

Routine Exams

Your pets are part of your family, but they can't always tell you when something is wrong. Annual wellness exams are important for your pet's overall health and should go beyond just taking a temperature and giving shots. Pets age much faster than we do, and it's crucial to catch potential problems before they've developed into serious issues. Concerns like dental disease, parasites, and obesity can lead to complicated issues if left unchecked, and the sooner you detect any signs of illness, the sooner we can treat your pet, leading to a much better quality of life.

We recommend routine pet exams every year for most pets, but since new health risks come with age, we recommend exams twice a year for older pets. During every routine exam, your veterinarian will provide a comprehensive, full body assessment to identify any potential threats to your pet's health, including:

Lab Tests

Testing your pet's blood, urine, and feces allows us to identify otherwise invisible problems. Lab tests are used to screen for heartworms, parasites, diabetes, and kidney disease. Having lab test results on hand for healthy pets is important too, because they provide a baseline for early identification of a problem if your pet were to get sick between routine exams.

Stethoscope Tests

When you visit a doctor, one of the first things they do is a stethoscope exam, and we do the same for your pets. We listen to your pet's heart and lungs to check for early signs of cardiac disease, heart murmur, abnormal heartbeat, and abnormal breathing patterns or breathing obstructions. This way we can identify underlying heart or lung problems early and begin treatment before it gets serious.

Vision Exams

Your pet's eyes are subject to many of the same issues humans can experience - from cataracts to ulcers and even pink eye. Some ocular issues are quickly identifiable, but others aren't, and eye health can be an early indicator of other problems, particularly for aging pets. Your pet's eyes should be examined at least once a year.

Hearing Exams

From ear mites and other parasites to allergic reactions, food sensitivities, and problems caused by swimming or bathing - your pet's ears are susceptible to irritation, disease, and even infection. Ear diseases are common, and regular ear exams can keep threats to your pet's hearing at bay.

Dental Concerns

Dental disease is one of the most common and most easily preventable medical conditions that affect pets, particularly dogs and cats. During your annual exam, your veterinarian will examine your pet's teeth and mouth for cavities, plaque build-up, toothaches, inflammation, and more. We'll also talk about what you can do at home to help care for your pet's teeth.

Physical Exams

Your veterinarian will examine your pet by feeling muscles, joints, skin, lymph nodes, and abdomen, as well as assess your pet's gait. We check for swelling, stiffness, muscle tone loss, or imbalances that can indicate underlying issues like early signs of hip and elbow problems and arthritis, particularly in older pets. Unusual lumps, skin discolorations, lesions, hair loss and thinning can signify metabolic or systematic concerns that are best caught early.

At Lake Union Vet, our doctors are experienced practitioners of veterinarian medicine with specialized training, and we care about your pet's long-term health and quality of life. Call us at (206) 467-5882 to schedule your pet's annual exam.

Dentistry

Did you know that up to 80% of dogs and cats over 3 are affected by dental disease? Pet dentistry is much more than a cosmetic consideration. The health of our pets' mouths are directly related to their overall, long-term health. Dental infections and bacteria from periodontal disease can get into your pet's bloodstream and spread to other parts of the body leading to organ and tissue damage. Many liver, kidney, and heart problems can be prevented with proper oral hygiene.

Pets are susceptible to many of the same dental problems that we are, like bad breath, gum disease, abscesses, broken or fractured teeth, gum recession, tartar build-up, and oral pain. Bad breath is usually an indicator of a problem, and pet parents don't always know what their pet's gums and teeth should look like or how to prevent or identify periodontal disease. Dental evaluations are a crucial part of routine pet exams, and if you notice a problem with your pet's teeth or mouth, it's best to see your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Dental Cleaning

Professional dental cleanings are one of the most important things you can do to keep your pet healthy and prevent dental disease. For optimal health, dental cleanings should be performed every six months. During pet dental cleanings, we remove tartar and plaque build-ups from your pet's teeth, and from below the gum line. At Lake Union Vet, we can perform both anesthetic and non-anesthetic dental cleanings, depending on the needs and anxiety level of your pet.

Advanced Dental Procedures

If your pet needs advanced dental care, your veterinarian will evaluate your pet's situation and talk with you about the best options for care. When needed, we can perform root canals, surgical extractions, fracture repairs, restorations, oral cancer surgery, and many other pet dental procedures at our state of the art facility.

Preventative Dental Care

Proper dental care will help your pet live a longer, healthier life, and it makes a big difference in quality of life, especially as your pet ages. There are many preventative measures you can take to help your pet maintain healthy teeth and gums, like regular brushing, special toys and dental chews, supplements, and regular professional cleanings.

