

Caring For Your Puppy

1. Feeding:



From weaning age we recommend feeding a complete and balanced good quality puppy food until your puppy is at least six months of age. If your puppy is a large, fast growing breed there are large breed diets available. After this your dog can move onto an adult food to continue their optimum development. We recommend the Royal Canin Vetcare range which is available from the veterinary practice and we will be happy to advise you on a suitable diet for your dog throughout their life. The food is specifically designed to provide the correct levels of energy, protein, vitamins and minerals for a growing puppy. There is no need to use supplements, but always ensure there is a constant supply of drinking water available.

2. Vaccination:



This consists of a course of two vaccinations-one which is given at 8 weeks of age and the second which is given at 12 weeks. These protect against Distemper (Hardpad), Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvovirus and ParaInfluenza. Your puppy will be able to go out for walks one week after the second vaccination. To maintain your dog's immunity against these diseases (which in some cases can be fatal) a yearly booster is required. We will send you a reminder when it is due but please make sure you keep their vaccination certificate in a safe place and make a note on the calendar when it is due!

3. Worming:



This is necessary for all dogs throughout their life not just when they are puppies. They should be wormed with a veterinary supplied broad spectrum multiwormer. Often supermarket and pet-shop wormers will only treat one or two types of worms so will not always be effective. Your puppy should be wormed every 2 weeks until they are 12 weeks and then once every 3 months thereafter. To help you remember we will send you a reminder when the next dose is due!

4. Flea Control:



We advise regular treatment for fleas all year round to prevent infestations. This is easily achieved by using a spot on treatment available from the veterinary practice. These are applied to the back of your puppy's neck and provide at least one month's protection. Please feel free to ask for advice on the products which best suit your puppy's situation.

5. House Training: Begin toilet training as early as possible. Take your puppy outside on a regular basis to a designated area in the garden. Your puppy will need to go out every 2 hours especially after sleeping, eating or playing. Always praise them when they have finished and keep an eye on them when they are in the house for any signs of whining, sniffing the ground or looking uncomfortable. Take them outside straight away as young pups cannot hold on very long. You can also provide your puppy with a small area indoors covered with newspaper for them to use for their toilet area. As they get used to using the newspaper you can gradually move it closer to the back door until it is outside and your puppy should then start asking to go out to go to the toilet. It is normal for your puppy to have accidents but it is important to remember not to tell them off. These accidents will decrease in frequency and eventually stop altogether. Please feel free to ask for any help and advice.



6. Microchipping: This is an extremely important way of identifying your puppy should they ever go missing. It is a permanent form of identification which should be used along with a collar and ID tag. A small chip (about the size of a grain of rice) is inserted in the excess skin of your puppy's neck. This chip contains a unique number which is read by using a scanner. This number is registered along with your contact details with the national Petlog database. It is important to inform the database if your details change. All stray animals are scanned and on reading the chip the database would be contacted and you would be reunited with your dog as quickly as possible. Without this permanent method of identification your dog may not be traced back to you and may even be re-homed.



7. Neutering: Our policy is to spay bitches from 6 months of age before their first season. This can significantly reduce their chances of developing mammary tumours and pyometras (infection of the uterus) later in life. Male dogs should also be castrated at 6 months of age as this helps prevent them from developing prostate problems and testicular tumours later in life. Once your dog has been neutered, you may need to slightly reduce the amount of food they require as it is quite common for neutered dogs to gain a little weight due to the reduction in hormones. There is a diet lower in calories available for neutered dogs at the veterinary practice and we will be happy to advise you.



8. Dental Care: We clean our teeth several times a day and have regular check ups with a dentist. Imagine what our mouths would be like if we didn't - Dogs are no exception! It is important to develop a dental care regime for your puppy at an early age, which you can continue throughout their life. The gold standard of dental care is to brush your puppy's teeth once a day (usually at bedtime) with a special dog toothbrush and toothpaste. Human formulas are not suitable as they are not designed to be swallowed. Dog toothpastes are available in a range of flavours and your dog will probably regard it as a treat! These kits and other dental care products including chews and dental biscuits are available from the veterinary practice. We will be happy to advise you on the most suitable products for your puppy.



9. Insurance: Pet insurance is an essential requirement to help cover the cost of unexpected veterinary fees. Accidents can happen especially with inquisitive puppies! These can be expensive but being insured means you can have peace of mind. There are a variety of policies available to suit you and your budget and it is always important to make sure you read the small print! We recommend our Vetsure policy which provides lifetime cover for any illness which may occur during your dog's life. Please ask for more information or see our website for more details.



10. Training: Socialisation needs to start as soon as possible. Arrange for your puppy to have several new experiences every day. Please see the socialisation chart enclosed. Make sure you allow time for rest inbetween and keep them safe from infectious diseases. This means no mixing with unvaccinated dogs, no walking in areas where other dogs have been and if necessary carrying them to avoid contact with other dogs or soiled areas. Once your puppy is fully vaccinated an ideal way of socialising and training is to attend a puppy party run by the veterinary practice and also your local dog training class. We recommend the book 'The Perfect Puppy' by Gwen Bailey for puppy training advice which is available from the surgery. We will be happy to provide you with details of classes in your area and offer any advice you may need regarding behavioural or training problems.

