



Importance of Lab Tests

Routinely testing blood, urine, and feces is an important tool for the doctor to detect early signs of disease. Often changes in laboratory tests occur before you see signs of the disease. By catching them early, your pet can receive early treatment to prevent, slow, or cure the problem. Most tests are done annually, though some are done only when needed.

Blood Tests

Pre-anesthetic blood screening is a panel of tests that evaluates the major organ functions and blood glucose. We run this before anesthesia in young, healthy pets to evaluate liver and kidney function.



Chemistry panel is a more comprehensive panel of blood tests that evaluates major organ functions, blood glucose, and electrolytes. It provides more information than the pre-anesthetic blood screening.

Complete Blood Count (CBC) is used to evaluate the cells in the blood including white blood cells (a major role in immune function), red blood cells (carry oxygen to the body), and platelets (clotting agents).

Thyroid hormone test (T4) is used to evaluate the thyroid hormone level in the body. Older cats tend to develop elevated thyroid hormone levels while older dogs can develop low thyroid hormone levels.

Heartworm test is done on all dogs older than 6 months every year. This test identifies heartworm infection. Cats do not need this test since the tests are not reliable in cats.

Feline leukemia/FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) test checks cats for these viruses. All cats should be tested when you first get them. For cats going outdoors, the test is done before starting the feline leukemia vaccine.

Vaccine titers determine if your pet needs additional distemper vaccines once your pet's initial distemper series has ended. A vaccine titer is recommended every 3 years.

Other Tests

Fecal examines the stool for parasite eggs.

Urinalysis tests the urine to screen for signs of kidney disease, bladder stones, urinary tract infections, and diabetes.

What Tests to Do

Pets less than 8 years old should have a pre-anesthetic screening before any anesthesia. Perform a chemistry panel, complete blood count, and urinalysis at least once while healthy to determine normal values for your pet, ideally before age two.



Pets 8 years old or older should have a chemistry panel, complete blood count, and urinalysis performed every year to identify any abnormal values as they age. Senior cats should also have a thyroid hormone test as well.