

# Your cat's physical exam

Just what is the veterinarian looking for when they stare and gently push, pull, and poke your cat during a visit? Here's a breakdown of the major body systems they're checking out and what they're looking for (and hoping not to find).

**EARS:** signs of ear infection (pain, tenderness, redness, swelling, "yeasty" smell, and discharge); mites

**ABDOMEN:** any irregularities in the margins of the liver, spleen, kidneys, and bladder; masses or tumors; thickened intestines

**EYES:** signs of disease; discharge or tearing; abnormal movement or reaction to light

**HEART:** Weak or abnormal heart sounds; an abnormally fast or slow rate; irregular beats

**BASE OF TAIL:** any abscesses; abnormalities in anal glands; fecal mats; evidence of soft stools; growths; parasites, like tapeworm segments and flea dirt

**MOUTH:** signs of periodontal disease in teeth and gums; bad breath

**LUNGS:** wheezing, crackling, or other abnormal lung sounds

**LYMPH NODES AND THYROID GLANDS:** any irregularities or changes in size

**LEGS:** limited range of motion in all limbs; signs of pain or discomfort; grinding sound in joints

**COAT, SKIN, AND NAILS:** poor overall quality of coat; lumps and bumps; rashes; areas of hair loss or excessive dander; matted or saliva-stained fur; fleas or ticks; callouses; overgrown or ingrown toenails; dehydration

**INTERNAL ORGANS:** we recommend blood work for older pets especially if they are 7+ years old. The techs and the doctor work together on looking at all of your pet's body and discuss what they see. Pets don't need to be touched a lot as that can make them uncomfortable in the exam room and we wish this to be a positive experience as much as possible. We also need your help especially if you noticed small growths when petting or grooming them or anything unusual to their normal daily activities.

