

PUPPIES

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OWNERS

Owning a dog is an extremely rewarding experience, but it also carries with it responsibilities. We hope these notes will give you some help. If you have questions concerning any subject related to your puppy's health, please do not hesitate to contact us.

WHEN SHOULD MY PUPPY BE VACCINATED?

Fortunately we have the ability to prevent the commonest infectious diseases that are potentially fatal to dogs, by the use effective vaccination. The standard vaccinations for dogs cover Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza and Leptospirosis. An initial vaccination "course" is given as two injections at an interval of two to four weeks apart. Initial vaccinations can be started at 10 weeks of age. Your puppy will be immune and "allowed out" 1 week after the second vaccination. Annual "booster" vaccinations are given to ensure protection against these diseases throughout your dog's life - we will send you a reminder when these are due.

Vaccination against infectious tracheitis (kennel cough) can also be given. Dogs going into boarding kennels or similar situations are at most risk from this disease. Immunity from the vaccine lasts for 12 months - so can be given with the yearly "booster". Unlike the diseases above the vaccination is in the form of drops down the nose. It should be given at least 5 days before kenneling. Many boarding kennels now insist on this vaccination.

WORMS

Intestinal worms are common in puppies. Puppies can become infected with worms in the bitch's womb before they are born or later in her milk. Modern worming preparations are safe and effective and we recommend their use at four-week intervals from 2 to 6 months of age. It is important that medication is repeated since it is only the adult worms that are killed. After 3-4 weeks the larval stages will have matured and therefore treatment should be repeated. **Combined spot-on preparations** which also treat fleas and mites are a practical and effective solution. "**Advocate**" is an example.



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Roundworms pose a small but definite risk to children: therefore it is good practice to administer worming preparations to your dog regularly throughout its life. We recommend that all adult dogs are wormed at least twice a year and more frequently if in contact with young children.

Tapeworms are the most common intestinal parasite of dogs, infection occurring from ingestion of fleas during licking or grooming. The eggs of the tapeworm live inside the flea and are released when the flea is digested in a canine intestine. The tapeworm then becomes anchored to the intestinal lining. Exposure to fleas may result in a new infection in as little as two weeks.

Dogs infected with tapeworms will pass small segments of the worms in their faeces. The segments are white in colour and look like grains of rice. They are about 3 mm (1/8 in) long and may be seen crawling on the surface of the faeces. They may also stick to the hair under the tail. If that occurs, they will dry out, shrink to about half their size, and become golden in colour.

Milbemax and **Drontal Plus** tablets are both effective against all worms found in this country. Dosing is simple as they can be given as a single dose with or without food. We advise that puppies are wormed monthly from 2-6 months of age and thereafter every 6 months. Please see our leaflet "A Guide to Worming your Dog" for further details.

WHAT SHOULD I FED MY PUPPY?

Diet is extremely important in the growing months of a dog's life, and there are two important criteria that should be met in selecting food for your puppy.

1. We recommend you feed a well known make of branded food.
2. Ensure it is specially formulated for puppies.

Follow the directions on the packet or can and if you have any queries do not hesitate to contact us.

Feeding a complete (dry), canned, or semi-moist form of dog food is acceptable. Each has advantages and disadvantages.



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Complete foods (dry kibble) is the most inexpensive option, and can be left in the dog's bowl without spoiling. Canned food contains about 75% water compared with only 10% in dry food: so dry food usually works out less expensive. With only a 10% moisture content in a dry food, compared with 70-80% in a canned food, your puppy will appear to drink more if fed a dry food.

Semi-moist and canned foods are also acceptable but may be considerably more expensive than dry food. They often are more appealing to the dog's taste; however, they are **not** more nutritious. If you feed a very tasty food, you are running the risk of creating a dog with a finicky appetite. In addition, the semi-moist foods are high in sugar.

Table foods are not recommended. Because they are generally very tasty, dogs will often begin to hold out for these and not eat their well-balanced dog food. If you choose to give your puppy table food, be sure that at least 90% of its diet is good quality commercial puppy food.

