

CARING FOR YOUR PUPPY

Congratulations on the arrival of your new family member. Below is some information to help you with all the necessary health care your new puppy may require.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are very important and protect your puppy against infectious and potentially fatal diseases: Parvovirus, Distemper, Infectious Canine Hepatitis, Canine Cough and Leptospirosis. They are extremely cost effective when you consider what treating a serious illness can cost you and your pet in terms of both money and distress. Puppies are vaccinated at the following ages to provide them with full immunity.

- **6 - 8 weeks**
- **10 - 12 weeks**
- **14 - 16 weeks**
- and then once every 12 months to maintain immunity.

Parasite Control

Worming must be part of a regular health program. Not only do these parasites affect your pet, they also have the potential to infect humans with children being most susceptible

Worms (Intestinal)

Dogs can be infected with worms in different ways

- Consuming worms or eggs from the environment (eggs can live for up to 5 years in the ground)
- Eating a prey animal that is carrying developing worms
- Puppies infected in utero (from the bitch)
- Nursing puppies (from the bitch)

Prevention

- Puppies from 2 weeks of age: Worm every two weeks until 12 weeks of age, then monthly until 6 months. It is especially important to worm puppies as they are the most susceptible to the effects of worms.
- All dogs from 6 months of age: Worm every 3 months.
- Working dogs: Worm monthly to prevent transfer to sheep (different products available).
- Pregnant and lactating bitches: Worm prior to mating, 10 days before whelping, then every 3 weeks while lactating.

It is important you get the right product to do a thorough job – and not all tablets are created equally. Some tapeworms are spread by fleas so it is important to use veterinary flea preventative products regularly.

Worming preparations are calculated on bodyweight so feel free to use our scales to keep track of your pup's weight. It is important to change the worming product used every few months to prevent resistance build up over years. Speak to our team about tablets or spot-on treatments for your puppy.

Fleas

Fleas can be annoying to your puppy and cause itching and scratching and can lead to skin problems. They come from any environment. Flea eggs are deposited and hatch over a period of time and jump onto the next passing 'meal ticket' (dog, cat, or even us). Fleas are easily treated with flea control products which are safe, effective and easy to use. They come in a variety of forms, such as spot-ons or chewables that provide 1-3 months protection depending on product. Remember to change product every few months-years to prevent resistance build up.

Feeding

Puppies are normally weaned by 6 weeks of age. They can be separated from their mother and are able to eat solid food. Puppies are growing and require a special diet which differs from that of adults. It is particularly important for their growing bones. The diet of a puppy sets them up for future health – what you put in, is what you get out; good quality in and good quality out. Depending on the size your dog is going to be they could need puppy or growth style diets for at least 9-10 months, but up to 18 months in giant breeds! Ask us what is right for your pup.

Puppies should have smaller meals more often, as a guide:

- **6-12 weeks old** -- 3-4 feeds daily
- **3-6 months old** -- 2-3 feeds daily
- **6 months and adult** -- 2 feeds daily

Always have fresh water readily available.

Dental Care

Maintaining good dental hygiene is very important as most dogs have some form of dental disease by 3 years of age! By starting with proper dental hygiene early on

as puppies makes it easy and better for the dog in the future. Teeth cleaning and gum massage are very important and getting puppies used to brushing is far easier than in adults.

Desexing

We recommend desexing is done around 5-6 months of age. Spaying females prior to puberty prevents unwanted pregnancies, protects against breast cancers and uterine infections (pyometras). Neutering male dogs reduces the urge to roam and fight. It also reduces the risk of prostate and testicular cancers. The desexing procedure is a day surgery involving a general anaesthetic and they go home the same afternoon with good pain medications.

Socialisation and Training

Puppyhood is a critical time for socialisation particularly between 6 to 18 weeks. While you need to be aware of potential health issues (vaccinations etc) and do this in a controlled way to minimise risk, puppies need to experience lots of new situations, especially people and other animals in this period. Puppy Pre-School is a great opportunity to socialise and learn.

Training such as toileting, learning to sit and come to their name can start as soon as you get your pup. They are incredibly responsive and wilful as youngsters. Brief fun lessons (5-10 minutes) tend to be more rewarding and keep a young pup's attention. Doing this at least twice a day is a good habit to form, for you and your dog for the rest of their life.

Make sure you use plenty of praise. Positive reinforcement of good behaviours achieves much better results than old fashioned punishment.

Toilet Training

Puppies will go to the toilet when they first wake up, after eating and also after play. Take them outside as soon as they wake up or you think they are ready to go to the toilet, then they will correspond outside with toileting. If, at any other time the puppy starts to go to the toilet inside take it outside immediately. Never punish your puppy for an accident but when your puppy does get it right remember to praise him/her so that it quickly learns this is acceptable behaviour. Patience is important when training!

Timetable for puppy potty breaks	
Puppy's age (months)	Time between bathroom visits (hours)
2	2
3	4
4	5
5	6
6	7
7	8

Environment, bedding and toys

Puppies need a comfortable, dry and warm space to sleep, and protection against all weather. Make sure the property is secure as puppies are inquisitive and will easily escape. Keep your puppy entertained by supplying a good range of toys such as Kongs, treat balls, Buster Cubes, etc, which can be rotated often. Make sure they are pup safe (size appropriate so they cannot be swallowed) and not easily destroyed. Get them used to walking on lead/harness from a young age.

Bathing

Puppies generally do not require much bathing. We recommend that your dog is bathed no more than once a week and using a mild/sensitive dog shampoo

Pet Insurance

Pet insurance can save you from financial stress or needing to make a tough call, and ensure your pet gets the treatment they need. There are a number of good pet health insurance policies available to suit your needs and finances.

Identification/ Registration

Your pup should be registered with the local council by the time they are 3 months. Some councils offer discounted registration for desexed animals. We recommend permanent identification ie a microchip, which is implanted under the skin by injection and includes lifetime registration with a central database.

Things to watch out for

If your puppy appears listless, lethargic, off their food, or if you have any concerns about your puppy's well-being, please do not hesitate to call us.

