Frequency of Visits

All dogs should have a veterinary examination at least annually. For many dogs, more frequent visits may be appropriate. Decisions regarding specific frequency of visits should be made based on individual needs of the dog.

Health Evaluation

Subjective
History, including evaluation of
- Life style and life stage
- Behavior
- Diet

Objective
Comprehensive physical examination, including
- Dental assessment
- Pain assessment
- Body and muscle condition scoring

Assessment
On the basis of history and physical examination findings, assessments are made for:
- Medical conditions
- Infectious and zoonotic diseases
- Parasite prevention and control
- Dental care
- Genetic, breed and age considerations
- Behavior
- Nutrition

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These guidelines were developed jointly by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) to provide information for practitioners regarding the care and treatment of their canine and feline patients. The information contained in these guidelines should not be construed as dictating an exclusive protocol, course of treatment or procedure. These guidelines are not intended to be an AAHA or AVMA standard of care. AAHA and AVMA hope that you find these guidelines useful.

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Plan

Client communication and education plan to include:

**Diagnostic plan:**
- Every dog should have:
  - Annual heartworm testing in accordance with existing guidelines
  - At least annual internal parasite testing

**Therapeutic plan:**
- Every dog should receive:
  - Year-round broad-spectrum parasite control with efficacy against heartworms, intestinal parasites and fleas

**Prevention plan:**
- Every dog should have or receive:
  - Immunization with core vaccines in accordance with existing guidelines
    - Rabies virus
    - Canine distemper virus
    - Canine parvovirus
    - Canine adenovirus-2
  - Appropriate identification including microchipping
  - Reproductive and genetic counseling and spaying or neutering unless specifically intended for breeding purposes

**Follow-up plan:**
- Establish a plan for follow-up based on assessment and future care recommendations
- Set expectations for next visit

**Documentation:**
- Thorough documentation of the patient visit

**Customized plan based on assessment:**
- Other diagnostic tests (including dental radiographs)
- Early disease screening tests
- Genetic screening tests
- Tick control as indicated by risk assessment
- Therapeutic recommendations
- Dental recommendations
- Behavioral recommendations
- Dietary recommendations
- Immunization with non-core vaccines in accordance with existing guidelines
- Other preventive recommendations and counseling regarding zoonotic diseases

**Diagnostic plan:**
- Other diagnostic tests (including dental radiographs)
- Early disease screening tests
- Genetic screening tests

**Therapeutic plan:**
- Tick control as indicated by risk assessment
- Therapeutic recommendations
- Dental recommendations
- Behavioral recommendations
- Dietary recommendations

**Prevention plan:**
- Immunization with non-core vaccines in accordance with existing guidelines
- Other preventive recommendations and counseling regarding zoonotic diseases

**Follow-up plan:**
- Establish a plan for follow-up based on assessment and future care recommendations
- Set expectations for next visit

**Documentation:**
- Thorough documentation of the patient visit