

Welcome to

Millis Animal Hospital!



At Millis Animal Hospital...

Our hospital team values our clients and the pets they share with us. We are committed to providing compassionate care through client education and exceptional service. Our experienced team understands the special role pets play in families and is here to strengthen and enrich that relationship. We provide the highest quality medical and surgical services in a clean and modern environment, with a focus on education and the well-being of our patients.

YOUR PUPPY'S FIRST VISIT

The way your puppy perceives his or her first visit to the veterinary hospital will greatly influence the way the puppy will respond here for the rest of its life. Puppies are sensitive to emotional cues from their owners. How you react to new situations tells the puppy how to react as well.

Therefore, you can interpret for the puppy the way it should respond in new or traumatic situations such as this first veterinary visit! To do this, behave in the way you want the puppy to behave when he or she is an adult dog.

For example, if you want a dog that tolerates veterinary visits, even enjoys them, act cheerful and upbeat before, during, and especially immediately after the treatment. If the pup yips or yowls during a procedure, talk to it in a jolly tone of voice until it wags its tail.

DO NOT coddle, coo, make sympathetic noises or soothingly pet the pup, or you will teach him to be worried and concerned, instead of cheerful and matter-of-fact.

This tactic also works in other new situations, such as trips to the park for socializing with children and adults, puppy kindergarten classes or when other dogs or strangers approach.

A dog that is relaxed and confident in any situation is an ideal pet, and an ideal veterinary patient as well. We hope this handout will start you off on the right paw!



Puppy Vaccination Schedule

Puppies get a series of vaccines: 8 weeks, 12 weeks, and 16 weeks. For your convenience, we have prepared the following list to keep track of needed examinations and vaccinations:

8 weeks

- DA2PP #1
- +/- Kennel Cough Annual
- +/- Lyme initial

12 weeks

- DA2PP #2
- +/- Kennel Cough Annual
- +/- Lyme Initial or Annual
- +/- Leptospirosis initial

16 weeks

- DA2PP #3
- Rabies 1 year
- +/- Kennel Cough Annual
- +/- Lyme Initial or Annual
- +/- Leptospirosis Initial or Annual
- +/- CIV initial



Spaying/Neutering: Recommended at 6 months of age. Intact male dogs are more likely to roam and fight. Females can come into heat after 6 months, with a heat cycle lasting at least 21 days. During the heat cycle, some blood spotting occurs, and females attract males. Heat cycles increase the risk of mammary cancer (breast cancer), so if spayed before the first cycle, the incidence is rare.

Microchip: A microscopic identification chip that is inserted under the skin. This can be done as an office visit or while the puppy is under anesthesia for the spay/neuter procedure. If your pet is lost, a shelter or hospital can scan for a microchip to identify the owner and the address to where the pet is registered.



Canine vaccinations

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Rabies:

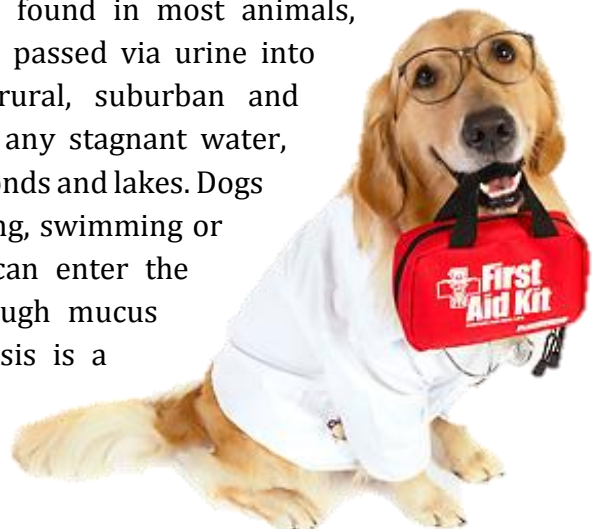
Rabies virus represents a serious risk to people and their pets. Rabies is an acute viral infection that can affect all warm-blooded animals including dogs and cats. The disease is almost always caused by a bite of an infected animal that has the rabies virus in its saliva. Rabies virus is always fatal once clinical signs appear. Transmission of Rabies happens when the virus travels along the nerves to the brain. It can take a matter of days, weeks, or months for your pet to show signs of the Rabies virus. Infected animals often show anxiety, aggression, restlessness and erratic behavior. They may develop weakness, poor coordination or tremors. Dogs that have never been vaccinated and are exposed may need to be euthanized or placed in strict isolation for 6 months. Rabies vaccine is mandatory by state law. All dogs should receive their first rabies vaccination between the ages of twelve to sixteen weeks. Vaccination of adult dogs occurs either annually or every 3 years depending on state law.