Your veterinarian can talk with you about home care to keep your pet's teeth as healthy as possible and prevent periodontal diseases that can lead to other complications. Schedule a pet dentistry appointment by calling us at (206) 467-5882.

Ultrasound

Pet ultrasound exams use the same type of diagnostic equipment you're most likely familiar with from internal medicine. An experienced radiologist uses sound-wave generating equipment to produce images of your pet's internal organs, helping to diagnose and evaluate diseases. Ultrasound is most frequently used to view a pet's abdomen or heart, and more advanced imaging equipment is used for CT scans and MRIs.

Ultrasound is a safe way to look inside your pet's body and may be needed following abnormal blood work, significant weight loss, unexplained long-term sickness, repeated infections, for cancer evaluation or pre-diagnosis, fluid retention, pregnancy, or as an internal examination before surgery.

What can I expect during a pet ultrasound?

During an ultrasound, our imaging equipment needs to make contact with your pet's skin, so it might be necessary to shave your pet's fur in the area being examined. Don't worry though; fur typically grows back within a month. Pet ultrasounds usually last less than 45 minutes and they're conducted by a trained veterinarian in our office. In most cases, pet parents will be asked to wait outside of the ultrasound room while the exam is being performed so we can focus our full attention on getting clear imaging and making the experience as positive as possible for your pet.

What can a pet ultrasound show?

Pet ultrasounds give us an internal view of organs so we can assess organ size, shape, location, and the supply of blood flowing to your pet's organs. We can also see if there are any abnormalities in organ texture, or if a foreign object or mass is present. If a mass is found, that doesn't mean it's cancerous. Some pets develop non-cancerous masses as they age. Additional tests can be recommended or performed, with your permission, for a more thorough diagnosis.

What will my pet experience during an ultrasound?

We care about your pet's comfort and want to make the ultrasound as pleasant of an experience as possible for both you and your pet. Our ultrasound tables are padded, and the gel used to improve contact for imaging is warmed before being applied to your pet's skin. We use very minimal pressure during the procedure and a veterinarian technician will be there to give your pet undivided attention, with plenty of petting to encourage your pet to lay comfortably during the exam. If an exam lasts more than 15-20 minutes, we'll make sure your pet has an opportunity for a break to get up and stretch between sessions.

When will I know the results of the exam?

After the ultrasound, your veterinarian will talk with you about the initial results and discuss any follow-up recommendations or treatment that may be necessary for your pet. A complete ultrasound report will be available within 24 hours.

If you have other questions or concerns about pet ultrasounds at Lake Union Vet, call our office at (206) 467-5882.

Geriatric Care

As our pets age, they can become more vulnerable to certain risks and diseases, like arthritis, thyroid problems, and obesity, but old age itself is not a disease, and many of the signs we attribute to aging can be treated or prevented with the right care and consideration.

Every pet ages differently and some require geriatric care earlier than others, which is another reason why it's so important to stay up to date on vaccines and routine exams. With a record of your pet's history, we can more easily identify changes in your pet due to age, and if we help your pet maintain good health and nutrition throughout life, age-related concerns become less of a threat to your pet's quality of life.

How often should my senior pet see a vet?

We recommend that aging pets have routine exams twice a year, in comparison to younger pets which should have annual exams. Older pets can be more vulnerable to disease, and it's crucial to catch potential concerns early so we can treat your pet before small concerns develop into serious issues.

What kind of exams will my aging pet need?

During routine exams, we'll evaluate your pet's health thoroughly with lab tests, a physical exam, required and supplemental vaccines based on your pet's lifestyle, a dental evaluation, and nutritional assessment. We'll help you make sure your aging pet is getting optimal nutrition, and having a baseline for lab results is important to help identify changes and diagnose your pet should there be a health concern between routine exams.

What are the biggest concerns as my pet ages?

Every pet and breed is unique and may be susceptible to breed-specific concerns, but many of the diseases that can develop in older pets are similar to older people, such as cancer, heart disease, urinary tract infections, kidney or liver disease, diabetes, arthritis, weakness, and cognitive dysfunction. As with any pet, it's much better to prevent diseases before they occur rather than wait until there's a problem before beginning treatment. Your veterinarian can talk with you about preventative measures to help keep your pet healthy and happy while aging.

What can I do to help my pet age more comfortably?

Older pets sometimes need more attention and more intentional mental stimulation, diet modifications, or simple changes to their home environment such as the use of steps to comfortably reach favorite lounging spots. Since the needs of each aging pet can be unique, it's best to talk with your vet about your specific pet's needs. Schedule an appointment with Lake Union Vet by calling (206) 467-5882.

