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So You Have a New Dog....

Congratulations!!!

Getting a new puppy or dog is always exciting. As a new owner, there are usually many concerns in regards to how you can keep your dog healthy. This handout is written to try to address your concerns and questions. It will also give you helpful tips on how to better attain those goals. After all, we want you and your new dog to have a long, healthy life together. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to call our office and ask.

FOOD/WATER

Fresh water should be available at all times. Be sure to clean bowls at least once daily.

Puppies start the weaning process at approximately 3-4 weeks old. It is good to introduce a gruel-like formula to nipple feedings. Eventually canned and dry dog food formulas can be added as teeth develop. All puppies should be ingesting a good quality, well-balanced puppy food. It is better to choose foods with less fillers and better nutritional sources.

Examples of food:	Hill's Science Diet	Iams	Taste of the Wild
	Purina ProPlan	Eukanuba	Blue Buffalo
	Nutro	Bil Jac	Merrick

It is recommended to choose one food and stick with it. If, at any time, you choose to change food we recommend doing so gradually over a minimum of 3-5 days. This will decrease the chance of gastrointestinal upset. Remember, there is not one single food that will be perfect for every dog!

Allow 3-4 smaller feedings, per day, until puppies reach approximately 12 weeks of age. Then the frequency can be decreased to 2 feedings per day. This schedule may be adjusted by your veterinarian. For example, small/toy breeds may require additional feedings to help prevent hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar.

Multivitamins are not needed if your pet is eating a quality dog food. However, your veterinarian might advise their use during times of sickness or injury.

Treats are usually crucial during puppy training sessions. Again, it is a good idea to choose 1 or 2 different treats and stick with them. Do not just buy what is on sale or "looks good". Too many high fat treats can lead to diarrhea and vomiting. **AVOID pig ears, cow hooves, rawhides, bones, etc!** ** They have the potential to cause severe gastrointestinal trauma and even obstructions. This may require your dog to have surgery and even be life-threatening.

Healthy treat alternatives are:

Baby Carrots	Popcorn (unflavored)	Rice Cakes	Cheerios (Plain)
Green Beans	Cherries (no pits)	Melons	Cauliflower
Bananas	Broccoli	Apples	Blueberries

** See our handouts "Average Daily Calorie Requirements" & "95 Things That Can Harm Your Pet"!

ENVIRONMENT

Puppies are naturally curious. They love to explore their environment and usually do so with their mouths. Often what goes into their mouths then gets swallowed. Therefore, before you bring your new dog home, make sure to survey your home for potential dangers; also called “puppy proofing”. This is similar to making your home safe for a human child.

Some examples of “puppy proofing”:

- Know which plants are toxic and place them out of reach.
- Keep all medications, including dog supplements, in a safe area (inside cabinets or drawers).
- Keep all trash cans where dogs cannot get into them.
- Keep any cleaning supplies in high cabinets or use childproof latches. Keep pets away from area where these products are being used.
- Keep lid on the toilet bowl closed and stop using any sanitizing flush products.
- Tie up loose electrical cords or use cord concealers.
- Keep laundry baskets off the floor. Socks, nylons, underwear, and other clothing can be swallowed and cause a dangerous gastrointestinal blockage.
- Keep small objects out of reach. Things like coins, jewelry, needles/fishing lures, straight pins, thread/yarn/dental floss, paper clips, toys, etc can be toxic or cause damage to your pet.
- Keep doors and windows closed. Keep screens securely fastened and in good repair.
- Keep your dog from landscape hazards like cocoa bean mulch and stones.
- Make sure all gasoline, oil, pain, fertilizers, insecticides, and auto supplies are placed in secure containers and out of reach. Antifreeze and rat poisons are particularly tasty, but can be deadly if ingested.
- Monitor your property for hazards like broken glass, exposed nails, or other sharp objects.

EXERCISE

Dogs are built for activity. Stray animals have been known to travel 20-30 miles a day. Their domesticated counterparts don't need to cover that much ground, but they still need to be moving regularly. Daily exercise is good for your dog's mental and physical well-being. It can help avoid obesity-related illnesses, such as diabetes or arthritis. Their energy needs to have an outlet; otherwise puppies become bored and destructive. Many owners find that taking their dogs out for regular outdoor play/walks cuts down on behavioral issues like incessant chewing, digging, and nonstop barking.

