline: Rabies, Felv, and FVRCP Vaccines

1 **In House** Fecal flotation test

1 Heartworm test / FeLV FIV snap test

6 doses of Flea & Heartworm Preventative

- Sentinel (oral)
- Revolution (topical)

1 Basic Health Profile: Chem 10 & CBC

No upgrades or replacements for any services or medications are included. This is NOT pet insurance. Plan is recommended for healthy pets. Services are non-redeemable after plan's expiration date.

BASIC

\$510 Prepaid

\$550 Yearly

\$25 / Month

After \$275 down payment

(Discount starting at ~15% off original price of services)

