

CANINE WELLNESS CHECKLIST FOR PET OWNERS

At **Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic**, we strongly advocate for proactive canine wellness care. Preventive medicine is always superior to reactive treatment. Waiting until a dog shows obvious symptoms often means a condition has already progressed to a more advanced — and potentially more difficult or costly — stage to manage.

That is why we are sharing **Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic's Canine Wellness Checklist**: to help dog owners take a proactive role in their pet's overall health. If you notice any of the signs listed below or have questions about your dog's health, please contact us at **(401) 683-0803**.

At-Home Wellness Monitoring

Monitoring your dog at home is just as important as scheduling annual or biannual examinations at Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic. Subtle changes are often the earliest indicators of underlying disease. Use this checklist as a practical guide:

Physical Appearance

What to Monitor:

- New lumps or bumps
- Sores or non-healing wounds
- Hair loss or coat changes

Action:

Gently run your hands over your dog's body weekly. Early detection of masses significantly improves treatment options.

Oral Health

What to Monitor:

- Persistent bad breath
- Plaque or tartar buildup
- Red, swollen, or bleeding gums

Action:

Brush your dog's teeth daily if possible and use veterinarian-approved dental chews. Schedule professional dental cleanings as recommended.

Diet & Water Intake

What to Monitor:

- Changes in appetite
- Increased or decreased thirst

Action:

Track any sustained changes and report them promptly. Increased thirst, for example, can signal metabolic or endocrine disease. Discuss your concerns with the Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic team.

Weight**What to Monitor:**

- Unexplained weight gain or loss

Action:

Weigh your dog monthly and assess body condition score. Even modest weight changes can indicate health concerns.

Activity & Mobility**What to Monitor:**

- Reluctance to climb stairs
- Difficulty jumping
- Stiffness or limping

Action:

Observe gait and mobility closely. Early arthritis intervention can significantly improve quality of life.

Behavior & Mood**What to Monitor:**

- Increased anxiety
- Lethargy
- Changes in social interaction

Action:

Behavioral shifts are often early indicators of pain or illness. Do not wait — schedule an exam if changes persist.

Don't Wait for Symptoms

Many serious conditions — including kidney disease, diabetes, and certain cancers — may not present visible symptoms until advanced stages. Routine wellness exams combined with proactive diagnostic testing allow for earlier detection and more effective intervention.

Topics to Discuss during Your Dog's Wellness Exam at Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic

Your dog's annual visit is about more than vaccinations. It is a strategic opportunity to review overall health, risk factors, and preventive care. Arriving prepared ensures a thorough and productive appointment.

Vaccinations

Discuss: Current vaccine schedule and lifestyle risk factors

Why It Matters: Ensures protection against core and regionally relevant diseases.

Parasite Prevention

Discuss: Year-round protection against fleas, ticks, and heartworms

Why It Matters: Prevents transmission of serious vector-borne diseases and protects both pets and family members.

Nutrition

Discuss: Current diet, treats, supplements, and feeding amounts

Why It Matters: Nutritional needs vary by life stage, breed, and activity level. Proper nutrition supports longevity and disease prevention.

Diagnostic Testing

Discuss: Routine bloodwork, urinalysis, fecal testing, and heartworm screening

Why It Matters: Establishes baseline values and identifies disease before clinical signs develop.

Dental Health

Discuss: Professional cleaning schedule and home care plan

Why It Matters: Periodontal disease can lead to systemic health complications if untreated.

Spay/Neuter Status

Discuss: Timing, benefits, and potential risks

Why It Matters: Impacts cancer risk, reproductive health, and certain behavioral factors.

Microchipping

Discuss: Microchip placement and registration updates

Why It Matters: Significantly increases the likelihood of reunification if your dog becomes lost.

Mental Enrichment

Discuss: Exercise, training, puzzle toys, and socialization

Why It Matters: Mental stimulation prevents anxiety, boredom, and destructive behaviors.

Boarding & Travel Planning

Discuss: Boarding options and vaccination requirements

Why It Matters: Ensures safe, stress-reduced care during travel.

Our Commitment

At Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic, our goal is to partner with you in delivering comprehensive, preventive care tailored to your dog's individual needs. A proactive approach to wellness supports a longer, healthier, and happier life.

If you have questions about any aspect of your dog's health or would like to schedule a wellness exam, please contact us at **(401) 683-0803**.

Sources

- The veterinarians at Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic
- Veterinary Information Network (Veterinary Partner)
- American Animal Hospital Association
- American Veterinary Medical Association