Canine Distemper:

Canine Distemper is a highly contagious viral disease of domestic dogs and other animals such as ferrets, skunks, and raccoons. It is incurable, and it is often fatal. Distemper affects the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and central nervous system. The disease is spread by direct contact between susceptible dogs and dogs showing symptoms. Coughing and sneezing can spread the virus short distances. Signs of the disease are diarrhea, vomiting, a thick yellow discharge from the eyes and nose, cough and in severe cases seizures and neurological signs. Dogs that recover from the disease are often left with nervous muscular twitches and recurrent seizures. There are highly effective vaccines to prevent this deadly disease. These are combination vaccines which also provide protection against parvovirus, adenovirus, and parainfluenza. These are given to puppies along with other routine vaccines. After the initial puppy vaccine boosters, additional distemper vaccine boosters should be given 1 year following the initial series and then every 3 years.

Leptospirosis:

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease that can be found in most animals, including livestock and wildlife. The bacteria are passed via urine into water sources. Leptospirosis is prevalent in rural, suburban and urbanized areas. The bacteria can be present in any stagnant water, moist soil and recreational water sources such as ponds and lakes. Dogs can become infected with Leptospirosis by drinking, swimming or walking through contaminated water. Bacteria can enter the bloodstream through a cut in the skin or through mucus membranes such as eyes and noses. Leptospirosis is a contagious disease that can be transmitted from dog to dog. It can be zoonotic which means humans can also contract the bacteria from their dog. It is rarely fatal to humans but can



cause severe illness. Signs and symptoms of the bacterial infection are fever, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, weakness, depression and lethargy. In the most severe cases the disease can lead to kidney failure or liver failure and may be fatal. The most complete Leptospirosis protection is with a vaccine containing the four most common strains of Leptospira bacteria. The vaccine is routinely administered to dogs in combination with other common canine vaccines. Your veterinarian will initially recommend a two-shot series and then the vaccine will be repeated annually.

Lyme:

Lyme disease is spread through a tick bite. Usually an infective tick must be attached 48 hours for transmission to occur. The most common symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, swelling of the joints, pain, loss of appetite, constant tiredness and arthritis. If untreated, Lyme disease can lead to more serious complications such a neurologic disease and kidney disease. Vaccination can help prevent your dog from being infected with Lyme disease. This is most effective when first given at an early age. It is given initially as a two-shot series and then annually thereafter. A flea and tick preventative should be used along with the vaccine to help fight against the disease.

Canine Influenza:

Canine Influenza (Dog flu) is a highly contagious virus that can occur year round. It is easily spread from infected dogs to other dogs by direct contact, nasal secretions, contaminated objects, and by people moving between infected and uninfected dogs. The symptoms resemble those of kennel cough; dogs infected with CIV develop a persistent cough and may develop a thick nasal discharge and fever. Other signs can include lethargy, eye discharge and reduced appetite. Canine influenza infections can cause mild to severe illness in dogs. Some infected dogs may not show any signs of illness but can still be contagious and able to infect other dogs. Most dogs recover within 2-3 weeks. However, some dogs may develop secondary bacterial infections which may lead to more severe illness and pneumonia. Almost all dogs that are exposed to CIV will become infected. Vaccines are available for both strains of canine influenza (H3N8 and H3N2). The CIV vaccination is a “lifestyle” vaccination, recommended for dogs at risk of exposure due to their increased exposure to other dogs. The vaccine is given initially as a two-shot series and then annually thereafter.



