

**St. Louis Cat Clinic**  
**3460 Hampton Ave.**  
**St. Louis, MO 63139**  
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## **What is Special About a Physical Exam at St. Louis Cat Clinic**



A thorough physical exam is a critical component for a well cat and for a cat with a medical problem. A veterinarian uses four of the five senses to evaluate a patient (sight, sound, smell, touch). A patient, whether animal or human, is a complicated biological system. Cats are masters of hiding illness. A cat is best cared for by a feline only veterinarian.

Initially, a thorough history about the patient is taken. A feline patient cannot speak; so a veterinarian will rely on the observations of a cat's human companions. Many questions will be asked. Honest answers including "I do not know" are critical to establishing the pattern of wellness or illness. When did the cat first start exhibiting symptoms, how has the problem progressed, when did additional symptoms develop, is the cat indoor only or outdoor, appetite, vomiting or diarrhea, drinking a lot, or urinating a lot? These are some of the questions that will be asked. The answers will help narrow the scope of potential problems and establish a list referred to as a "differential diagnosis list".

The next phase of a physical exam is hands on. The patient is weighed and the temperature is taken. The body condition is assessed. The mouth, ears, teeth, lymph nodes, heart, lungs, abdomen, skin, degree of dehydration, presence of enlarged thyroid glands, anal glands and more are checked.

The symptoms, history, and hands on exam are correlated by the veterinarian and a differential diagnosis list is developed. At this time, the veterinarian will outline a diagnostic plan and recommend test procedures to narrow the differential diagnosis list and identify the cat's problem(s). Patients will often have more than one problem or disease at the same time. Diagnostic tests are absolutely necessary to ensure that a diagnosis is correct before treatment is implemented.

The recommendation for treatment is the final phase of the physical exam. Follow up Medical Progress exams will be necessary to evaluate the success or failure of treatment. Treatments may be altered as response is noted.

Wellness exams are very important at least once a year. Subtle symptoms or problems can be found and identified early. The earlier a problem is identified, the greater the success rate of treatment. Small problems may be missed by human companions because cats are masters of hiding illness. Many veterinarians believe cats seek to hide illness so they do not become prey when weakness is apparent.

For more information, call the St. Louis Cat Clinic at 314-832-2287, or visit them at 3460 Hampton Avenue.