
Routine Health Matters

Feeding

Many puppies come with a diet sheet which should be closely followed for the first few days. Thereafter then, if not already so, the diet should be changed to a reputable commercial puppy food. The big manufacturers invest greatly in the production of balanced diets for all breeds. Most vets have a preference for the diets made by Hills, a large American manufacturer, front-runners in pet nutrition, and producers of the largest range of "prescription" diets.

Vaccinations

All puppies should be vaccinated ; usually once at eight weeks of age and again at twelve weeks. The first vaccine "primes" the immune system, the second stimulates a substantial immune response, creating sufficient antibodies to last until a booster is needed annually. We vaccinate against:

Distemper: a viral diarrhoea, skin and brain disease

Hepatitis: a viral disease of the liver

Leptospirosis: bacterial disease of liver blood and kidneys often associated with waterways

Adenovirus: a viral respiratory disease

Parainfluenza: one of the Kennel Cough organisms

Parvovirus: a very severe viral gastroenteritis.



Fortunately some of these diseases are now uncommon due to our vaccination strategy.

Worms

Almost all puppies are born with the roundworm *Toxocara Canis*. They are acquired as larvae from their mothers before birth and continue to develop until the puppy's immune system is fully functional at six to twelve months of age. It is usual to deworm once a fortnight from six weeks to twelve weeks old then monthly until a year. *Toxocara* is of public health importance due to its ability to infect humans. It should be noted that the eggs shed by dogs in their faeces need to mature before becoming infective emphasising the importance of picking up after your dog.

Neutering

It is usual to neuter females at six months of age. The reasons are primarily those of health, and particularly to avoid the condition known as Endometritis or Pyometra. Male dogs are not routinely neutered at six months, but may be neutered in response to aggression, hypersexuality or vagrancy.

Exercise

Large breeds of dogs are prone to joint disease. It has been shown that overexercise whilst a puppy is a contributing factor

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Puppy Problems

Vomiting and Diarrhoea

Many puppies vomit occasionally, especially in the car. Persistent vomiting, however must be checked out - puppies have a habit of swallowing all sorts of objects!

Any change of diet from leaving their mothers, added to the stress of separation, can cause diarrhoea Puppies' habits of licking and chewing anything can also result in upset tummies, the new puppy has little immunity against infection.

Skins

Young puppies commonly acquire fleas and mites, yet because of their young age need great care in their treatment. Ear mites will cause irritation and the production of copious dark wax. Slightly older puppies may suffer bacterial skin disease, often seen as itchy spots under the tummy.

Teeth

Puppies teethe between three and six months, replacing their sharp temporary teeth with stronger adult ones. Some smaller dogs may fail to lose all their puppy teeth, particularly the canines, and are said to have "double Dentition". This usually requires extractions to be performed.

Don't forget it is the old and the young that need most veterinary attention. With ever increasingly sophisticated medicine available and ever rising costs - GET INSURED! The injection of a tiny electronic chip into your puppy's scruff provides permanent identification should he ever get lost. Ask us about "identichips".

Training

Behaviour

It is generally recommended to allow puppies to meet other dogs (of known good health) as early as possible. It is believed that this early socialisation is essential to the development of a well adjusted dog.

We would strongly recommend you take your puppy to puppy school. In the presence of a professional trainer both you and your pet will be shown the benefits of dependability. Many potential behavioural problems can be averted by their early recognition and appropriate instruction.

House Training

The secret of all training is action and reaction. If every time your puppy messes in the house he gets a negative response, and every time he messes outside or on paper he gets rewarded he will soon learn. To help you witness every mess made, some sort of small pen is useful for confinement to your puppy's bed at night or whilst you are out. Each mess made without the appropriate response lengthens the time taken to achieve training.

Reward is best achieved by verbal encouragement and the offering of a treat - particularly if fed dry food when this can be part of the daily ration. Punishment may range from a scolding to being shut away from human contact for a period. Both reward and punishment must coincide with the act to be effective. Any punishment after the event is worse than useless.

Going Out

Once fully vaccinated your puppy can start to go out to public places, initially on the lead. It is a good idea to have an electronic identification chip injected into the scruff in case of getting lost. **Ask us about "identichip"**.

Some Useful Numbers

Dog Training

Peter Burns	020 89543619
Alan Menzies	020 78332271 07946 792230
John France	07771 751 721
Patricia White	020 896956702 020 7243 0359
Colette Kase Pet Sense	020 8527 0349

Dog Walkers

Val	020 7722 8591 07960 751 853
Tanya Palmer (& Dog Sitting)	020 8922 5443 07973 534038
Sara Haydon (& Dog Sitting)	07971 587822

Karen	020 82018106 07930434 865
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Dog Sitters

Animal Aunts	01428 712611
Pals 4 Pets	020 8201 1606

Dog Groomers

Primrose Hill Pets	020 74832023
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You and Your Puppy



Hamilton Pet Clinic
110 Boundary Road
St. John's Wood NW8 020 7722 3381

Park Pet Clinic
116 Regents Park Road
Finchley N3 020 8343 1433

Primrose Hill Pet Clinic
138 Gloucester Avenue
NW1 020 7586 8806

<http://www.hamiltonvets.co.uk>