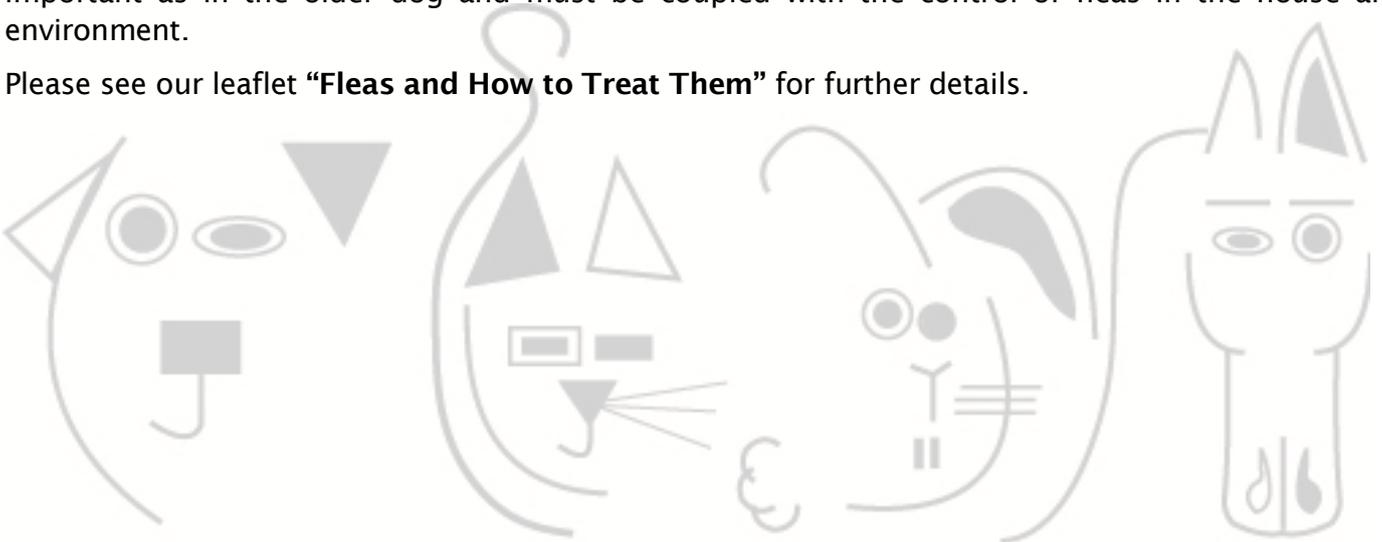
We enjoy a variety of things to eat in our diet. However, most dogs prefer not to change from one food to another unless they are trained to do so by the way you feed them. Do not feel guilty if your dog is happy to just eat one food day after day, week after week.

Commercials for dog food can be very misleading. If you watch carefully you will notice that media commercials promote dog food on one basis, TASTE. Nutrition is rarely mentioned. Most of the "gourmet" foods are marketed to appeal to owners who want the best for their dogs; however, they do not offer the dog any nutritional advantage over a good quality complete or canned foods. If your dog eats a gourmet food for any length of time it will probably not be happy with other foods. If it needs a special diet due to a health problem later in life, it is very unlikely to accept it. We do not encourage feeding gourmet dog foods.

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT FLEAS ON MY PUPPY?

Many effective flea control preparations for use on adult dogs are not suitable for use on puppies so please consult us regarding flea control. We have a variety of products in various formulations which can be suitable for puppies from as young as two days. Flea control in the puppy is just as important as in the older dog and must be coupled with the control of fleas in the house and environment.

Please see our leaflet "Fleas and How to Treat Them" for further details.



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CAN I TRIM MY PUPPY'S SHARP TOENAILS?

Puppies have very sharp toenails. They can be blunted and shortened using an emery board or a piece of carpenter's fine sandpaper. They can also be trimmed with nail scissors or with clippers made for dogs and cats. However if you remove too much nail, you will cut the quick and cause bleeding and pain. If the puppy has clear or light coloured nails it is possible to see the quick as a pink line running through the nail. With black nails this is more difficult and therefore these should be trimmed at only about 1 mm a time until the puppy is beginning to resent it: at which time it is likely you are getting very near to the quick and should stop. It is useful to have shaving styptic pencil available so that if you inadvertently cut the quick you can stop the bleeding without causing pain or discomfort to the puppy. If in doubt, please consult us and we will show you exactly how to trim the nails.

WHAT ARE EAR MITES?

