

Recommended Diagnostics Based on Life Stage*

	Kitten (Birth up to 1 Year)	Young Adult (1–6 Years)	Mature Adult (7–10 Years)	Senior (>10 Years)
Complete blood count: hematocrit, red blood cells, white blood cells, differential count, cytology, platelets		+	++	+++
Serum biochemistry panel: at a minimum include total protein, albumin, globulin, alkaline phosphatase, alanine aminotransferase, glucose, blood urea nitrogen, creatinine, potassium, phosphorus, sodium, calcium		+	++	+++
Urinalysis: specific gravity, sediment, glucose, ketones, bilirubin, protein		+	++	+++
T4		+	++	+++
Symmetric dimethylarginine and other renal indices		+	++	+++
Blood pressure		+	++	+++
Retroviral testing	+++	+	+	+
Fecal examination	+++	+	+	+
Testing frequency[†]	Single baseline, then as needed	Single baseline, then as needed	Every 1–2 years	At least yearly (every 6 months recommended)

Detailed information on heartworm testing is available in the American Heartworm Society guidelines.¹²⁵

*Diagnostics should be tailored to the individual cat and based on history/physical examination. These recommendations are based on the opinion of the Task Force for apparently healthy cats and do not include recommendations for preanesthetic laboratory work. In most cases, these tests are recommended to establish baseline data and to detect unapparent clinical disease.

[†]These tests may be done as a single baseline evaluation or at repeated intervals based on the specific needs of the individual cat.

+, consider based on individual patient; ++, recommended; +++, strongly recommended.

The 2020 AAHA/AAFP Feline Lifestage Guidelines are available at aaha.org/felinelifestage.

These guidelines were prepared by a task force of experts convened by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP). This document is intended as a guideline only, not an AAHA or AAFP standard of care. These guidelines and recommendations should not be construed as dictating an exclusive protocol, course of treatment, or procedure. Variations in practice may be warranted based on the needs of the individual patient, resources, and limitations unique to each individual practice setting. Evidence-based support for specific recommendations has been cited whenever possible and appropriate. Other recommendations are based on practical clinical experience and a consensus of expert opinion. Further research is needed to document some of these recommendations. Because each case is different, veterinarians must base their decisions on the best available scientific evidence in conjunction with their own knowledge and experience.

