



The Importance of Biannual Lab Work and Exams for Senior Dogs Over 7 Years

As our beloved dogs age, their bodies go through changes that can often be subtle or silent. Just like humans, senior pets are more prone to developing health issues, some of which may not show any outward signs until the disease is advanced. For dogs over the age of 7, regular wellness visits that include both physical exams and lab work every six months are essential to maintaining quality of life and catching problems early, when they're often more manageable or even reversible.

Why Every 6 Months?

Dogs age much faster than humans, what happens to us over several years can occur in just a few months in a dog's body. Waiting a full year between checkups may allow disease to progress to a critical stage. Seeing your veterinarian every six months means changes can be caught sooner, allowing for earlier intervention, less invasive treatments, and potentially lower veterinary costs in the long run.

Physical Exam: The First Line of Defense

Veterinary physical exams are more than just a routine checkup—they are a thorough head-to-tail assessment of your dog's health. During an exam, your veterinarian will check:

- 🐾 **Weight and body condition:** Unintentional weight loss or gain can be a sign of metabolic disease, organ dysfunction, or cancer.
- 🐾 **Skin and coat:** Dull fur or hair loss may indicate allergies, thyroid issues, or poor nutrition.
- 🐾 **Eyes, ears, and mouth:** Dental disease, cataracts, or ear infections can be common in older dogs and may impact overall health.
- 🐾 **Joints and muscles:** Arthritis and muscle loss are frequent in senior dogs and can lead to pain and mobility issues.
- 🐾 **Heart and lungs:** Detecting early murmurs or abnormal lung sounds can help prevent future complications.

Even if your dog seems healthy, many changes happen slowly and can be easily overlooked at home. A physical exam every six months gives your vet a baseline to compare over time and catch changes early.

If you have any questions, feel free to give us a call, text or email.

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Why Lab Work Matters

Many age-related conditions begin internally and show no signs until they are significantly advanced. That's where lab work becomes essential. Routine blood and urine tests can detect:

- 🐾 **Kidney disease** – common in older dogs and often symptom-free until significant damage is done.
- 🐾 **Liver disease** – early detection allows for dietary changes or medications that can extend your dog's life.
- 🐾 **Diabetes** – manageable with early detection but dangerous if left untreated.
- 🐾 **Thyroid imbalances** – hypothyroidism can cause weight gain, skin issues, and lethargy, all of which are reversible with treatment.
- 🐾 **Anemia and infections** – often a sign of underlying disease such as cancer or autoimmune disorders.

Lab work can also help your veterinarian assess how well your dog is tolerating any current medications and ensure organs are functioning properly.

Quality of Life Is Everything

Regular exams and lab work aren't just about finding problems—they're about keeping your dog feeling their best for as long as possible. By staying proactive with senior wellness care, you can help your dog enjoy more happy, comfortable years by your side.

If your dog is 7 or older, now's the time to talk with your veterinarian about a twice-a-year senior care plan. Prevention and early detection are key to a long, healthy life.

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