

TO YOUR *Pet's* Health

TO DO *blood work* OR NOT TO...

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It is time for your pet's annual wellness exam and vaccinations. The veterinarian has recommended blood work be done. I know.... you are asking yourself "Is blood work really necessary?" The answer is "yes", whether your animal is sick or not. Blood work is a way to monitor different organ functions with the thought of diagnosing and even catching an issue early.

A yearly routine screening CBC (complete blood count) and Chemistry Profile allows for the normal values for your pet to be set. This allows for comparison of these values from year to year and the possible early detection of any changes. Some diseases, such as kidney failure, are better treated when detected before the animal becomes sick from it.

A CBC monitors the number of red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. It also gives an estimate of the type of white blood cells present. There is an array of diseases that can be indicated by abnormalities in these counts.

A standard chemistry profile gives levels for kidney and liver enzymes which can indicate how these organs are functioning. It also indicates levels of production of albumin (a blood protein), glucose (blood

sugar), and different electrolytes.

If your animal becomes sick, it is important to do blood work. There are many diseases that may present with the same set of clinical signs: such as vomiting, drinking too much, urinating more than normal, and weight loss. Blood work allows your pet's doctor a way to figure out what is going on and ways to treat it.

There are many more specific tests that can be done once there is some indication from the screening blood work what direction should be taken. These tests help to confirm certain diseases and help with therapeutic monitoring.

It is recommended to start doing annual blood work between 5-8 years of age or earlier if there is any family or known history of issues. It is also a good idea to do screening blood work before an anesthetic episode so that any liver or kidney issues are known and can be accounted for during anesthesia. Before starting any kind of long-term medication (like pain medication), blood work should be performed and repeated at least yearly to monitor effects on organ function.

So, is blood work really necessary? The answer is yes!



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