Ear mites (*Otodectes cyanotis*) are tiny parasites that live in the ear canal of dogs (and cats). The most common sign of ear mite infection is scratching and shaking of the ears. Sometimes the ears appear dirty because of a black material in the ear canal which is sometimes shaken out. Ear mites spend most of their time within the ear canal although they can be found on the face around the ears and sometimes around the base of the dog's tail (since dogs curl up with their head near their rump). Transmission is by direct contact between animals and the mites can be transmitted between dogs and cats. Ear mites are common in litters of puppies if the mother is infected or if the bitch has been brought up in contact with a cat with mites. Please ask us to check your puppies ears if you are concerned.



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SHOULD I HAVE MY FEMALE DOG SPAYED?

Spaying offers several advantages. The female's heat periods (known as "seasons") result in about 2-3 weeks of vulval bleeding and attractiveness to male dogs. In some cases, despite your best efforts, the bitch will become pregnant. Your bitch will have a heat period about every 6-7 months. It has also been shown that as the bitch gets older, there is a significant incidence of mammary tumours and uterine infections if she has not been spayed. Spaying helps to avoid these problems, seasons no longer occur and unplanned litters of puppies are prevented. The surgical procedure involves removal of the uterus and ovaries under general anaesthesia. If you do not plan to breed from your dog, we strongly recommend that she is spayed. We can discuss the best options for you at the 6 month development assessment consultation.

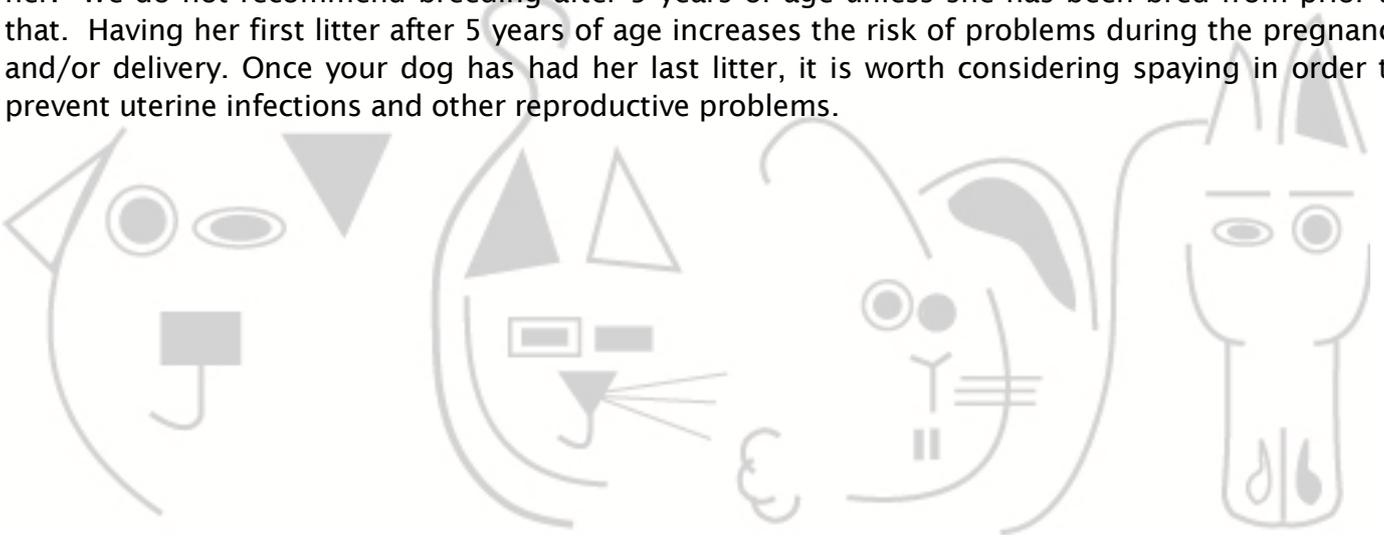
SHOULD I HAVE MY FEMALE DOG NEUTERED?

Neutering offers several advantages. Male dogs are attracted to a female dog in heat and will "wander" to get to her. Entire male dogs are more aggressive and more likely to fight, especially with other male dogs. As dogs age, the prostate gland frequently enlarges and can cause difficulty with urinating and defecating. Neutering will solve, or greatly help, all of these problems. The surgery can be performed any time after the dog is 6 months old.

It is worth remembering that all Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs and Dogs for the Disabled, both male and female, are routinely neutered. Please see our leaflet "Neutering our Dog" for further information.

IF I WISH TO BREED FROM MY FEMALE DOG, WHEN SHOULD THAT BE DONE?

