



### The Gift That Keeps On Giving



Did Santa bring you a pet for Christmas? A new snuggly family member is without a doubt the gift that keeps on giving, but don't forget, pet ownership is a lasting commitment. Lifelong, routine preventive care is key for your pets to provide a better quality of life and to enhance the human-animal bond.

Preventative care should start with an annual wellness exam. During this exam, your veterinary health care team will get to know you, your pet, and the lifestyle you share. Recommendations can then be made to keep them healthy throughout every stage of life and maintain a bond with your pet. If your pet is sick, a wellness exam would not necessarily meet their needs. The goal of a wellness exam is to maintain optimal health given their lifestyle. The goal of a non-wellness exam is to address a specific illness or concern. If you suspect your pet is ill, never wait to have them examined.

Vaccines are vital part of preventative care for young and adult pets. Like with children, puppies and kittens will complete a series of vaccines before reaching adulthood. Once this series is complete, their vaccine schedule will change to annual or every 3 years depending on their age and health status. Be sure to talk to your veterinarian about your pet's lifestyle so they can suggest the appropriate vaccines to keep your pet protected from disease.

But preventative care is more than just vaccines. Annual intestinal and blood parasite screening is also recommended to keep your pet healthy. And don't forget to keep up with monthly preventions for heartworms, fleas, and ticks for dogs and cats year-round! If you're not sure which medication is best for your pet and their lifestyle, be sure to talk with your veterinarian for advice and suggestions.

Don't forget about diet and exercise! "New year, new you" can also include your pet! Our furry friends need a balanced diet for their life stage and regular exercise to maintain a great quality of life. What better way to strengthen the human-animal bond with your pet then by including them in your new year healthy lifestyle? Having a work-out buddy always makes it easier to start a new exercise routine, so why not your new pup?

Pets improve our quality of life so be sure to improve theirs with routine preventative veterinary care.