Neutering in dogs

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Why should I have my dog neutered?

Neutering should be considered if you are keeping any male dog as a pet. Remember that Guide Dogs for the Blind, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, and Dogs for the Disabled are routinely neutered.

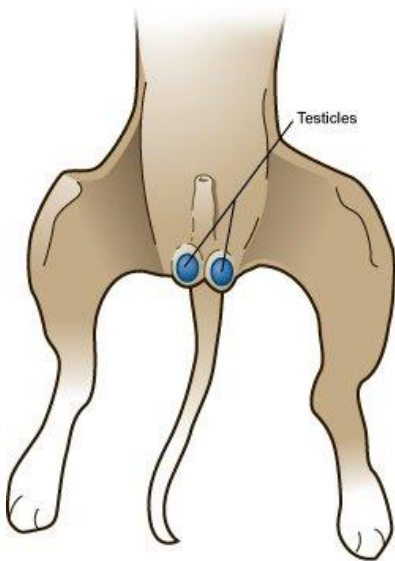
What are the advantages of neutering my male dog?

- Reduces the risk of prostate cancer and prostatitis
- Reduces the risk of hormone-related disease such as perianal adenoma
- Eliminates the risk of testicular cancer
- Removal of sexual urge which results in less roaming behaviors
- Reduction of certain types of aggression

Is neutering performed for any other reason?

The operation may be performed to treat testicular tumors and some prostate gland conditions. It is also used to control hormonal (testosterone) dependent diseases such as anal adenomas.

Neutering may also be used in an attempt to treat certain forms of aggression.



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What are the disadvantages?

Most of the perceived disadvantages are false. The most quoted of these are that the dog will become fat, characterless, and useless as a guard. Obesity is probably the most commonly quoted disadvantages of neutering. Obesity is the result of overfeeding. By regulating your dog's diet and caloric intake, you can prevent obesity in neutered or intact males.

Neutering doesn't cause a change in personality, guarding instincts, intelligence, playfulness and affection.

When should the operation be performed?

Research reveals that neutering a pet at an early age does not cause any increased risk. Most veterinarians recommend neutering between four and six months of age.

Is there any alternative to surgery?

Not at the present time, although there are several exciting advances being made in this area.

Are there any dangers associated with the operation?

Neutering is considered a major operation and requires general anesthesia. With today's modern anesthetics and monitoring equipment, the risk of complication is very low. It has been said that your pet has a greater chance of being injured in a car wreck than having an anesthetic or surgical complication.

What happens when I leave my dog for this procedure?

Your pet will be examined, and pre-anesthetic blood tests are usually performed. If everything is acceptable, your pet will then be anesthetized. Most pets will have an intravenous catheter placed to administer the anesthesia and to provide fluid therapy during the surgery. After your pet is anesthetized, a breathing tube will be placed in his trachea (windpipe). This will allow us to deliver oxygen and the gas anesthetic. The surgery consists of making a small incision in front of the scrotum and removing the testicles. Many veterinarians use absorbable sutures so that you do not have to return to have them removed.

Are there any post-operative precautions I should take?

Rest and restriction of activity are the primary post-operative care you should provide. Most dogs can resume normal activity five to ten days after surgery. Until then, leash walks, no running or climbing stairs and lots of rest are the rule.

This client information sheet is based on material written by: Ernest Ward, DVM
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Spaying in dogs

Why should I have my dog spayed?

