

January 2023

## Yearly Bloodwork

It's that time of year again: your pet is due for their wellness exam! Vaccines are an extremely important part of your pet's yearly exam. Something else you should ask about during your pet's next wellness exam is bloodwork!

### What is in a Bloodwork Panel?

There are many different bloodwork panels available. However, a standard bloodwork panel includes two main features: a CBC and a Chemistry. CBC: Standing for "complete blood count," a CBC looks at the red and white blood cell counts. Abnormalities in these values can tell us a lot! For example, a low number of red blood cells tell us that our pet is anemic, while a high number of white blood cells can tell us that our pet has an infection. Chemistry: A chemistry panel looks at our pet's organ function. Typically, these panels look at how the liver and kidneys are functioning, whether the electrolytes (sodium, potassium, and chloride) are within normal levels, and can check protein levels, among other things.

### But Wait, My Pet's Not Sick!

Your pet doesn't necessarily need to be sick or on a lifelong medication in order to have bloodwork run. There are plenty of benefits in running yearly bloodwork!

One excellent reason to consider having bloodwork run on your healthy pet is because your pet may not be as healthy as you think! Pets are masters at keeping their illnesses hidden, sometimes until it is too late! Yearly bloodwork may find an early sign of disease that we would have otherwise missed.



Another good reason to have bloodwork run is to identify our pet's normal baseline. Each pet is different, and this includes their bloodwork values. Watching different bloodwork trends is a great way to catch early signs of disease. For example, if our pet's liver

values were consistently on the low end of normal and suddenly jumps up to the high end of normal, this may alert us to the development of potential liver disease.

In younger pets, bloodwork is often recommended yearly. However, once your pet becomes a "senior" pet (around 7 years of age), it is often recommended that bloodwork be checked every 6 months. This is because older pets tend to develop problems more quickly and frequently than younger pets. Ask your vet today about when the right time is to have your pet's bloodwork checked.

Best regards,  
*Rachel Rielinger, DVM*



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