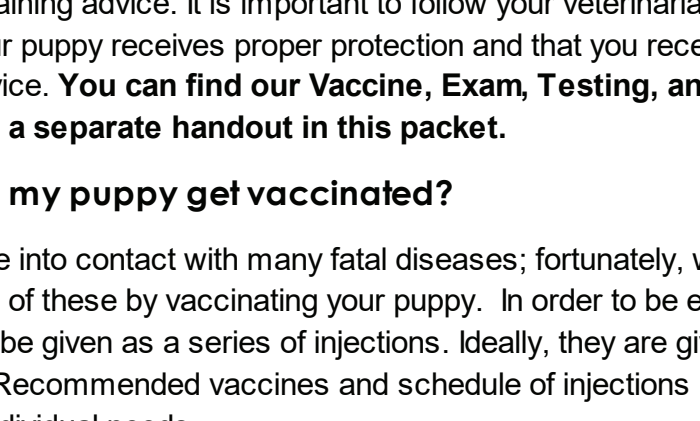


Puppy Wellness Pack for New Puppy Parents

Caring People, Caring For Your Pets



Congratulations on the addition of your new family member! Puppies can be an extremely rewarding experience; however, they also come with responsibility that lasts the entire lifetime of your puppy. We hope this booklet will give you the information needed to make educated decisions regarding the care of your puppy. **We've also provided you separate handouts with detailed fact sheets for some subjects that are briefly mentioned in this booklet.**



When should I bring my puppy in to meet their veterinarian?

Most puppies will begin going to the veterinarian at eight weeks of age to begin immunizations, heartworm prevention, intestinal parasite treatments and to receive behavior and training advice. It is important to follow your veterinarian's exam schedule to ensure that your puppy receives proper protection and that you receive timely and appropriate advice. **You can find our Vaccine, Exam, Testing, and Surgery Guidelines on a separate handout in this packet.**

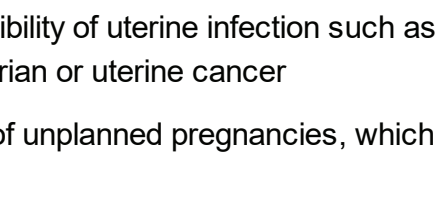
When should my puppy get vaccinated?

Dogs can come into contact with many fatal diseases; fortunately, we have the ability to prevent several of these by vaccinating your puppy. In order to be effective, these vaccines must be given as a series of injections. Ideally, they are given at 8, 12 and 16 weeks of age. Recommended vaccines and schedule of injections may vary depending on your pet's individual needs.

Why does my puppy need more than one vaccine?

When the puppy nurses its mother, it receives a temporary form of immunity through her milk. This contains high levels of maternal antibodies that can provide passive protection against diseases that the mother has previously been exposed to, either naturally or by vaccination. As long as the mother's antibodies are present, vaccinations are unable to stimulate the puppy's immune system because the mother's antibodies neutralize the vaccine.

Many factors determine when the puppy will be able to respond to vaccinations. These include the level of immunity in the mother at the time of birth, how many antibodies the nursing puppy has absorbed and the general health of the puppy. Since we do not know when each puppy will lose its short term maternal immunity, we give a series of vaccinations. The goal is for at least two of these to fall into the time frame when the puppy has lost immunity from its mother but has not yet been exposed to disease. A single vaccination, even if effective, is not likely to stimulate long term immunity, which is critically important.



Importance of Neuter (Castration)

Neutering your pet is one of the best decisions you can make for his or her health. It's also a part of responsible pet ownership.

Why should I have my female dog spayed?

Spaying is the surgical removal of the uterus and the ovaries, and eliminates the dog's estrus (heat) cycle.

Heat cycles last for approximately 3 weeks with 1 week of vaginal bleeding every 6 months for the entire life of your pet. This will stop once she is spayed.