We recommend spaying all female pets. The benefits to your pet's health and to help reduce the pet overpopulation crisis make this decision easier. It should be remembered that owners of Guide Dogs for the Blind, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and Dogs for the Disabled routinely have their dogs spayed and this does not affect their ability to perform their duties in any manner whatsoever.

What are the advantages of spaying in the female dog?

- Prevention of "heat" or estrus
- When in "heat", the female experiences an urge to escape to find a mate. This unwanted and dangerous behavior is eliminated.
- Elimination of the hormone fluctuations that cause false pregnancy following the "heat cycle"
- Prevention of uterine infection known as *pyometra*
- Prevention breast cancer. Dogs spayed before their first "heat" have less than 0.5% chance of developing breast cancer.
- Elimination of the risk of uterine and ovarian cancer

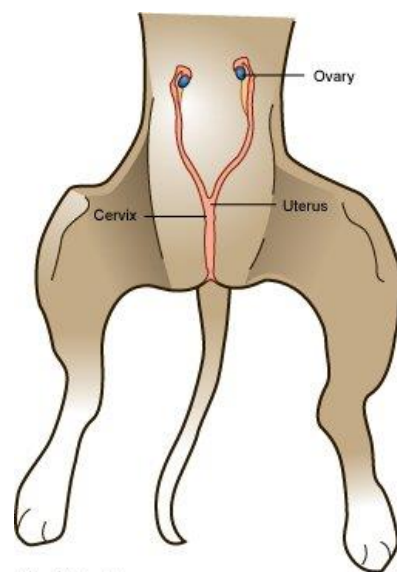
Is spaying performed for any other reason?

The operation may be performed for several medical conditions. These include:

- Treatment of intractable false of phantom pregnancy
- Treatment of irregular or abnormal cycles due to ovarian cysts
- Treatment of uterine infection (pyometra) or cancer
- Dystocia (difficult birthing) or post caesarean-section surgery
- An aid to correction of certain behavioral abnormalities

What are the disadvantages?

Most of the perceived disadvantages are false. The most quoted of these are that the dog will become fat, lazy, and useless as a guard dog. Obesity is probably the most commonly quoted disadvantage of spaying. Obesity is the result of overfeeding and lack of physical activity. The role of female hormones in preventing obesity is poorly understood. By regulating your dog's diet and calorie intake, you can prevent obesity in neutered or intact females. Spaying doesn't cause a change in personality, guarding instincts, intelligence, playfulness or affection.



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When should the operation be performed?

Most veterinarians recommend spaying between four and six months for age. Spaying at an earlier age, which is common practice at animal shelters, does not appear to be detrimental.

Is there any alternative to surgery?

Not at the present time, although there are several promising advances being made in this area, including the development of novel vaccines.

Are there any dangers associated with the operation?

Spaying is considered a major operation and requires general anesthesia. With any anesthetic, the risk of serious complications, including death, is always possible. With modern anesthetics and monitoring equipment, the risk of having complication is very low. It has been said that your pet has a greater chance of being injured in a car wreck than having an anesthetic or surgical complication.

What happens when I leave my dog for this procedure?

Your pet will be examined by a veterinarian and pre-anesthetic blood tests will usually be performed. If everything is acceptable, your pet will be anesthetized. Most pets will have an intravenous catheter placed to administer the anesthetic and to provide fluid therapy during the surgery. After your pet is anesthetized, a breathing tube will be placed in her trachea or windpipe. This will allow the delivery of oxygen and gas anesthetic directly into the lungs. The surgery consists of making an incision just below the umbilicus and removing both the ovaries and the uterus. Many veterinarians use absorbable sutures so that you do not have to return to have them removed.



Are there any post-operative precautions I should take?

Rest and restriction of activity are the primary post-operative care you should provide. Most dogs can resume normal activity five to ten days after surgery. Until then, leash walks, lots of rest, and no running or climbing stairs are the rule.

I have heard that letting my dog have one litter will calm her down.

There is no scientific evidence that having puppies has any calming psychological effect. This myth has no basis in fact.



