

PUPPY CARE SHEET

This leaflet is designed to give you information about routine care for your new puppy/dog for now and the future. Please don't hesitate to ask any of our staff for further information and help.

VACCINATIONS

Your puppy needs to be regularly vaccinated throughout his/her life in order to prevent the life-threatening diseases that are contagious: distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvovirus and parainfluenza. It is also important to know that certain diseases such as leptospirosis (also known as Weils' Disease) can be passed on to humans from animals and can be fatal both to animals and humans if left untreated.

Puppy vaccination courses begin when the puppy is aged from eight weeks onwards and consist of two injections that are given 3-5 weeks apart with the second vaccine given at 12 weeks or older. Your puppy will then be free to go out for walks 2 weeks after the 2nd injection.

It is necessary to give your dog annual booster vaccinations for the rest of his/her life in order to maintain immunity from the above diseases.

If your puppy needs to go to a boarding kennels in the future, he/she will need to be vaccinated against kennel cough. This is a highly contagious disease that is passed through the air to unprotected dogs. The risk of catching kennel cough is higher in environments where a lot of dogs are gathered and it causes uncomfortable symptoms such as a dry, hacking cough and a sore throat. However, it is usually not life-threatening but can cause persistent problems especially in the young and old. We would always recommend dogs being vaccinated against kennel cough when being kennelled, although it is not compulsory at all kennels.

If you are considering taking your puppy abroad in the future, it will be necessary to give him/her a rabies vaccination also as part of the Pet Passport Scheme.

DIET

There are many types of diet available and it can be difficult knowing which is best. Supermarket foods and tinned foods contain a lot of salt to encourage the dog to eat it. However this is not good for the heart and kidneys. We recommend a good quality dry food that is low in salt and provides excellent and complete nutrition for your growing puppy. The foods we recommend have a 'closed formula' which means that the ingredient list must remain the same and cannot be changed to include cheaper ingredients just because

they become available. The 4 brands that are 'super premium' and meet our standards are:

Hills Vet Essentials/ Science Plan
Purina Proplan
Royal Canin
Eukanuba

Once the dog is 12 months old, you should change to an adult formulation of the same brand and at 7 years, swap to the senior version.

WORMS

All animals develop infestations of worms. The most common type found in puppies is roundworm. If left untreated, your puppy will become emaciated and weak with a pot belly. Adults tend to suffer from tapeworm, lungworm and roundworm, all of which can be picked up from the environment.

It is important to worm puppies from 2 weeks of age and to ensure that the mother was also wormed regularly throughout the pregnancy. The mother passes worm infestations on to her puppies whilst carrying them in her womb or through her milk.

There are a number of products available to treat roundworms in puppies.

- Milbemax is our wormer of choice and treats round, tape and lungworm (which are a particular problem in this area and can cause life-threatening disease). This should be given **monthly until 6 months of age and then at least every 3 months for life. If you have children, your dog eats slugs/ snails or debris off the floor when out walking, you should continue to worm monthly for life.** Many of the products sold in supermarkets and pet shops are not effective at killing all worms and none of them contain an ingredient to kill lungworm. For this reason, we do not recommend the use of any pet shop or supermarket products for dogs living in this area of the country.

We will advise you of the most appropriate treatment to suit your puppy's needs. The most important point to remember is that regular worm treatment is essential to maintain good health for your puppy throughout his/her life.

FLEAS

Fleas are the other most common parasite found on puppies. They cause discomfort to the animal when they bite and they carry tapeworm. Newly hatched fleas also do not tend to be fussy and will bite humans as well!

A common misconception amongst pet owners is that flea infestations are clearly visible or that the puppy only has one or two fleas because they have

only seen a couple at a time! The reality is that 5% of the flea infestation is on your puppy and that 95% of the problem is actually in the environment where the various stages of the flea are developing! It is only when they have matured that they will jump on your pet to feed. If the environment remains untreated, an infestation can continue for 3 years even without an animal present! Fleas can also be quite sneaky, hiding deep in the fur. Often the only evidence of a flea infestation seen is the 'flea dirt' they leave behind.

It is important not only to treat your puppy if fleas are present but to also prevent fleas from infesting in the first place by treating your puppy regularly with flea treatments available from your vet. A lot of products sold over the counter at pet outlets and supermarkets do not provide a persistent, satisfactory level of protection.

There are lots of products available but in general, we recommend the use of Simparica tablets.

- Simparica is a new-generation flea and tick treatment which is given as a tablet once a month. It starts killing fleas within hours of being given and also kills all species of ticks. This is especially important since European ticks carrying nasty diseases have been brought into the UK by dogs travelling abroad. Fleas are killed too quickly to be able to lay eggs in the house.

