THE IMPORTANCE OF BLOOD WORK

Early Detection is Key
The risks of cancer, diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, and other serious conditions all increase with age. Significant health changes can occur in a short amount of time. As with people, early disease detection in animals allows you to treat the condition soon enough to prevent long-term health problems.

Examination and Testing
During a complete physical examination, you will check for cardiovascular, respiratory, musculoskeletal, digestive, and urinary tract abnormalities. You may also offer screening laboratory tests. These blood tests are essential components of a good health maintenance program. Blood samples can be evaluated for abnormalities that cannot be diagnosed on physical examination alone, including kidney and liver disease, metabolic disturbances, and blood abnormalities.

CBC (Complete Blood Count)
A complete blood count (CBC) is a blood test used to measure and evaluate cells that circulate in the blood. The test includes an actual counting of red and white blood cells and platelets. In addition, a technician will examine the blood smear under a microscope and look for any abnormalities. A CBC is useful as a screening test for inflammation, anemia, underlying infection, leukemia, or blood parasites.

Chemistry Tests
Basic blood chemistry tests assess a wide range of conditions and the function of certain organs including:
- Liver
- Kidney
- Pancreas

Blood tests also check electrolytes, the minerals that help keep the body’s fluid in balance, and are necessary to help the muscles, heart, and other organs working properly. Other analytes tell how well the kidneys are functioning and whether there is a normal amount of sugar in the blood.

Endocrinology
Endocrine abnormalities are common in cats and dogs. The signs of endocrine disease can be very subtle and could go unnoticed. Certain blood tests can determine if the pet has an abnormality of the thyroid or adrenal glands, such as:
- Thyroid
  - Hypothyroidism (most common in dogs)
  - Hyperthyroidism (most common in cats)
- Adrenal
  - Hyperadrenocorticism (most common in dogs)
  - Hypoadrenocorticism (most common in dogs)

Urine Analysis
The evaluation of urine helps rule out urinary tract disease and may indicate diabetes or metabolic disease.

Fecal
A sample of stool is examined and a flotation test is performed to look for intestinal parasites such as hookworms, whipworms, roundworms, tapeworms, and Giardia.

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