Canine Heartworm disease

Heartworm disease is a serious, deadly disease wherever mosquitos are present. Each year thousands of dogs become permanently debilitated or die from lung, heart, or circulatory problems caused by heartworms. Your dog can have heartworms for several months before symptoms are obvious. By then the disease may be difficult or impossible to treat successfully.

Prevention...

A single blood test is usually required before starting your pet on effective, easy-to-use preventive medication. Regular blood testing throughout your pet's life will ensure he or she is not infected despite preventative medication. Make sure your pet is tested and protected. Don't gamble with your pet's life!

Transmission...

The disease is spread from one dog to another by mosquitos. Mosquitos feeding on an infected dog pick up the larval stage of the parasite along with their blood meal. The larvae develop inside the mosquito and then later are passed to another dog with the bug's next meal. Cats can also get heartworm disease however it is less common. Interestingly enough, heartworms aren't good for mosquitos either. More than 6 or 7 heartworm larvae will kill the mosquito before it can transmit to the next dog or cat.

Symptoms...

An infected dog becomes less active and tires easily. Coughing, weight loss, chronic fatigue, and fainting may appear in advanced disease stages. Adult heartworms are found in the heart, lungs and major blood vessels. Secondary liver and kidney disease may result. Heartworms can grow from 5 to 14 inches long. In advanced cases, a hundred or more worms have been found in a single heart.



Treatment...

Successful treatment depends on early detection and close veterinary supervision. If permanent damage has occurred, prognosis is very poor. It is easy and inexpensive to test for and prevent heartworm disease. The blood test requires only a brief office visit. The preventative medications usually cost from \$6 to \$15 per month, depending on the medication chosen and the size of your dog.

FACT... All dogs, regardless of age, sex, size or breed, are at risk wherever mosquitos are present. It takes only ONE infected mosquito to infect your dog.

FACT... Heartworm disease can kill your dog.

FACT... Effective, easy-to-use preventive medication can save your dog's life! Not only are heartworm medications reasonably priced, many of them now prevent roundworms, whipworms, and hookworms as well. These parasites live in the intestines. 95% of puppies are born with one or another of these parasites, and they are common in adult dogs as well, especially those that spend a lot of time outdoors. Roundworms and hookworms can also cause problems for people, especially children who may be out barefoot in the yard, or toddlers who may put soiled fingers in their mouths. There are 10,000 cases of animal parasites causing disease in children every year in the United States.

Why risk problems for your pet or for your family?

Along with the yearly heartworm test, it is a good idea to have a stool sample checked for intestinal parasites at the same time. If the stool sample is positive for intestinal parasites, your pet will need deworming to kill adult intestinal worms. Most heartworm preventatives will help prevent your dog from becoming reinvested with the intestinal parasites. Eggs of intestinal parasites survive on grass for long periods of time, so without the heartworm medication, it is very common for dogs to pick up intestinal parasites repeatedly from their yard.

Heartworm preventatives come in both chewable beef flavored chewable form or in non-chewable that are given one a month. There is also a heartworm-specific injectable that is effective for 6 months. Which kind you choose depends on what is easier for you to remember to give.

Knowing how long to medicate is critical for successful prevention!

Preventative medication should be started as soon as your pet has been blood tested. Regardless of where you live, the medication should be continued year-round because of its effect on intestinal parasites, as well as heartworms. Even though it may seem cold, mosquitos will come out to feed on warm, sunny days.

Untreated animals spread disease. Please don't let yours be one!

Unfortunately, heartworm disease is here to stay. There will always be pets not on a heartworm prevent program. Nationwide, this percentage is anywhere from 25-50% of dogs. Heartworm is also carried and spread by other wild canids - wolves, foxes, and coyotes. These unprotected animals serve as a reservoir, spreading the disease to other pets. Please don't let your dog become a victim of this deadly disease. Call for an appointment to get your pet started on a parasite prevention program today.

thank you!