3 Main Benefits to Spay Female Dogs:

- Reduce the chance of breast cancer occurring late in life by 95%, this benefit decreases each time your pet goes through a heat cycle
- Eliminates the possibility of uterine infection such as pyometra, which can be fatal, as well as ovarian or uterine cancer
- Eliminates the risk of unplanned pregnancies, which also helps prevent overpopulation

Why should I have my male dog castrated?

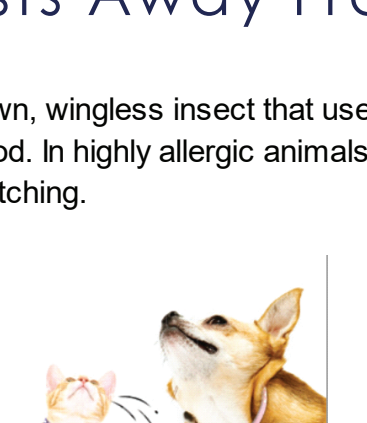
Castration (neutering) is the surgical removal both testicles.

Unaltered males have a tendency to roam the neighborhood looking for females in heat. This exposes them to fights with other animals, getting struck by cars or other mishaps. Neutering your male pet will decrease their urge to roam from home.

3 Main Benefits of Neutering Male Dogs:

- Eliminates the possibility of testicular cancer
- Helps prevent the enlargement of the prostate gland, an age-related problem that can cause urination to be painful or difficult. Painful prostate infections are also highly likely.
- Reduces the chance of roaming and other unwanted behaviors such as urine-marking.

Please remember, in the U.S., there are an estimated 6-9 million homeless animals entering animal shelters every year, barely half of them get adopted. Spaying/Neutering your pet will help decrease these numbers and the less fortunate pets will have a place to call home.



Protecting Your Puppy

How can I provide permanent identification for my puppy?

The microchip is the most widely recommended pet identification device. It is a tiny chip which is implanted with a needle much like administering an injection. This chip provides a LIFETIME OF PROTECTION for your pet. Local animal shelters and vet hospitals are checking stray animals for this device every day, it could save your pet's life.

The ideal time to implant one of these microchips is while your pet is anesthetized for surgery.

How do I protect my puppy against Canine Heartworm Disease?

Heartworms are important parasites, especially in warm and humid climates where mosquitoes are present. The live in the dog's bloodstream and cause major damage to the heart and lungs and often result in death. They are transmitted by the bite of infected mosquitos.

To prevent your puppy from being infected with Heartworm Disease, we recommend using a monthly heartworm preventative tablet called Sentinel year round – for life. This preventative also protects your puppy against certain intestinal parasites and external parasites such as fleas. **For more detailed information on Heartworm Disease, please see the separate handout in this packet.**

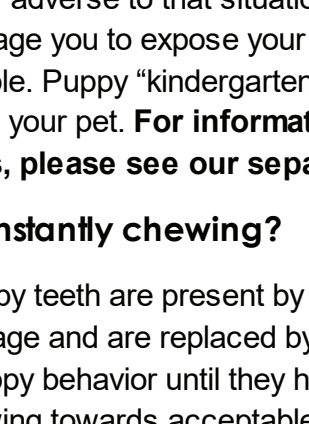
How do I protect my puppy against Intestinal Parasites?

Intestinal parasite infestations can seriously threaten a puppy's health. Humans are also susceptible to some of the intestinal parasites and we can protect ourselves by protecting our pets. Thankfully, today's safe and effective deworming, heartworm preventative and flea and tick control products can keep them protected.

Most puppies are infected with worms transmitted by their mothers. For this reason, we recommend at least two fecal tests done during the first four months of life to check for intestinal parasites and initiate appropriate deworming treatment. **For more detailed information on Intestinal Parasites, please see the separate handout in this packet.**

Keep Pests Away From Your Puppy

The flea is a small, brown, wingless insect that uses specialized mouth parts to pierce the skin and siphon blood. In highly allergic animals, the bite of a single flea can cause severe itching and scratching.



