## **What does an exam include at The Spayed Club?**

An exam is a complete physical, from nose to tail, of your pet. The veterinarian not only examines the outside of your pet, but also listens to the heart and lungs inside and feels the organs inside the abdomen. A typical exam evaluates: teeth, gums, ears, eyes, nose, skin, coat, lymph nodes, heart, lungs, kidneys, bladder, intestines, abdomen, genitals, hips, knees, spine, and hydration, with extra attention to any problem areas.

## **My animal has up to date shots or only goes to the vaccine clinic for shots, why should I take it for a yearly exam?**

Keeping vaccines up to date is important. Yearly exams are just as important as a preventative measure. A thorough yearly exam is necessary to help catch and/or prevent issues down the line.

For example:

* The veterinarian can check or find lumps you might not have noticed while they are still small and easier to remove. Cancerous tumors are much easier to treat with early detection and action.
* Catching a heart murmur early on can help get the proper treatment in place before your animal goes into heart failure.
* Maintaining a healthy weight is important for your pet, and getting an accurate weight and body condition assessment makes sure they stay at a healthy weight. If your pet is over or under weight, it can lead to serious health complications, including diabetes and organ diseases.
* Dental disease is an easily solvable and preventable issue which is not taken care of early, can lead to kidney or other infections. Most animals will need at least one dental cleaning in their lifetime and your vet will be able to recommend when is the right time for your pet so he or she stays healthy.

## **Why do you recommend yearly blood work? Is it really a good idea?**

Yes! Yearly blood work is essential for disease prevention, especially as an animal ages. Checking your pet’s blood counts (checking for anemia and immune system function), and kidney, liver, and thyroid functions can help diagnose, slow, or prevent issues before they become serious, or even fatal.

Animals will benefit from full blood work being performed at least once when young and healthy. The largest benefit to this is being able to have a baseline to refer back to if/when your pet gets sick when older.

In addition, dogs need a heartworm test every 12 months to verify that they have not acquired heartworm. Animals who are not on heartworm prevention and are over 6 months of age, require a heartworm test before starting prevention. Starting or continuing heartworm prevention in an infected animal can be harmful or fatal.

Cats should be tested at least once in their lives for FIV and Feline Leukemia.