Heartworm Prevention for Dogs

A simple blood test is required before starting your pet on effective, easy to use, preventative medication. Annual testing is required even in year-round use of the medication. Make sure your pet is tested and protected.

1. Heartgard Plus

A beef-flavored soft chewable tablet given to your dog every 30 days to prevent heartworm disease and intestinal worms such as roundworm and hookworm. This can be given starting at 6 weeks of age.

2. Tri-Heart Plus

A chewable tablet given every 30 days to prevent heartworm disease and also used to prevent and treat hookworms and roundworms. This can be given starting at 6 weeks of age.

3. Revolution

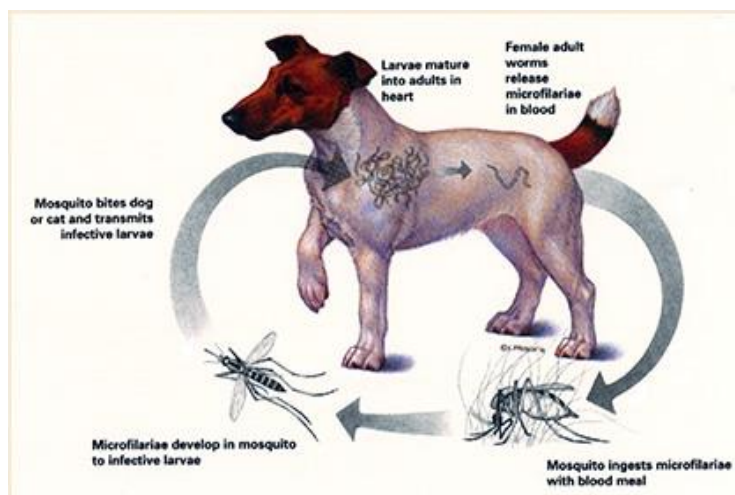
Heartworm preventative combined with a flea medication that kills adult fleas and prevents flea eggs from hatching for one month and helps to prevent and control flea and dog tick infestations. Revolution is also used to treat ear mites as well as hookworms and roundworms. It is a topical product that is applied every 30 days. Revolution is safe to use on puppies 6 weeks of age.

4. Sentinel

A flavored chewable given every 30 days to your dog. Sentinel is also used to prevent roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and fleas. This can be given starting at 4 weeks, and your dog must be at least 2 pounds.

5. ProHeart

A professionally administered injection that protects dogs of all sizes and breeds for 6 months against heartworm. It also provides treatment for hookworms. ProHeart can be given starting 6 months of age.



Flea and Tick Prevention for Dogs

Flea and tick prevention comes in two forms: a topical form that is applied to the skin or an oral form that is fed to your pets. Like with heartworm prevention, it is recommended that your pet be protected year-round as fleas and ticks may become active during periods of mild weather.

Oral Methods

1. Nexgard

A beef-flavored soft chewable tablet given to your dog every 30 days to prevent flea and tick infestations. Nexgard can be given starting at 8 weeks of age to dogs that are 4 pounds and over.

2. Simparica

A chewable tablet that can be given to dogs over 6 months of age and over 2.8 pounds. Simparica lasts for 30 days.

3. Bravecto

A flavored chewable twist given every 3 months to your dog against flea and tick infestations. Bravecto can be given starting at 6 months of age to dogs that weight more than 4.4lbs.

4. Capstar

A fast-acting chewable tablet that begins to kill adult fleas in as little as 30 minutes, but only lasts for 24 hours. It can be given to dogs starting at 4 weeks of age and 2 pounds of body weight.

Topical Methods

1. Revolution

Heartworm preventative combined with a flea medication that kills adult fleas and prevents flea eggs from hatching for one month and helps to prevent and control flea and dog tick infestations. Revolution is also used to treat ear mites as well as hookworms and roundworms. It is a topical product that is applied every 30 days. Revolution is safe to use on puppies 6 weeks of age.

