



## THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL EXAMS

In the best interest of your pet, the best medical practice demands veterinarians have a current (within a year) doctor/patient relationship and do a physical exam prior to any vaccinations or other treatments. Even preventative medicine such as “routine” vaccines can have side effects. For that reason it is important for us to know how your pet is doing *that* day. Therefore, a comprehensive exam is done looking at the following:

- Your pet’s overall alertness, mobility, and body condition
- Listening to the heart to evaluate rate and rhythm, and to the lungs for quality of breath sounds
- Checking the eyes for proper pupil responses, evidence of retinal changes and general brightness
- Examining the ears to view the condition of the ear canal and ear drum
- Checking for dental disease such as gingivitis
- Palpating (or feeling) the abdomen & lymph nodes for proper size & texture and assessing any pain
- Palpating (or feeling) joints to evaluate for pain or arthritis
- Evaluating the condition of the skin and coat for hydration, allergies or fleas