Remember: A tired puppy is happy, and better behaved, puppy.

So how much exercise is enough?

A good rule of thumb is five minutes of exercise per month of age up to twice a day, according to the U.K. Kennel Club. In other words, a 3-month-old puppy will need 15 minutes of exercise while a 4-month-old will need 20 minutes. This may take the form of low-impact activities like swimming or playing with small dog exercise balls. You can also take your puppy out for short walks on a leash. However, if he starts to sit down, give him time to rest. If he does not start walking again, you may have to carry him home.



The amount of exercise your puppy needs depends on his/her age, breed, and medical condition. For instance, brachycephalic breeds (English Bulldog, French Bulldog, Boston Terrier, or any dog with a “smushed” face) are not capable of going long distances, especially in Florida's climate. Whereas other breeds, like Border Collies, Jack Russell Terriers, and Dalmatians, need the most exercise. Make sure you are consistent with the amount of exercise your puppy gets. He/She needs to build his stamina and the only way to accomplish this is by exercising regularly, but with caution.

SOCIALIZATION

Socialization means learning to be part of society. When socializing our new puppies/dogs, it means helping them learn to be comfortable within our world. This includes many different types of people, environments, buildings, noises, smells, and other animals. Most young animals have a natural curiosity about the everyday things, but once they reach a certain age they become more suspicious. This is crucial for development so young animals become accustomed to things that will be a part of their lives. The later suspicion ensures that the animal will react with a healthy dose of caution at new things that may turn out to be dangerous.

Puppies are most accepting of new experiences between 4 and 12 weeks of age. After this “critical period” closes, the friendly socializing puppy enters into a fear-acquiring developmental period. From about 12-18 weeks, the opportunity to easily socialize your puppy ends and with each passing week it becomes even harder to get the pup's acceptance of new things. After 18 weeks old, it's extremely difficult, and sometimes impossible, to teach a dog to like something new, or help him/her become comfortable with something he/she finds frightening. The amount of socialization your puppy requires will depend on the lifestyle you have planned for your dog. The rule of thumb, with puppy socialization, is to keep a close eye on your puppy's reaction to whatever you expose him/her to so that you can tone things down if your pup seems at all frightened. Always follow up a socialization experience with praise, petting, a fun game or a special treat.



The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) states, “Puppies need socialization with other dogs, but those dogs must be well vaccinated and healthy.” Socializing with litter-mates or in-house dogs is not sufficient. Well-socialized puppies usually develop into safer, more relaxed and enjoyable pet dogs. This is because they're more comfortable in a wider variety of situations than poorly socialized dogs, so they're less likely to behave fearfully or aggressively when faced with something new. Poorly socialized dogs are much more likely to react with fear or aggression to unfamiliar people, dogs and experiences. Dogs who are relaxed about honking horns, cats, cyclists, veterinary examinations, crowds and long stairwells are easier and safer to live with than dogs who find these situations threatening. Socialization isn't an “all or nothing” project. You can socialize a puppy a bit, a lot, or a whole lot. While it is impossible to expose a young puppy to absolutely everything he/she will encounter in life. The wider the range of experiences you expose him/her to, the better his chances are of being comfortable in a wide variety of situations as an adult.

One *great* way to help socialize a puppy is to attend puppy training classes! These are classes designed especially for basic lessons and early socialization. In a typical puppy class, off-leash play and play-fighting helps socialize puppies with each other, teaches them to be gentle with their mouthing and biting, and gets them used to being handled by a variety of people. Some classes even include exposure to odd sights and sounds using props, recordings of sounds, and theatrics with costumes to accustom the puppies to a wide range of life experiences. Puppy classes also teach some basic obedience skills, so on top of the socialization component, you'll learn how to ask your pup to comply with your requests and behave according to your expectations.

Statement from the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior:

"In general, puppies can start puppy socialization classes as early as 7 to 8 weeks of age. Puppies should receive a minimum of one set of vaccines at least 7 days prior to the first class and a first deworming. They should be kept up-to-date on vaccines throughout the class. Puppy socialization classes offer a safe and organized means of socializing puppies. Where possible, classes should be held on surfaces that are easily cleaned and disinfected (e.g., indoor environments). Visits to dog parks or other areas that aren't sanitized or are highly trafficked by dogs of unknown vaccination or disease status should be avoided."

