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NATIONAL PET WELLNESS MONTH
Prevention is Key to Living a Healthy Life

October is National Pet Wellness Month! It's time to reflect on the last time your pet saw a veterinarian and underwent a wellness examination, received vaccinations, and had a health screening for the presence of certain diseases. Prevention can ensure that your pet lives a healthy life while saving you money.

Like humans, pets benefit from wellness exams. It is during these examinations that your pet's veterinarian evaluates the overall health of your pet and can screen for problems before they turn into serious diseases. Wellness exams are the best method of prevention. Your pet can not vocalize discomfort or emotions so you must rely on veterinarians to know when your pet is not feeling well.

Your veterinarian can assess the health status of your pet and may perform blood tests or other routine preventive practices. It is recommended that pets, particularly dogs and cats, undergo a wellness exam at least once a year, and at least twice a year for senior pets.

During the wellness exam, your veterinarian will have the opportunity to identify the best prevention program for your pet which typically includes a schedule for vaccinations. The importance of vaccinations should not be underestimated as they provide protection against a number of diseases. Vaccinations protect your pet against diseases like feline leukemia, feline immunodeficiency virus, leptospirosis, bordetella, rabies, coronavirus, distemper, parvovirus, Lyme disease and more.

Some diseases are highly contagious and can spread quickly through the animal's system. Factors like age and health status can affect how the animal reacts to the disease. Although cases of adverse and allergic reactions to vaccinations have been reported, they are rare and should not prevent you from protecting your pet.

The lack of preventive care can also hurt your wallet. As with human health, the lack of wellness exams for your pet can leave them vulnerable to contracting serious diseases, which in many cases are discovered at late stages of progression. As a result, surgeries or extensive treatments may be needed and the costs can add up. In the current state of the economy, taking preventive care seriously, can help you avoid added pet healthcare-related costs.

The best resource for questions about preventive care is your veterinarian. Only your veterinarian knows the health history of your pet and other factors that will help determine the best prevention program for your pet.

For more information please visit, [Caring for Your Senior Pet](#), [Keeping Your Adult Pet Well](#), [Nutrition Basics for Dogs and Cats](#), [Preventative Horse Health](#), and other articles available on the Animal Health Center at www.njvma.org.