



For Pet's Sake

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PET REPTILES: THE ANNUAL CHECKUP

Many reptile owners are surprised to learn that all pets need at least an annual checkup. A number of reptile veterinarians actually recommend checkups at least twice a year. There are 2 reasons for this: first, since most pets including reptiles don't live as long as people, getting a checkup only once a year is like you going to your doctor every 5-10 years. This is too long to wait to find out if something is wrong with your pet. Second, early detection and treatment of disease is very important in giving your pet the best prognosis for recovery from a disease, and is less expensive than treating a serious problem. Regular veterinary care is necessary in order to ensure your pet lives a long, healthy life.

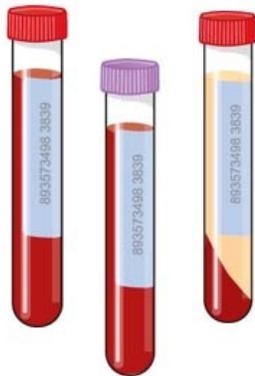


Parts of the Reptile Checkup

While each doctor has his own protocol on what is done during the annual or twice yearly checkup, the following tests may be recommended to keep your pet healthy.

Physical Examination - Every visit starts with a thorough physical examination. During the physical, the doctor will record your pet's weight, general appearance, and mobility. He will palpate (feel) various parts of the pet's body. Any abnormalities that are noted or changes that have occurred since the previous visit may indicate the need for specialized testing.

Blood Testing - Just as your regular visit includes blood testing, so does a checkup for pets. Blood testing can include a complete blood count (examining the red blood cells, white blood cells, and thrombocytes) and serum biochemical profile (which looks at various organ enzymes.)



Fecal Analysis - Microscopic examination of the feces allows detection of parasites (coccidian and worms.)

Microbiological Testing - Special stains called Gram's stains may be needed. The doctor uses these stains to determine the presence of abnormal bacteria and yeasts. Depending upon the findings from the Gram's stains, additional tests such as a culture and sensitivity may be needed to determine the species of bacteria or yeasts and the proper treatment.

Radiological Testing - Using X-rays the doctor can examine your pet's body for abnormalities in the size, shape, and position of body organs; screen for masses such as tumors or granulomas; look for abnormal fluid accumulation; and check the bones and joints.