If you plan to mate your dog, she should have at least one or two heat periods first. This will allow her to physically mature allowing her to be a better mother without being such a physical drain on her. We do not recommend breeding after 5 years of age unless she has been bred from prior to that. Having her first litter after 5 years of age increases the risk of problems during the pregnancy and/or delivery. Once your dog has had her last litter, it is worth considering spaying in order to prevent uterine infections and other reproductive problems.



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TRAINING YOUR PUPPY

Responsible ownership involves having a well-trained dog and this training should be commenced as soon as the puppy is acquired. Puppies are continuously learning from the moment their eyes are open and responsible breeders will ensure that the elements of training have commenced before you acquire the puppy at 6-8 weeks of age. Remember training is not some “formal” process but should occur all the time that you are together with your puppy.

Training and socialisation are intermixed. A well socialised dog is invariably a well trained dog and vice versa, hence early socialisation is important. They should be handled by family members and strangers as soon as possible and be introduced to other dogs and puppies, as soon as their vaccination status allows. Our leaflet “**Training your New Puppy**” has further details.

HOW DO I ENSURE THAT MY PUPPY IS WELL SOCIALISED?

Your puppy should be socialised from 4 weeks of age onwards, the most useful time being up to the age of 12 weeks. During this time the puppy is very impressionable to social influences. If your puppy has had positive experiences it is likely to accept them, whilst negative or unpleasant experiences may promote unacceptable behaviours when they are encountered in the future. We encourage you to expose your dog to as many situations and influences as possible, however since the puppy will not have built up a complete immunity from vaccination until approximately 11 weeks of age exposure to potentially harmful diseases should be avoided. The aim is to strike a balance: obviously not expose him to the risk of disease but at the same time ensure that as much socialisation as possible, both with people and other animals, takes place. We will be happy to advise on your individual circumstances.

WHAT TYPE OF PLAYING SHOULD I EXPECT FROM A PUPPY?

Stimulating play is very important. Stalking and pouncing are important play behaviour in puppies and are necessary for proper muscular development. If given a sufficient outlet for this behaviour with toys, your puppy will be less likely to use family members for these activities. The best toys are lightweight and movable. These include wads of paper and rubber balls. Any toy that is small enough to be swallowed should be avoided.



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CAN I DISCIPLINE A PUPPY?

Disciplining a young puppy may be necessary if its behaviour threatens people or property, but harsh punishment should be avoided. Hand clapping and using shaker cans or horns can be intimidating enough to inhibit undesirable behaviour. However, remote punishment is preferred. Remote punishment consists of using something that appears unconnected to the “punisher” to stop the problem. Examples include using spray bottles, throwing objects in the direction of the puppy to startle (but not hit) it, and making loud noises. Remote punishment is preferred because the puppy associates punishment with the undesirable act and not with you.

PUPPY PARTIES

Our nurses run monthly puppy parties when you are invited to the surgery to meet other puppies and have a look round. It is an excellent opportunity to ask questions and get your dog acclimatised to coming to the surgery.

6 MONTHS DEVELOPMENT CHECK

At this age dogs are changing from puppies into adult dogs with all the attendant problems that this can bring. The initial “honeymoon period” of puppyhood is over and you will be getting to know them as an individual and vice-versa.

We will check that your dog is developing as expected both physically and with regard to behaviour and training. At the same time we will review your options for feeding and maintaining your dog in the best of health. Attention to any problems at this stage gives the best chance of preventing them from detracting from your dog’s quality of life later on.

This is a good time to consider insurance and permanent identification for your dog. We have enclosed leaflets for your information.

We will send you a reminder to make an appointment for this consultation which will take about 15 minutes.



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LIFETIME HEALTHCARE

PRIMARY VACCINATIONS
MICROCHIP IDENTIFICATION
ADVICE on BREEDING or NEUTERING
ADOLESCENT HEALTHCHECKS

ANNUAL VACCINATIONS and HEALTHCHECKS
FLEA and WORM CONTROL
NUTRITIONAL ADVICE and WEIGHT MANAGEMENT
DENTAL CARE

SENIOR HEALTH ASSESSMENTS
PRESCRIPTION DIET FOODS

ADVICE FROM OUR NURSES

GENERAL HEALTHCARE
BEHAVIOUR & ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT
GROOMING
NUTRITION and DIETARY ADVICE
WEIGHT CONTROL
DENTAL



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