



Oral Health

Oral health is often overlooked in our pets. While some signs of dental disease can be easily noted, such as a fractured tooth, bad breath, or difficulty eating, signs of oral pain can often be hidden.

Dental Care Starts at Home

Bacteria and food particles result in plaque, or a film, forming on the teeth. If left on the tooth surface, plaque hardens to tartar. Regular teeth brushing can remove plaque.

- Routinely brush your pet's teeth using a toothpaste that is specifically designed for pets, as human toothpaste can be toxic.
- Gradually introduce your pet to teeth brushing until you are brushing each day.

When to Involve Your Veterinarian

Once tartar has built up on the teeth, a dental cleaning by a veterinary professional with your pet under general anesthesia is required to remove the tartar. Many pets require a yearly dental cleaning to remove tartar buildup and extract any diseased teeth. In addition to routine care at home, discuss options for dental treatment with your veterinarian.



Please **schedule** an **appointment** with your veterinarian to discuss any questions or concerns!



<http://phc.amedd.army.mil>
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APHC Animal Health

This information brochure was written by Army Veterinary Services personnel and published by the Army Public Health Center to inform and educate Service members, beneficiaries, and retirees about Animal Health. Comments or questions regarding content can be directed to ARMY-VSPublications@mail.mil. Locate your local Veterinary Treatment Facility at <https://tiny.army.mil/r/JG66r/VTFs>

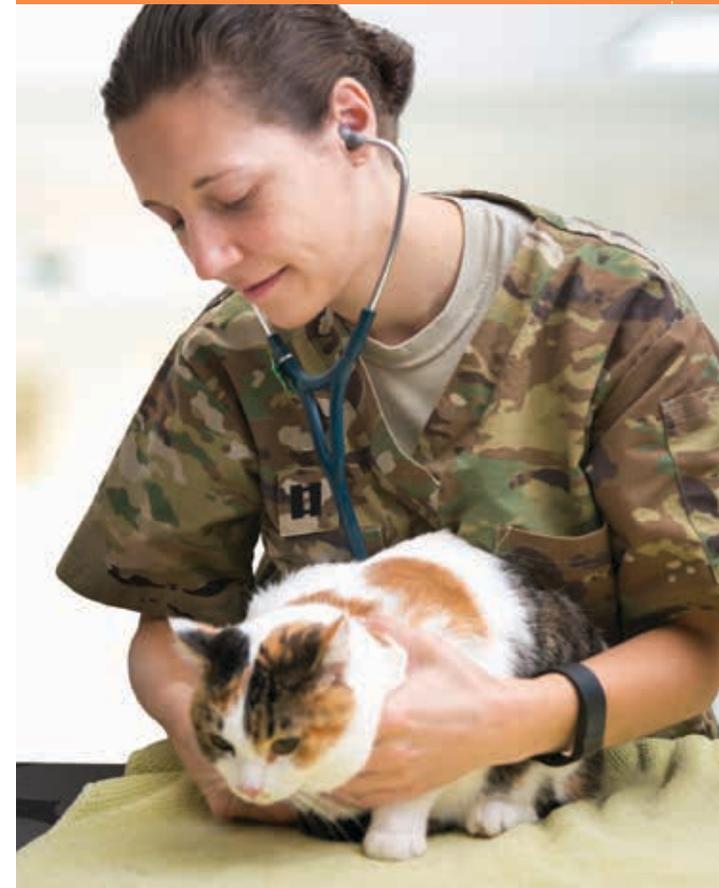


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Preventive Health

Veterinary preventive care



Routine veterinary preventive care is essential for our pets.

Your Veterinary Treatment Facility can help!



DOGS



CATS

Routine preventive care is essential to keeping your pet healthy and promoting longevity. As many people know, it is important to feed your pet a healthy diet appropriate for their life-stage and provide routine exercise to help them maintain physical and mental fitness. However, addressing your pet's overall health and wellness starts with a thorough annual veterinary exam, which should include tests for preventing disease and identifying possible parasites.

