

Your New Puppy

Your new puppy requires special care. Whether this is your first dog, an additional pet or if you haven't had a pet for a long time, there are special things that need to be done for ~~this new pup~~. Having a dog is not as simple as it used to be. This is partly because we now know more about the health and preventative care for dogs. And while preventative care requires some time and investment on your part, it is much more cost effective and less emotionally draining than treating a dog for a preventable disease.

Vaccinations

Your pup will need to be vaccinated against *distemper*, *parvovirus*, *Bordetella* and *rabies*. Our vaccines also contain protection against *hepatitis*, *Leptospirosis* and *Parainfluenza*. Vaccinations should begin at about 8 weeks of age and will be given in a series of 3 vaccinations each given about 3-4 weeks apart. The vaccines are started at this age because although he gets some immunity from his mother, this begins to decline at about 7-8 weeks of age. The immunity he receives from his mother against *rabies* is longer-lived, declining when he is about 4-5 months of age. This is why the *rabies* vaccine is not given until the pup is 4 months old.

These vaccines need to be boosted at one year of age so that your dog's immunity does not decline to the point where he would become susceptible to these diseases.

Heartworm Disease Prevention

Mosquitoes transmit heartworm disease. There are several stages the parasite goes through before it becomes the actual heartworm, which lives in the dog's heart and lungs. The heartworm preventatives kill the early life stages, but can cause severe reactions if the dog has adult heartworms and larvae residing in the heart and lungs. Your puppy can be started on the preventative at 8-12 weeks of age and if kept on the preventative without interruption, tested at the time of the pup's yearly boosters. If treatment is interrupted testing should be done at 6-7 months of age. Heartworm prevention is a lifelong treatment in your dog.

Fecal Exams and Wormings

We recommend checking for internal parasites in your puppy by examining a fecal sample. We will examine the sample under a microscope looking for eggs. You will occasionally see worms in the stool only if the worm burden is extremely large. If your pup has worms present, we will prescribe the exact treatment for the exact parasite. No wormer kills all types of parasites, so there is no "one wormer gets all" medication.

Strategic worming is a practice recommended by the American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists (AAVP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We recommend deworming at least three times at the same time the puppy's vaccinations are given. Then, again at the same time of annual vaccinations.

Feeding

Feed your puppy a good quality *puppy* food. At about 1 year of age, he can be switched to a good quality maintenance diet. Avoid giving him people food or table scraps, these foods can cause severe tummy upset in some dogs. They are usually too high in fat and too low in nutrition to do your pup any good. If you train him early to eat *his* food and not yours, he will live a long and healthy life.