Other puppy socialization suggestions:

- Host a puppy party! Invite friends and family over, play some music, toss some toys, and pass your pup around.
 - Bring your puppy to indoor meetings/children play areas. Supervise the children interacting with him/her to make sure your pup is not frightened by them and they're being gentle.
 - Take your pup on car rides through different neighborhoods, drive-thrus, car washes, and out into the country where he/she will see and smell a variety of scents.
 - Arrange play sessions with other puppies and adult dogs who you know are healthy and friendly.
 - If your puppy is small enough, carry him around town and let strangers pet him and give him treats.
 - Drive to a busy mall and hang out with your pup on a mat at the entrance. Strangers will flock to you because they want to pet your puppy and they'll willingly feed him the treats that you've brought with you.
- ** See our handout "Socialization Checklist" to help keep track of what your puppy has been exposed to!

GROOMING

Caring for a dog requires knowing how to take care of his/her coat, skin, nails, and teeth.

Brushing

Brushing the hair coat of young pups cleans the coat, removes loose hair, and stimulates the oil glands of the skin. Oil helps protect and nourish the skin. Puppies will often consider this as just another form of petting. By getting them used to it now so they will let you do the same when they are adults. Ask your veterinarian what would be the appropriate brush for your dog's hair coat. Brushing should be performed prior to bathing in order to remove dead hair, dirt, mats, and burrs.

Bathing



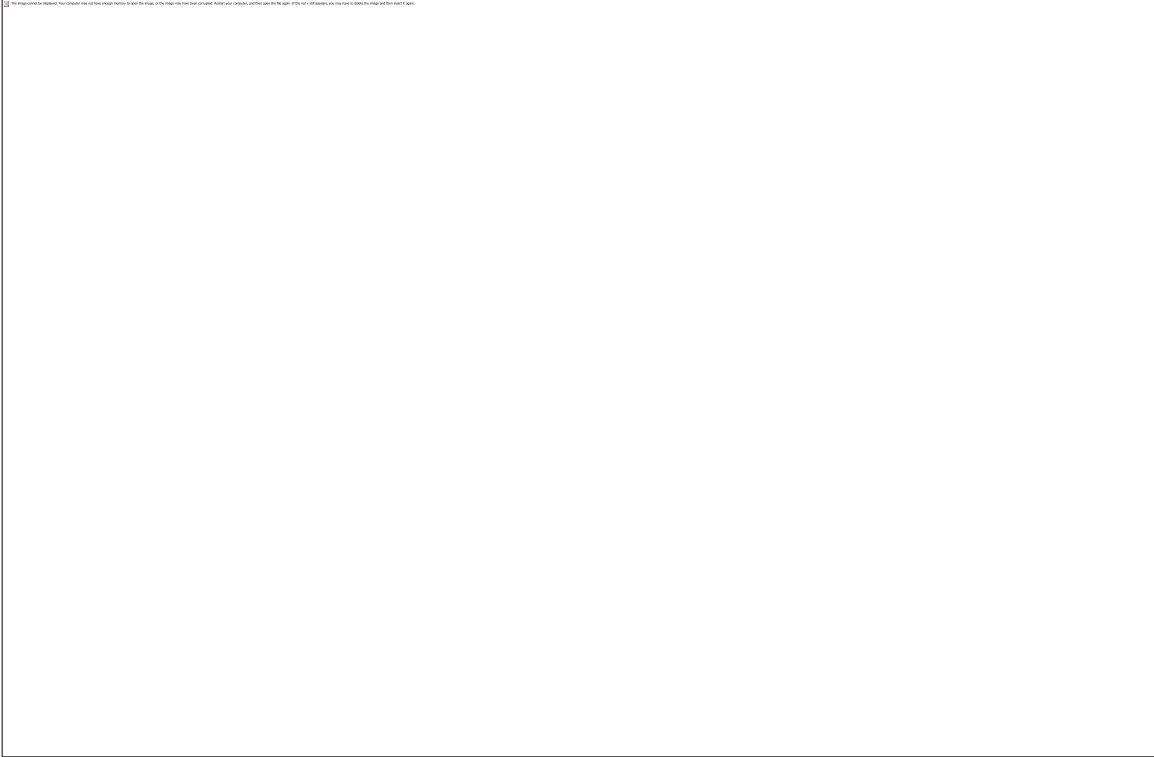
Bathing can start right away with a new puppy. Many dogs will come from the breeder or shelter with a dirty or smelly coat. These dogs need to be bathed. Bathing helps control odor by removing excess dander, oil, and bacteria from the skin/hair coat. There are numerous shampoos on the market; however, you want to choose a soap free/non-detergent one. Baby shampoo is a suitable substitute. These types of shampoos do not irritate the eyes; remove the coat's natural oils, or topical flea treatments. Typically, we recommend bathing your dog up to once a week; however, if a puppy gets dirty, it is okay to give him/her a bath. There may be times we advise using a different shampoo or frequency depending on certain medical conditions.

Bathing Process:

- Apply small amount of sterile eye ointment in each eye to provide a protective film.
- Using warm water, wet the coat thoroughly.
- Apply enough shampoo to provide a good lather. Always rub coat in the direction of hair growth.
- Let the shampoo sit (under supervision) for 5 minutes.
- Rinse thoroughly! Soap-free shampoos do not lather as much and it makes it hard to verify if all is rinsed. So when you think you have rinsed it all, it is best to rinse some more. Retained shampoo can cause skin irritation.
- Remove excess water from the coat and wrap your puppy in a warm, dry towel. Puppies have poor control over their body temperature. Adult dogs can be allowed to air dry under normal room temperature conditions.
- If a hair dryer is used, be sure to set it on a cool (not warm or hot) setting.

Nail Trimming

Puppies' nails have tiny sharp points on them and can easily scratch skin or furniture. They can also get caught in carpet or other fabrics. After an initial trimming, puppies/dogs are usually active enough to keep them worn down for 4-6 weeks. Typically the front nails need more frequent trimming than the rear nails. This is one reason why it is imperative to accustom your puppy to having his/her feet and toes handled. A file or Emory board can be used to keep nails less sharp. Always reward cooperative behavior with a treat or play time.



Ear Cleaning

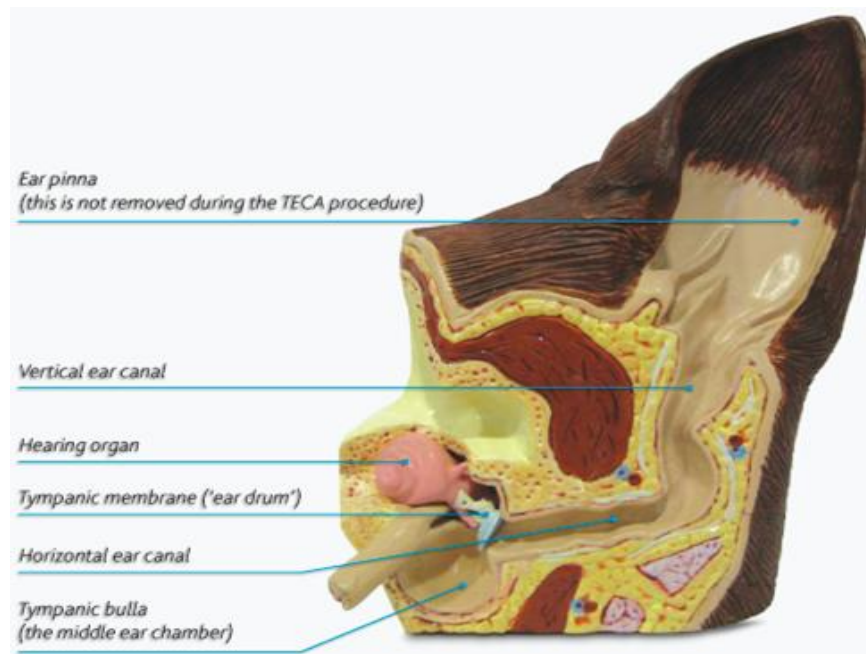
Ear cleaning is an essential part of your dog's basic grooming routine. In general, dogs can build up wax and debris at a faster rate than people. All dogs should have their ears cleaned from time to time, but some dogs need more frequent and thorough cleaning than others (especially those prone to infections). Using an appropriate cleaner helps release wax and debris from the external canal.

Regular cleaning can help prevent ear infections. Inspect your dog's ears regularly and talk to your veterinarian about your dog's needs. Typically, ear infections result from an excessive amount of bacteria or yeast in the ears. External ear infections can cause itching and pain. Dogs with itchy/sore ears tend to shake their heads violently, which can lead to the rupturing of the ear flap blood vessels. These results in the formation of a pocket of blood called a hematoma. Classic signs of an ear infection include odor from the ears, frequent head shaking, redness/warmth inside the ears, excessive scratching at ears, excessive ear discharge/debris, and even crying/nipping when ears are touched. Examples of dog breeds with genetic predisposition to ear infections are: Cocker Spaniels, English Bulldogs, Labrador/Golden Retrievers, and Basset Hounds.

Supplies:

- Ear Cleansing Solution – ask your veterinarian for the proper one for your dog.
- Paper Towels/Cotton Pad/Washcloth

Normal Ear Anatomy



Ear Cleaning Process:

- Inspect the ears. This gives you an idea of how dirty they are and to check for excess hair or discharge/debris.
 - ** If your dog has a lot of hair coming from the ear canal, it may need to be plucked.
 - Talk to your groomer or vet's office about this process.
- Best to be done in the tub, or outside, before a bath. This is because when your dog shakes his head the debris and cleaner have to go somewhere. So Beware!
- Hold the ear flap up and gently squirt a small amount of ear cleaner into the canal opening.
- Before he/she can shake the head, begin massaging the base of the ear (this is near the jaw where cartilage can be felt) for a few seconds to help loosen debris. You should be able to hear a “smacking sound”.
- Allow your dog to give a good shake.
- Using a paper towel/washcloth/cotton pad wipe out the opening of the ear canal and underside of the ear flap.
 - ** **DO NOT USE COTTON-TIPPED SWABS (Q-tips) IN ANY ANIMAL'S EARS!!!**
- Reward your dog with a treat
- Repeat the process if the ear still seems dirty. Do not over clean, this can lead to irritation.
- Move to the other ear and repeat.

Oral Care

Did you know that regularly brushing your dog's teeth and providing a healthy diet and plenty of chew toys can go a long way toward keeping a healthy mouth? Home dental care can make a tremendous difference in your dog's health and comfort. There are several options to choose from, but keep in mind anything you can do to help prevent plaque and tartar accumulation will pay in the long run. All methods of at-home care share the goal of preventing or controlling periodontal disease by minimizing plaque (bacterial film) accumulation, and preventing the mineralization of the plaque to form calculus (“tartar”). Combining several methods will achieve the best results. However, it will never replace dental cleanings performed by your veterinarian. It is just like you brushing your teeth, flossing, and using mouthwash doesn't replace going to the dentist. Many dogs show signs of gum disease by the time they are 4 years old.



CLEAN TEETH



CALCULUS FORMATION

Give your dog home checks and follow the tips below.

Brushing with Toothpaste – The single most effective means to maintain oral health between professional dental examinations. The bacterial film that forms on teeth is easily disrupted by the mechanical effect of brushing the teeth. Frequent (ideally daily) brushing is recommended to maintain optimal dental health. The key to success is to be patient and gradual in your approach. Focus mainly on the outsides of the “cheek teeth” located under the upper lip. Toothbrushes designed for dogs are soft and angled to assist in brushing the back teeth. However, finger brushes are sometimes preferred by pets. It is important to use pet-specific toothpastes. They come in flavors like poultry and seafood. Avoid human products because they often contain abrasives and high-foaming detergents that should not be swallowed.



Oral Rinses/Gels – These are similar to human mouthwash. You want to look for rinses that contain Chlorhexidine. This ingredient has been shown to have immediate bacteria-killing action. It also has a prolonged action because it binds to the oral tissues and tooth surfaces and then is gradually released into the oral cavity. It is safe for pets and rarely causes problems, though it can have a bitter taste. The rinse is applied by squirting a small amount inside the cheek on each side of the mouth. The gel is applied by smearing it onto the teeth using your finger or piece of gauze. The tongue and lips will spread the rinse or gel around the mouth.

Diets/Chews – These are an additional means of decreasing dental disease. Several “dental diets” employ a specific kibble design and others include a chemical anti-tartar, poly-phosphate ingredient; for example, Hill's t/d. Giving these daily yields the best results. Palatability is important! One diet/chew may be appealing to one dog, but not the next dog. You can improve palatability by smearing a small amount of peanut butter or soft cheese onto the product. Chew toys can satisfy your dog's natural desire to chomp, while making his teeth strong. Gnawing also reduces your dog's overall stress level and prevents boredom. **AVOID pig ears, cow hooves, rawhides, bones, etc!** These hard products are associated with broken teeth and damaged gums. Keep in mind that dogs should be monitored while chewing these products to prevent the swallowing of large pieces.

The following are signs that your dog may have a problem with his mouth and should be checked by your veterinarian:

Bad breathe
Loose teeth

Excessive drooling
Reluctance to chew food/toys

Inflamed (Red) gums
Oral growths

PREVENTIVES

In our area of the country internal and external parasites are a very common problem.

Heartworms –

Heartworm infection in dogs has been diagnosed around the globe and is considered, at least regionally, endemic in each of the contiguous 48 states and Hawaii. Transmission of the disease requires a susceptible mosquito vector (carrier). The urban-dwelling mosquitoes are able to reproduce in small containers, such as flowerpots and bird baths. Heartworm infection is preventable. Puppies should be started, on *monthly* preventive, as early as 8 weeks of age, without performing a heartworm test. For dogs older than 6 months of age, a heartworm test and microfilaria screening should be performed. Options for effective prophylaxis include *monthly* oral or topical medications. These products require a prescription. All dogs living in heartworm-endemic areas are at risk, so prevention is a high priority. Ask your veterinarian which is the best preventive for you and your dog's needs.



Fleas & Ticks –

Fleas are external parasites that are wingless with mouthparts adapted for piercing skin and sucking blood. From mammals and birds. Their hind pair of legs is used for jumping, sometimes up to 7 inches vertically. The tough body is able to withstand great pressure, so they can often survive mashing or scratching. Eggs are laid on the host itself; therefore, areas where the host rests/sleeps become primary habitats. They remain resting until they received a signal that a host is near – vibrations (visual and physical), heat, and carbon dioxide. In ideal conditions, fleas can have a lifespan of as long as 1 and ½ years. Female fleas can lay 5000 or more eggs over their life, which allows for phenomenal growth rates. Fleas are not simply a source of annoyance. They can also lead to hair loss, anemia, or infectious diseases (bacteria, viruses, tapeworms, and trypanosomes).



Flea control includes placing all pets in the home on a monthly medication, such as Comfortis or Nexgard. Frequent and thorough vacuuming is also helpful to pick up the larvae and eggs in the environment. It is recommended to dispose of the bag after each vacuuming of flea-infested area. Be careful when using any environment-treating products until you determine it is safe for use around your particular pet. Bathing your dog dramatically reduces the flea population on a badly infested animal. It should be combined with brushing/combing and a mild shampoo. Products like baking soda and table salt can be used weekly on carpets and floors to kill fleas by dehydration. Borax and diatomaceous earth have also been used, but exposure to these products can be dangerous if inhaled or ingested. People should wear a dust mask and animals kept from the environment until it has been cleaned. Fleas cannot withstand high temperatures, so placing bedding and clothes in a medium or high dryer setting will kill fleas.



Ticks are external parasites that also survive by sucking the blood of mammals and birds, and sometimes reptiles and amphibians. They are incapable of flying or jumping. Ticks are widely distributed around the world and they tend to flourish in regions with warm, humid climates. This is because they require a certain amount of moisture in the air to undergo parts of their life cycle. Many ticks hold on to leaves and grass and wait with legs outstretched waiting to climb on to the host. When a host brushes the spot where a tick is waiting, it quickly climbs up. Some attach immediately and others wander looking for thinner skin (like the ear). Ticks are vectors for a number of diseases that can affect both humans and other animals.

Examples of tick-borne infections are: Lyme disease, Q fever, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Tularemia, ehrlichiosis, anaplasmosis, and babesiosis.

Sometimes one tick can harbor more than one disease-causing agent.

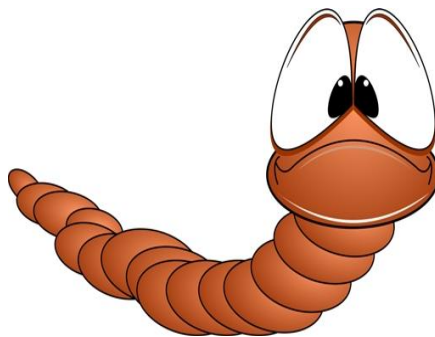
The treatment and control of ticks is different than that for fleas. Ticks are typically found in wooded areas. However, as wooded areas are torn down for urban growth the wildlife (and their parasites) gets displaced into our yards. So ticks are now being seen more frequently in suburban-like areas. Also many houses use decorative material, like mulch, which can contain ticks. These parasites can get inside homes by hitchhiking inside on pets, people, or our clothing. Therefore, it is always a good idea to inspect pets and our children.

Ticks can also become a problem if there are suitable ticks hosts living the crawl spaces or attics of our homes. Repairing any crevices or gaps and keeping grass cut short outside may discourage infestations. Dispose of all empty bird and rodent nesting materials. Expose shaded areas to sunlight to decrease moisture available to the parasites. Remove thick leaf litter or ground cover as well. These changes are typically done in areas frequented by pets and family members, not necessarily the entire property.

Any feeding ticks found on people or pets should be carefully removed. Tweezers should be used to grasp behind the head and then use a gentle pulling motion. It is important that the tick be completely removed and then the area should be washed thoroughly and disinfected. Since ticks are capable of seeking safety in hidden areas within the home, infestations are harder to battle. Therefore, we recommend using a monthly product to protect your pets from these nasty parasites. Ask us which product is best for your dog's lifestyle.

Intestinal Parasites –

These are very common. They are more often seen in younger animals, but adult dogs can become infected as well. Some of these can even cause problems in people (zoonotic). We often deworm puppies, whether we find anything in the fecal samples or not. The typical schedule is every 2 weeks from age 2 to 10 weeks. The most common symptoms of intestinal parasites are: anemia (pale gums and lethargy), vomiting, diarrhea (sometimes with blood), dull coat, and poor growth. Infection, with the most common worms, can also be controlled with monthly heartworm preventives. If your dog is diagnosed with any of these, please complete all recommended treatments to help prevent egg shedding. We recommend annual fecal examinations, minimally, on all pets. We will often repeat this test if your dog develops gastrointestinal signs, such as vomiting and diarrhea.



Type of Parasite	How Infected?	Zoonotic?	How to Prevent?	Preventive Available?
Coccidia	Ingesting feces, grooming due to being immune-compromised (young, sick, stressed, etc.)	NO*	- Strict sanitation. - Bathing infected pets to decrease coat contamination. - Strict insect and rodent control (can carry coccidia from place to place).	NO
Giardia	Ingesting infected feces, drinking contaminated lake/standing water	NO*	- Promptly remove feces from yard. - Prevent drinking of possibly unclean water. - Strict sanitation.	NO
Hookworm	<i>Young</i> = crossing the placenta, through milk <i>Adults</i> = ingesting feces, worms penetrating skin	YES	- Promptly remove feces from yard. - Avoid areas with high animal traffic. - Wear shoes/gloves when gardening. - Wash hands thoroughly after handling dirt. - Prevent feces ingestion. - Deworm puppies every 2 weeks until old enough for monthly preventive. - Cover sandboxes when not in use.	YES
Roundworm	<i>Young</i> = crossing the placenta, ingesting feces <i>Adults</i> = ingesting eggs in soil or items contaminated with infected feces	YES	- Promptly remove feces from yard. - Avoid areas with high animal traffic. - Deworm puppies every 2 weeks until old enough for monthly preventive. - Clean sandboxes/litterboxes with soap & water with aggressive scrubbing (eggs are sticky and long-lived).	YES
Tapeworm	Ingesting infected fleas or tissue of infected animals.	YES	- Make sure all family pets receive strict monthly flea control.	YES
Whipworm	Ingesting infected feces or matter (water, tissue, etc.)	NO*	- Promptly remove feces from yard. - Avoid areas with high animal traffic.	YES

*Even though these are not directly zoonotic, humans have their own species of these parasites.

SPAY/NEUTER

These terms refer to the sterilization of female (removal of both ovaries and uterus) and male (removing both testes) animals, respectively. We **HIGHLY** recommend this be done at approximately *5-6 months of age*. By sterilizing your dog you decrease unwanted behaviors, improve his/her health, and prevent pet overpopulation. Should you elect to breed your dog, please consult our staff regarding the proper technique and what to expect. *** See our handouts “Why Spay” and “Why Neuter”.