Heartworm Disease

Heartworm disease is a disease spread by mosquitos. It is found in all 50 states and globally in all climate zones. When an infected mosquito bites, it deposits larva (microfilaria) under the pet's skin, which can grow to an adult worm that then migrates to the blood vessels of the lungs and heart. If left untreated this can lead to chronic disease and possibly the loss of your pet. Regardless of your geographic location, the American Heartworm Society recommends year-round heartworm prevention for both dogs and cats.

Testing and Prevention:

It is essential to have your dog tested for Heartworm disease yearly and administer an approved preventative. Heartworm preventatives kill the microfilaria that infected mosquitoes deposit under the skin, and many preventatives are also effective against intestinal parasites. Heartworm preventatives are safer for your pet and far less expensive than treatment.

Cats can also be infected with heartworms. Annual testing is not required, but monthly heartworm preventatives are strongly advised.

Symptoms of Heartworm Disease:

Oftentimes, symptoms are not visible until the disease has advanced and significant damage has occurred. Common symptoms include:

- Coughing
- Exercise intolerance
- Sudden death

Treatment:

Treating Heartworm disease is a costly and lengthy undertaking. Dogs must undergo an extended period of strict exercise restriction and monitoring by the owner and veterinarian. Treatment can also be dangerous as it causes mature worms to die and break apart which can block the blood flow to the lungs.

Parasites

Pets can be infected with both external and intestinal parasites. Your veterinarian can examine your pet and test for parasites during an annual visit.

External Parasites

The most common external parasites include fleas and ticks. Fleas can cause your pet to be miserable and can also result in an infestation of your home! In addition to being a nuisance, fleas can transmit diseases to people (murine typhus, cat scratch disease, plague, and tularemia). Ticks can also transmit serious diseases to you and your pet, including Lyme disease, *Ehrlichia spp.*, *Babesia spp.*, tularemia, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Intestinal Parasites

Hookworms, roundworms, and whipworms are a few common intestinal parasites. Intestinal parasites can cause diarrhea, weight loss, and a dull hair coat. Some intestinal parasites, including roundworms and hookworms, can be transmitted from animals to people, especially young children.

There are many products available for parasite prevention. Talk with your veterinarian to determine which product will work best for your pet.

Addressing your pet's overall health and wellness starts with a thorough annual veterinary exam.



Vaccines

Many diseases that cause pets to become extremely sick or even die are easily prevented with a series of vaccines. Your veterinarian will create the proper vaccination schedule for your pet based on local laws and your pet's age, risk factors, previous immunizations, and lifestyle.

Core vaccines are recommended for pets of all ages and lifestyles.

Core vaccines for dogs include:

- Rabies virus: A viral disease that causes brain inflammation in mammals. Once an animal is infected, the disease is always fatal.
- Distemper virus: Highly contagious and can affect the gastrointestinal tract, respiratory tract, brain, and spinal cord.
- Parvovirus: Common in unvaccinated puppies and causes extreme vomiting, diarrhea, and dehydration. If the disease is not managed quickly, it can result in death.
- Hepatitis virus: An acute liver infection in dogs caused by canine adenovirus type-1 (CAV-1).

Core vaccines for cats include:

- Panleukopenia virus (feline parvovirus): Attacks the intestinal lining and causes severe vomiting, diarrhea and dehydration.
- Calicivirus: Causes upper respiratory tract infections.
- Herpes virus: Causes upper respiratory tract infections.
- Rabies virus: A viral disease that causes brain inflammation in mammals. Once an animal is infected, the disease is always fatal.

Non-core vaccines are available for pets and are administered based on geographic location and lifestyle.

Talk with your veterinarian to determine if your dog should receive the following non-core vaccines:

- Bordetella (kennel cough)
- Canine influenza virus
- Leptospira
- Lyme disease

Your veterinarian can also help you determine if your cat should receive the following vaccines:

- Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)
- Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV).