

# CANINE LIFE STAGE GUIDELINES: VETERINARY TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



## VETERINARIANS

- Determine life stage for each canine patient and communicate that to each staff member during the pet's visit.
- Make individualized preventive care recommendations for each patient based on history, physical exam, life stage, and risk factors.
- Diagnose and treat disease.
- Provide an appropriate level of oversight and supervision as veterinary teams work to implement life stage-based recommendations.
- Administer, coordinate, and supervise client education.



## PRACTICE MANAGERS

- Support the training and education of veterinary technicians to assume a larger and appropriate role in individualized, life stage-based preventive care.
- Support and encourage basic and advanced continuing education in preventive healthcare strategies for all team members.
- Ensure veterinarians, credentialed technicians, and assistants are performing tasks appropriate to their skill level and their state/provincial veterinary practice act.
- Maintain an adequate supply of materials required to perform preventive healthcare procedures and educate clients.
- Plan team meetings for training and motivation.



## VETERINARY TECHNICIANS

- Obtain a patient medical and dental history.
- Before the procedure, explain to the client the preventive healthcare strategy indicated based on the dog's life stage.
- At the time of discharge, explain to the client the treatments performed.
- Answer client questions.
- Translate veterinary diagnoses into lay terms.
- Reassure the client by demonstrating expertise in individualized life stage-based preventive care.
- Obtain samples for laboratory analysis (e.g., blood, urine, ear cytology, etc.).
- Perform basic diagnostic tests (e.g., radiographs, blood pressure, intraocular pressure, etc.).
- Educate the client on how to provide quality home preventive care.
- Follow up with the client after discharge to check the pet's status.



## VETERINARY ASSISTANTS

- Act as an assistant to the credentialed veterinary technician.
- If the practice does not have a credentialed veterinary technician, the assistant may be involved to the level that the veterinarian deems appropriate\*.



## CLIENT SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

- Answer client questions, or find an appropriate team member to do so.
- Give clients relevant printed or online information at discharge.
- Review procedures that were performed, and explain the value of regular preventive healthcare.
- Schedule a follow-up appointment at check out.
- Send reminders at appropriate times using the client's preferred communication method (e.g., text, email, telephone, or mail).

\*In accordance with the state/provincial veterinary practice act.



Learn more about the *2019 AAHA Canine Life Stage Guidelines* and find valuable materials and resources for your staff and clients at [aaha.org/caninelifestage](https://aaha.org/caninelifestage). These guidelines are supported by generous educational grants from Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health USA Inc., CareCredit, Elanco Animal Health, Hill's® Pet Nutrition, Inc., IDEXX Laboratories, Inc., Merck Animal Health and Zoetis Petcare.