Initially after a flea infestation, any flea product needs to be used in conjunction with a household insecticide spray (Vetkem Acclaim) to treat the developing stages of the flea already in your home. This is also available from the practice and one can will treat a 3-4 bedroom house. Once this is done, regular use of Simparica will provide protection for your house and animal.

We will advise you of the most appropriate treatment to suit your dog's individual needs. Please remember that these products are only available from your vet and are prescription medicines. This means that your dog needs to be seen annually in order for us to re-prescribe them to you. This will be done at annual vaccination or free of charge with a nurse if we have not seen your pet previously.

NEUTERING

If you are not planning to breed from your dog it is advisable to have him/her neutered. This procedure can be carried out from 6 months of age in both sexes. The operation involves your dog being admitted for the day. Contrary to popular belief, neutering your dog will not change their personality! However, due to a reduction in the hormone testosterone after castration, it is common that male dogs will calm down. This is usually seen as an advantage.

- Benefits of castration include decreased tendency to wander and be hypersexual, and protection against anal cancer, testicular cancer, prostate enlargement and some types of hernia.
- Benefits of early spaying (before the first season) include complete protection against breast cancer (risks can be as high as 40% in unneutered females), prevention of uterine infection (also very common and life-threatening in older dogs) and obviously, prevention of unwanted puppies.

Dogs can also be susceptible to gaining weight after being neutered due to a reduction in calories required. Reducing daily food intake will prevent weight gain in your dog.

Please ask if you have any further questions regarding the neutering of your dog.

MICROCHIPPING AND IDENTIFICATION

Microchipping is now a legal requirement by 8 weeks of age. The microchip itself is implanted with an injection and contains a barcode. This barcode is your dog's individual identity number. When the microchip is implanted, the owner is asked to fill in a form and these details are sent to a database alongside your dog's identity number. Once the microchip is in place, a scanning device can be passed over the dog to read the barcode on the chip.

When ownership of the dog changes (such as buying a puppy) or when you move house or change a phone number, it is your responsibility to update your details with the database. You can contact them using the information on your microchip certificate. Failure to have your dog chipped or keep the details updated can now result in a fine or prosecution.

Veterinary surgeries are not the only places that keep scanners. Police stations, rescue centres and dog wardens all have access to scanners and this is what makes microchips so effective. When a dog goes missing and is then found, the barcode on the microchip is reported to a national database and is matched to your personal details. This makes reuniting you with your dog a much easier task!

It is also a legal requirement for your dog to wear a tag with your name, address and postcode when in a public place. Since no-one can anticipate when a dog is going to escape from the house or be let out by accident, we strongly recommend that your dog wears the tag at all times. We have recent experience of dogs lost when builders and even burglars have allowed them to escape.

INSURANCE

We strongly recommend pet insurance. It enables us to provide the best level of care for your dog. Although pet insurance does not cover preventative healthcare treatments such as vaccinations and neutering, it does cover illnesses or accidents that may affect your dog throughout his/her life. We can offer very advanced surgery and medicine either here or at a specialist practice, should it be required. Chemotherapy, cataract removal, pinning of fractures, spinal surgery are all possible, but can be extremely expensive, as can be lifetime conditions such as skin allergy, diabetes and Cushing's disease. Having a good insurance policy means that you do not have to consider cost when deciding on the best treatment options for a pet.

There are now many insurance policies on offer. However, please remember that the cheapest policy does not usually mean the best policy. Therefore it is wise to 'shop around' but to look at policies carefully to make sure you get the most satisfactory level of cover. We recommend Pet Plan policies as they offer the best cover- a minimum of £4000 per year for every year of your pet's life. Other policies usually only cover each condition for a year (12 month cover) or sometimes up to a limited amount of money (maximum benefit cover), which is rarely enough for the lifetime of the animal.

We offer a 4 week insurance policy for animals less than 12 months, free of charge with Pet Plan. There is no money or credit card details required and if you do not choose to continue the policy, you can just say no. However, the policy gives you up to £4000 instant cover for illness or injury (excluding standard excess) and allows Pet Plan to give you a quote for insurance premiums for your animal. If you keep the policy going, anything for which you have made a claim will remain covered.

Please ask us for more advice. Leaflets are also available in the waiting room.

FINALLY.....

We at The Oaks hope that you have found this leaflet useful. We are here to help you give your puppy the best start in life and maintain health and wellbeing throughout their life. So, if you have any more questions or queries, do not hesitate to ask one of our members of staff who will be happy to help.