

VETERINARY CARE OVERVIEW FOR YOUR NEW PUPPY



FEEDING

Recommended Brands: Hill's Science Diet, Purina ProPlan, Royal Canin : Feed according to puppy's current weight and instructions on the bag. Feeding can be broken up into 2-4 meals per day Puppies under 5 pounds feed 3-4 times daily, larger puppies can eat twice daily

SPAY/NEUTER

For most breeds, it is recommended to spay your female dog prior to her first heat cycle (around 6 months of age) to reduce the risk of hormone-related tumors and eliminate the risk of uterine infections. In most breeds of dogs, it is recommended to neuter between 6 and 10 months of age to prevent the risk of hormone-related tumors, the desire to roam, behavior changes and especially, marking behavior. New research has presented some breed-specific recommendations. Please ask your veterinarian when the recommended time is to spay or neuter your pet.

HEART WORM, FLEA AND TICK PREVENTATIVES

Heart worm disease is spread by mosquitoes and your puppy should be started on preventatives at 8 weeks of age. Fleas and ticks thrive here year-round, because we live in the Mid-Atlantic region. Fleas can cause tapeworm infections and anemia. Ticks can carry dangerous organisms such as Anaplasma, Ehrlichia and Lyme. Preventing these diseases can significantly increase your pet's quality and duration of life. There are many different products on the market today; please discuss your individual pet's needs with your veterinarian to determine which option is best for your and your pet.

**Be wary of products purchased online as many counterfeit products are available that can be dangerous to you and your puppy. Many "natural" products purchased over-the-counter can also be dangerous to your pet's health. Please consult with your veterinarian before using any products on your puppy.

INTESTINAL PARASITES:

Puppies should be tested throughout their vaccination series, and yearly as adults, for intestinal parasites. Some of these parasites can be passed from mother to her young and are commonly found in puppies and kittens. Deworming medications are readily available and usually resolve the infection. Some parasites are transmittable to humans -- testing protects your whole family!



FEET & EARS:

As you are bonding with your new friend, make sure to handle his feet and ears regularly. This will assure that if there is ever a problem, he will already be used to these areas being cared for. Nails should be trimmed every 3-4 weeks and ears should be cleaned 1-2 times monthly.

DENTAL CARE:

The benefits of good oral hygiene have been noted in recent years. Brushing, rinsing and chewing are all important parts of keeping your pet's teeth clean. Having your pet tolerate tooth brushing never happens overnight. It takes patience and practice, just like any other form of training. Don't give up! It really will make a difference. Make sure to use dog-specific toothpaste which is safe for your pet if swallowed and has enzymes to help break down tartar.

VACCINES:

Your veterinarian will discuss the different vaccinations that are available and recommended for your pet. Some of these are optional based on your pet's exposure to potential pathogens. Rabies vaccination is required by law and is always recommended as there is no potential pathogens. There is no cure for Rabies and it is 100% fatal. Be sure to keep a folder of all your pet's records, as this will allow you to quickly reference his vaccine history if needed.

PET INSURANCE

No one wants to deny their pet the care he needs, but costs do add up when things go awry. There are many companies that offer pet insurance, and they vary widely. Some plans are available for emergency care only, while others cover vaccines and wellness care. Be sure to do your research on the companies and plan provided. Unlike human health insurance, most pet insurance plans are based on reimbursement to the owner after care is paid for. Make sure you understand your insurance plan and what it provides for you and your pet.

TOXINS:

Many items in your house are potentially dangerous for your puppy. All medications should be kept up high and away from exploring paws and jaws. The No. 1 call to pet poison hotlines is for ingestion of human medications. Other toxic items include plants, cleaners, children's toys, clothing, and electrical cords. Be sure to puppy-proof your house. After all, they are babies!

TRAINING:

An organized training program should be started by 14-16 weeks of age. This helps to instill good behavior as your puppy grows and encounters the wonders of the world. Basic commands such as "Sit", "Stay" and "Down" are a good framework to build upon. Please ask your veterinarian for recommended training classes in your area!