If your pet is allergic, several changes may result in your pet including:

- A small hive may develop at the site of the flea bite, which either heals or develops into a tiny red bump that eventually crusts over
- May scratch/chew at himself until the area is hairless, raw and weeping serum, known as "hot spots." These can cause hair loss, redness, scaling and bacterial infection. The affected areas include the lower back, base of tail, the abdomen, flanks and neck. It may become quite generalized in severe cases, leading to total body involvement.

Contrary to popular belief, the flea spends the majority of its life in the environment, not on your pet, so it may be difficult to find. In fact, your pet can continue scratching even if you never find a flea on them. Check your pet carefully for fleas or for signs of flea excrement (also called flea dirt), which looks similar to ground pepper. When moistened, flea dirt turns a reddish brown because it contains blood.

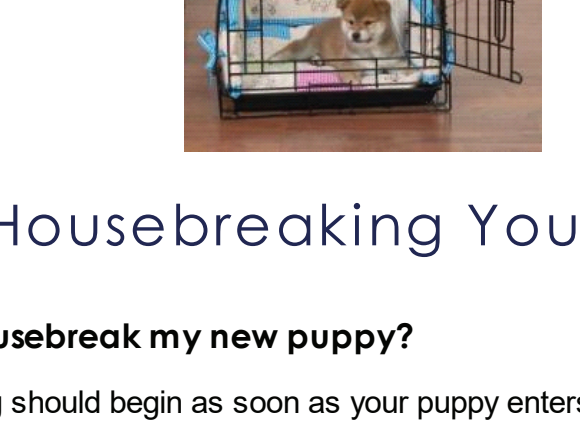
It is important to remember that if one pet in the household has fleas, you should assume each pet in the household is affected. A single flea found on your pet means that there are probably hundreds of fleas, larva, pupa, and eggs in your house.

The flea's lifecycle has four stages: egg, larva, pupa and adult. The adult flea use your dog as a place to take its blood meals and breed. Fleas either lay eggs directly on the dog where they may drop off or deposit eggs into the immediate surrounding (your house, yard). Because the female may lay several hundred eggs during the course of its life, the number of fleas present intensifies the problem. The eggs hatch into larva that live in carpeting, cracks or corners of the dog's living area. To complete the life cycle, larvae develop into pupae that hatch into adults. The adult flea emerges from the pupa and then hops onto the host. This development occurs more quickly in warm, humid environments. Pupae can lie dormant for months, but under temperate conditions fleas complete their life cycle in about three weeks. The inside of your home may provide a warm environment to allow fleas to thrive all year round.

Treating animals and their living areas thoroughly at the same time is vital; otherwise some fleas will survive and re-infect your pet. You may even need to treat your yard or kennel with an insecticide if the infestation is severe enough.

The vacuum cleaner can be a real aid in removing flea eggs and immature forms. Give special attention to cracks and corners, and also any upholstered furniture your pet spends time on. When finished vacuuming, empty the canister and clean with hot water. Otherwise, the vacuum will serve as an incubator, releasing more fleas into the environment as they hatch.

Next time you stop in or call, ask us about our options for Flea Prevention!



Puppy Behavior

What is normal play behavior of a healthy puppy?

It is very important that you provide stimulating play for your puppy, especially during the first week in your home. Running, chasing and fetching are important play behaviors in puppies and are necessary for proper muscular development. Chewing and biting are more common ways for puppies to investigate new things. Your puppy will be less likely to use family members or their possessions for these activities if you provide adequate puppy-safe toys. The best toys are lightweight, pliable and durable, without attachments such as eyes that can be bitten off and swallowed. Any toy small enough to be swallowed should be avoided.

How do I ensure my puppy is well socialized?