Diagnostic Medicine

Diagnostic medicine is a critical part of what we do at Lake Union Vet. When our pets get sick, they can't communicate what's wrong or tell us where it hurts, and the problem might not always be apparent because some pets have a high tolerance for pain. You may know that something is wrong because of behavior changes or obvious signs of pain, but fully understanding what's wrong can be difficult in many situations. This is where diagnostic medicine is invaluable.

Our veterinarians have the knowledge and advanced tools available to look beneath the surface and understand what is wrong. We have a broad range of diagnostic tools available in our facility, and we work quickly to assess symptoms and provide your pet with comprehensive exams to find the problem and address it as quickly as possible.

In-house Lab

If your pet is in pain due to sickness, injury, or an accident, timing can be critical. The faster we can identify and diagnose a problem, the more quickly we can work to resolve the problem, which substantially increases the chances of a positive outcome. Lake Union Vet has an in-house lab facility for conducting the most common lab tests and getting fast results when it matters most - from blood, stool, and urine samples, to digital x-rays and ultrasound.

Blood, Urine, and Stool Tests

Analyzing your pet's blood, urine, and stool can tell us a lot about your pet's health. Urine samples can evaluate the likelihood of bleeding within the urinary tract, kidney infections or urinary tract infections. We can also check urine for crystals, bacteria, and urinary-related diseases. Blood tests help your veterinarian diagnose and monitor a number of diseases and infections. Your vet can analyze blood tests for cell counts and structure to determine how well your pet's body is functioning and help indicate potential health problems.

Stool samples are most often used to detect the presence of parasites, like hookworms, roundworms, and tapeworms. During fecal exams, our lab will evaluate a sample of your pet's feces under a microscope to identify signs of gastrointestinal parasites. Sometimes more than one fecal sample will need testing. If your pet needs a fecal exam, your vet will talk with you about options for obtaining fecal samples.

X-rays and Ultrasound

If your pet is experiencing pain or showing signs of unexplained illness, an x-ray or ultrasound may be the most effective way to evaluate and diagnose the source of the discomfort. We have digital x-ray and ultrasound imaging technology on site so that we can look inside your pet's body for a thorough understanding of his or her medical needs. For more information on ultrasound and its uses, visit our [ultrasound information page](#).

If your pet is sick it may be critical to get a diagnosis and treat the problem as quickly as possible. At Lake Union Vet, we practice compassionate veterinarian medicine and we are completely dedicated to your pet's long term health, wellness and comfort. Call us at (206) 467-5882 to schedule an appointment.

Pet Acupuncture

Acupuncture is an alternative medicinal therapy that works by stimulating energy points throughout the body to promote healing, bring relief and restore balance. It's an ancient healing art that has been around for more than 5,000 years.

Pet acupuncture is performed by a licensed veterinary acupuncturist who inserts very thin, sterile needles into specific points along the 14 major energy channels in your pets' body. It provides many benefits for pets and humans alike, from pain relief to stimulating the immune system, regulating digestion, improving musculoskeletal or neurological disorders, and decreasing inflammation.

What should I expect during an acupressure session for my pet?

The idea of acupuncture might seem a little scary at first, but because the needles are so small most pets don't react when they're inserted, and some even fall asleep because it's a relaxing experience. Acupuncture sessions last 45 minutes to an hour. Pet parents are welcome and encouraged to stay, but a veterinarian assistant will be on hand to help comfort your pet during the treatment. Pets shouldn't be fed immediately before a session, but there's no need for fasting.

What types of acupuncture do you perform?

At Lake Union Vet, we perform three types of pet acupuncture: dry needle, electro-acupuncture, and aqua-acupuncture. Dry needle acupuncture is the use of acupuncture needles to stimulate a set of points. During electro-acupuncture, a weak electric current is used to stimulate energy and movement between pairs of points. Aqua-acupuncture involves the use of a solution, like vitamin B12, which is injected into acupuncture points to provide stimulation to the point long after the needle is removed.

How often should my pet receive acupuncture treatment?

Acupuncture treatment frequency depends on the pet, the condition being treated, and the response to the treatment. Some conditions improve after a single treatment, but chronic or severe conditions will need follow up sessions. Traditionally, we recommend trying five treatments and then assessing the response before beginning a long-term treatment schedule. Your veterinarian will talk with you about follow-up treatment recommendations for your pet's specific situation. Once your pet's condition responds to acupuncture, we often recommend herbal remedies to maintain results between sessions.

Can you teach me how to do it at home?

Many of the acupuncture points used can be stimulated at home with pressure and touch. If your veterinarian believes this will benefit your pet, we'll talk with you about how and when to supplement acupuncture sessions with home care.

Acupuncture and other Chinese medicine techniques are very different from Western medicine and focus primarily on finding and correcting imbalances in the body. A balanced body is a healthy body, and acupuncture is a big step toward restoring balance. We will also recommend supplements to help decrease the frequency of acupuncture treatments needed, and how to use

food to help restore balance in your pet's body.