EXAMINATIONS

Routine physical examinations are extremely important to ensure the continuing health of your dog and to prevent potential problems in the future. Some studies have shown that 10% of pets that appear to be healthy are found to have hidden diseases. It is an excellent idea to start these exams when you get the dog and then 1-2 times a year. Exams are also advised should you notice any changes in your dog's normal behavior, as these can be the first indicators of underlying problems. Your veterinarian will inform you of the best course of action should anything abnormal be found on your dog's physical exam. Wellness testing leads to the early detection of disease, which leads to early treatment and possibly a better prognosis.

**Remember, depending on your dog's weight and breed,
a yearly examination is comparable to you getting a physical exam every 4-7 years!*

VACCINATIONS

Vaccinations are given to your dog in an effort to prevent infections that could harm and potentially decrease your pet's lifespan. These are usually started at 6 weeks old and are given every 3-4 weeks until he/she reaches 4 months old. They can be started later depending on the age the puppy first presents. Vaccines given by a breeder/non-veterinarian are not recognized by the veterinary profession. We will start your vaccination series based on the age of your dog, and provide a schedule for you. Since we live in an endemic area (meaning there are proven cases of these diseases each year) our hospital suggests the following general schedule. Please be sure to follow the recommended schedule for your particular dog.

		Age			
Date	Option 1	Option 2	Vaccinations		
	6 weeks	-----	Distemper, Adenovirus, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus, Coronavirus		
	9 weeks	8 weeks	Distemper, Adenovirus, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus, Coronavirus Bordetella		
	12 weeks	12 weeks	Distemper, Adenovirus, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus, Coronavirus Bordetella		
	16 weeks	16 weeks	Distemper, Adenovirus, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus, Coronavirus Rabies		
	20 weeks	20 weeks	Distemper, Adenovirus, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus, Coronavirus (for Rottweilers/Dobermans because of increased risk)		
	1 year & 4 months (then annually)	1 year & 4 months (then annually)	Distemper, Adenovirus, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus, Coronavirus Leptospirosis – 4 strain Bordetella Rabies		

If you would like to know more about a specific disease, do not hesitate to ask your veterinarian. Keep in mind, on occasion, we may recommend the vaccines be given separately, especially in very small dogs. Also, there are other vaccines available, Lyme and Canine Influenza, which we can administer once we determine your dog's exposure risk.

Mild/Acceptable side effects of vaccines are:

Mild fever	Decrease in activity	Decreased appetite
Sneezing (w/ intranasal vaccines)		Discomfort/mild swelling at injection site

These generally last about 8-24 hours.

More severe side effects* are:

Swelling of face/legs	Vomiting/Diarrhea	Whole body itching
Difficulty breathing		Collapse

*Contact our office, or emergency clinic, immediately if any of these are seen.

AS YOUR DOG AGES.....

Just like in people, your dog's health will change as it ages, no matter how many preventative measures you take during its life. Because animals age faster than people, major health changes can occur quickly. The annual examinations (usually required more often) may indicate a need for further testing over and above that done on previous visits. Depending on the symptoms, we will discuss the options and recommended course of diagnostics and/or treatment. Senior dogs are at an increased risk for developing arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer just to name a few. If you see any of the following, an exam is recommended.

Change in water/food consumption
 Change in weight
 Bad breath/Drooling
 Panting/Coughing
 Lumps/Bumps on or under the skin

Change in urination/bowel movements
 Change in normal behavior/sleeping habits
 Increased stiffness/trouble walking
 Vomiting

Comparative Age in Human Years

Dog's Age	Adult Size in Pounds (lbs)			
	0-20 lbs	21-50 lbs	51-90 lbs	Over 90 lbs
6 months	9 years	10 years	13 years	15 years
1 year	15 years	16 years	20 years	23 years
2 years	24 years	25 years	28 years	30 years
5 years	36 years	37 years	40 years	42 years
6 years	40 years	42 years	45 years	49 years
7 years	44 years	47 years	50 years	56 years
8 years	48 years	51 years	55 years	64 years
9 years	52 years	56 years	61 years	71 years
10 years	56 years	60 years	66 years	78 years
11 years	60 years	65 years	72 years	86 years
12 years	64 years	69 years	77 years	93 years
13 years	68 years	74 years	82 years	101 years
14 years	72 years	78 years	88 years	108 years
15 years	76 years	83 years	93 years	115 years
20 years	96 years	105 years	120 years	-----
	Relative Age of Dog in Human Years			
	SENIOR			
	GERIATRIC			