

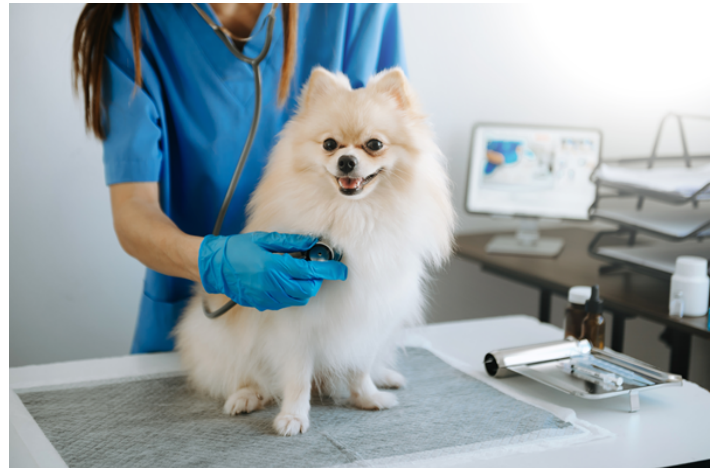
Wellness Testing for Dogs

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.

Why should I do wellness testing?

Dogs are very good at masking illness, and disease may be present even in dogs that appear to be healthy. If a disease can be detected before a dog shows signs of illness, you can often take steps to manage or correct the problem before permanent damage occurs.



When is wellness testing done?

Wellness testing should be done regularly, and many pet owners combine wellness testing with their dog's annual visit to the veterinarian for physical examination, vaccination, heartworm testing, and parasite prevention.

"Your veterinarian may recommend more frequent testing, depending on your dog's age or specific health concerns."

Your veterinarian may recommend more frequent testing, depending on your dog's age or specific health concerns. Monitoring your dog's health on a regular basis makes it easier for your veterinarian to detect minor changes that signal the onset of disease.

What is involved in wellness testing?

There are four main categories of wellness testing for young to middle-aged dogs: complete blood count (CBC), biochemistry profile, urinalysis, and thyroid hormone testing. Your veterinarian will advise you on how extensive the testing should be for your pet. In younger dogs without noticeable health complaints, relatively simple testing may be adequate. In middle-aged dogs, more comprehensive testing may be beneficial.

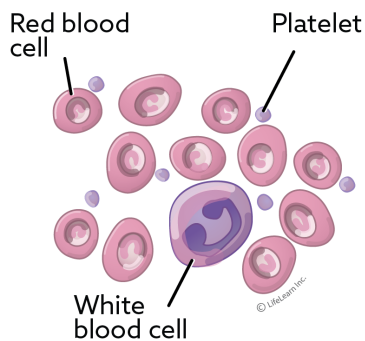
Complete Blood Count (CBC). This test gives information about the different cell types in the blood. These include red blood cells, which carry oxygen to the tissues; white blood cells, which fight infection and respond to inflammation; and platelets, which help the blood to clot. The CBC provides details about the number, size, and shape of the various cell 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 (for more information, see handout “Complete Blood Count”).

Biochemistry Profile. These tests provide information about the body's organs and tissues, and help detect diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, endocrine disease, and other disorders (see handout “Serum Biochemistry”). If minor abnormalities are found on the biochemistry profile, your veterinarian may suggest that the tests be repeated in a few days, weeks, or months. If the abnormalities are more serious, then a more extensive diagnostic workup may be recommended, including an expanded biochemistry profile and/or imaging tests such as X-rays (radiographs) or ultrasound.

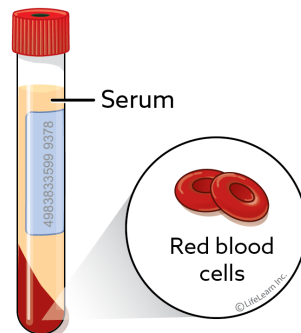
Urinalysis. Urinalysis is a routine test that reports the microscopic and chemical properties of a pet's urine (for more information, see handout “Urinalysis”). Urinalysis provides information about how well the kidneys are working and identifies inflammation and infection in the urinary system. It can also help to detect diabetes and can be useful in the diagnosis of cancer in the urinary system. Urinalysis is part of a comprehensive assessment of the kidneys and urinary system and should be included in routine wellness testing.

Thyroid testing. The thyroid gland acts like a thermostat and sets the metabolic rate of the whole body (for more information, see handout “Thyroid Hormone Testing in Dogs”). The most common thyroid disease in dogs is hypothyroidism, which occurs when the thyroid gland fails to produce enough thyroid hormone. Hormone levels should be tested routinely in middle-aged to older dogs. Even young dogs should be tested if they show signs of hypothyroidism such as unexplained weight gain, lack of energy, recurring skin or ear infections, or hair loss on the body and tail.

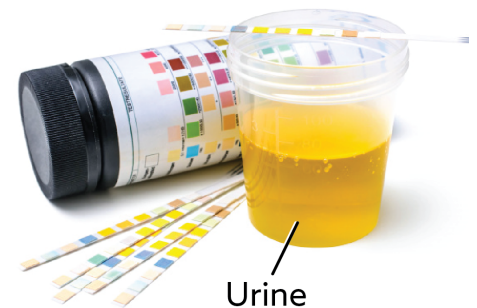
CBC analyzes the cellular components of the blood.



Serum biochemistry refers to the chemical analysis of the liquid component of blood.



Urinalysis includes a dipstick test of the chemical properties of the urine.



Wellness testing is a simple and effective way to monitor your dog's health. With early detection, you can correct or manage medical problems before they become serious, helping to ensure that your dog will live a long, healthy, and active life.

© Copyright 2024 LifeLearn Inc. Used and/or modified with permission under license. This content written by LifeLearn Animal Health (LifeLearn Inc.) is licensed to this practice for the personal use of our clients. Any copying, printing or further distribution is prohibited without the express written consent of LifeLearn. This content does not contain all available information for any referenced medications and has not been reviewed by the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine, or Health Canada Veterinary Drugs Doctorate. This content may help answer commonly asked questions, but is not a substitute for medical advice, or a proper consultation and/or clinical examination of your pet by a veterinarian. Please contact your veterinarian if you have any questions or concerns about your pet's health.