If you have further questions about our pet acupuncture services, please call us at (206) 467-5882. We'll be happy to answer your questions and talk with you more about the benefits of acupuncture treatments for your pet.

Preventative Medicine

Preventative medicine is an important aspect of caring for your pet. Preventing diseases altogether, or treating a minor condition before it becomes a serious problem, dramatically improves the quality of a pet's life and lengthens the time we get to spend with them. At Lake Union Vet, we work closely with every patient to provide the best care possible, help guard against future health problems, and make sure you're on the right track for your pet's health and wellbeing.

We provide a holistic evaluation of your pet's health, including overall risks, breed-specific vulnerabilities, and nutritional needs, and make personalized recommendations. Some of our preventative services are outlined below.

Nutritional Assessments

A nutritional, balanced diet, along with the right amount of exercise, is just as important for your pet's health and longevity as it is for your own. If your pet is underweight or overweight, there may be long-term risks involved. Food allergies in pets aren't always easy to recognize, and some pets need prescription diets or supplements to help treat or prevent the recurrence of certain diseases. Our nutritionists will help assess your pet's needs, so you can know that your companion is getting optimal nutrition.

Flea and Tick Prevention

Fleas and ticks can spread disease and affect your entire family. We recommend flea and tick prevention for most pets to prevent the spread of diseases, avoid flea and tick related allergies, and for your pet's overall comfort. Fleas can cause anxiety in your pets and infestations in your home. It's best to protect your pets against these menacing parasites before exposure. We have several options available and will make preventative recommendations based on your individual needs.

Parasite Prevention and Control

While fleas and ticks are generally easier to spot, many parasites that affect pets are completely invisible. Your pet may have a parasite and experience no obvious symptoms at all until it contributes to a serious health problem. Early identification and treatment of pet parasites is crucial, and preventative medicine is available for the most common parasites that affect our pets.

Vaccinations

Some pet vaccines are recommended and even required in Washington state, but not every vaccine should be given to every pet. Beyond the core vaccines, we make vaccine recommendations based on a number of factors, including your pet's age and lifestyle. We take everything into consideration to help make sure your pet is protected based on their individual exposure to risk.

Lake Union Vet offers compassionate and personalized preventative medicine for pets of all shapes and sizes in our Seattle veterinary office. We truly care about your pet and make recommendations based solely on what your pet needs to maintain optimal health.

Surgical Services

When your pet needs a surgical procedure, experience and skill are the biggest factors in making sure your pet is as comfortable and safe as possible. At Lake Union Vet, we begin pain management before surgery starts and take each patient's needs into consideration. Our veterinary surgeons use the safest anesthesia available and monitor patients closely throughout their procedures.

We truly believe there is no such thing as a "routine" surgery, and we treat every pet as if he or she were our own. Our surgeons regularly perform both soft tissue and orthopedic surgeries, including:

Spaying & Neutering

There are many benefits to spaying or neutering your pet. Aside from preventing overpopulation and unexpected reproduction, it helps prevent some cancers and infections. Most young pets should be spayed or neutered before they turn six months old or begin sexual maturity. Your veterinarian can talk with you about the right time to spay or neuter your pet.

Biopsies and Mass Removal

A biopsy is a surgical procedure used for obtaining a sample of tissue in order to test cells for cancer or disease. Most frequently, biopsies are performed due to the presence of a mass, either before or in conjunction with removal of the mass. Our goal is for biopsies and mass removals to be as minimally invasive as possible. Before we begin any biopsy or removal, your vet will perform an ultrasound so we can make the smallest incision possible.

Trauma and Reconstructive Surgery

Just like humans, pets can experience joint problems or suffer from breaks, fractures or ligament damage. At Lake Union Vet, we have orthopedic specialists available to assess musculoskeletal trauma or injury and talk with you about the most effective options available. We are here to provide your pet with the best surgical care possible along with personalized pain management both before and after surgery.

Dental Surgeries

Keeping your pet's teeth healthy can affect overall health for years to come. Since infection can quickly travel through the bloodstream, it's crucial to address your pet's dental needs or problems as early as possible. If your pet has an abscessed, broken, or otherwise damaged or troublesome tooth, dental surgery may be necessary. Dental procedures for pets include root canals, tooth extractions, fracture repairs, and oral cancer surgery. Your veterinarian can talk with you about the best options for your pet's dental concerns and perform most dental surgeries here in our office.

If your pet needs surgery for any reason, Lake Union Vet will make sure your pet is as comfortable as possible and that you fully understand the options available. If you have any questions about the surgical procedures we offer, please call us at (206) 467-5882.