When puppies are anywhere between 4 and 12 weeks of age, they are very impressionable to social influences. If the experiences are unpleasant, your puppy may become apprehensive or adverse to that situation in the future. During this period of socialization, we encourage you to expose your puppy to as many types of social events and influences as possible. Puppy "kindergarten" and puppy training classes are ideal opportunities to socialize your pet. **For information on West Suburban Animal Hospital's Puppy Class, please see our separate handout in this packet.**

Why is my puppy constantly chewing?

Almost all puppy's 28 baby teeth are present by about 4 weeks of age. They begin to fall out 3 1/2 -4 months of age and are replaced by 42 adult teeth by 6-7 months of age. Chewing is a normal puppy behavior until they have all adult teeth. It is important that you direct your puppy's chewing towards acceptable objects. Provide your puppy with safe items such as nylon chewing bones and other chew toys so the puppy does not pick other objects in your home. Avoid hard rubber or plastic toys as they can break teeth. It is also important to avoid bones since they can fragment and become obstructed in the intestinal tract.

How should I discipline my puppy?

Disciplining your puppy may be necessary if its behavior threatens people, other animals, or property. It is important to note that harsh physical punishment should be avoided at all costs. Hand clapping and using shaker cans, horns, or rolled up newspaper can be intimidating enough to inhibit most undesirable behaviors.

Feeding Your Growing Puppy

What should I feed my puppy?

Diet is extremely important during the growing months of a dog's life. We recommend a *name-brand food* made by a national dog food company (not generic or local) and a diet specifically made for *puppies*. This should be fed until your puppy is about 12 to 18 months of age, depending on their breed and size. Feeding a dry, canned, or semi-moist form of puppy food is acceptable as long as the label states that the food is intended for growth and/or development and is "complete and balanced". These foods will also have a label saying they are approved by AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials).

Table or people foods are not usually recommended for pets. Because they are usually very tasty, dogs will often begin to refuse their well-balanced dog food in favor of table food.

Although we enjoy a variety of things to eat in our diet, most dogs actually 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 eating the same food day after day, week after week.

How often should I feed my puppy?

There are several "right" ways to feed puppies. The most popular method is called, "meal feeding." This means that the puppy is fed at specific times of the day. A measured amount of food should be offered four times per day 12 week old puppies. Any food left behind after 30 minutes should be taken up. They eventually will only be fed twice daily.

Free Choice feeding," means that food is available at all times. This works well with dry foods and for some dogs. However, other dogs tend to overeat and become overweight or obese. If there is weight gain after the optimal size is reached at around 12 to 18 months of age, this method of feeding should be discontinued.

Housebreaking Your Puppy

How do I housebreak my new puppy?

Housebreaking should begin as soon as your puppy enters the home. Some pups are housebroken faster than others. Your dog wants to please you, but as a puppy their memory is short, so your patience is important.

The simplest way to housebreak a puppy is to use "crate-training." This method uses a dog's natural instincts as a den animal. A wild dog's den is their home, a place to sleep, hide from danger and raise a family. The crate becomes your dog's den, a secure, quiet place to hang out at home.

The crate can limit access to the rest of the house while your pet learns the rules, such as not chewing on furniture. They are also a safe way to transport your dog in the car and it is good for them to be familiar with one.

Use the crate with caution! It isn't a magical solution and if it isn't used correctly your pet could come to fear it and refuse to enter it. Never use it as punishment. Never leave your pet in the crate for too long, if you do the pet isn't going to get enough exercise or human interaction and can become depressed or anxious. You may have to change your schedule, hire a pet sitter, or take your dog to doggie day care facility to reduce the amount of time it must spend in its crate.

Puppies under 6 months of age shouldn't stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time. They can't control their bladders and bowels for that long. The same goes for adult dogs that are being housetrained. Physically, they can hold it, but they do not know they are supposed to. Crate your pet only until you can trust them not to destroy the house. After that, it should be used as a place for them to go voluntarily.

If you have any questions concerning any subject related to your pet's health, please feel free to call our hospital at (734) 384-0812. Our entire professional staff would love to help.