2. Vectra 3D®

A topical flea and tick medication that is safe to use on dogs as early as 8 weeks of age. Vectra 3D not only begins to kill fleas, ticks, and mosquitos on contact, but also repels them. Vectra 3D remains effective for 30 days and continues to work even after bathing or swimming. Never apply Vectra 3D to cats and be sure to separate cats and dogs for 24 hours after application.

How to avoid and treat behavior problems



Dogs and people have lived together for thousands of years, but that doesn't mean we always understand each other. Living with pets can sometimes be as frustrating and confusing as living with people! The following program will help you make the most of your relationship with your dog.

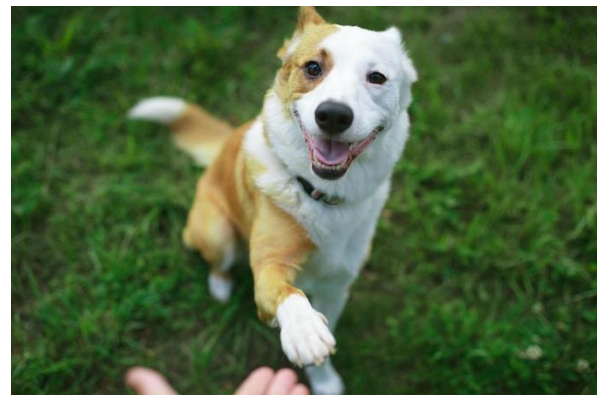
Dogs are pack animals – they are social and like to interact with people and other dogs. You can use this sociality to your benefit; your dog will do what you want if it earns them praise or petting AND he considers you a leader in his pack.

This is a key point. All dog packs have a leader dog that makes decisions for the rest of the group. Other dogs are subordinate to the leader. Your dog should never think he is the leader in your house. You are the one who should decide when to eat, when to go out, when to go to the veterinarian for a checkup, or when to get a nail trim. As with children, dogs that have rules to follow and respect for their parents are well behaved. Many behavior problems arise as a direct result of lack of leadership on the part of their owners.

Dogs behave as though they prefer knowing that you are in charge, and often seem much happier when they understand that you have taken charge. Following the advice below may be harder on you than on your dog! It's lonely at the top, so give your dog a break and take over. He'll love you just as much.

Also keep in mind that dogs are very sensitive to body language and visual cues. Behaviors that you don't think much about may have meaning to your dog, in a way that may not be what you intended to say! For instance, two people are talking face-to-face is confrontational in a dog's body language. Standing side by side is not. You can learn to take advantage of nonverbal cues.

The following suggestions are an effective and humane way to let your dog know that he or she is safe, well loved and NOT the leader of the pack. Keep in mind that love is not related to social status, and that most dogs live in relaxed harmony when the social hierarchy is clear, no matter where they stand in it.



These are not practices that you must follow every minute of the day. Who wants a dog if you can't ever pet it just for fun? But it's not good to cater to your dog. Your dog's behavior should drive your decisions on how to treat him or her. If your dog has always been a perfect gentleman, you may not need to change a thing you're doing. But if your dog gives you problems, follow all these "social distance" suggestions.

If Spot just bit you, totally ignore him for two days to notify him there's been a change in the household. Don't speak to him or look at him, even while feeding or letting out. Then follow this program to the letter for at least a month before giving him any slack. If Ginger ignored a command at the park today, adopt these tips for a few days. Applying "social distance" when your dog is misbehaving and rewarding with praise and attention only when he is good is the key to good behavior. Reward the behavior you want to continue to see!



Here's how:

1. Petting

- Pet only for obedience (come, sit, down, stay, shake, etc.). Reward obeying commands with attention
- Keep petting brief (don't indulge your dog).
- If your dog demands petting, either: look away (fold arms, turn head up and away from the dog) or ask for a "sit" or "down" and then pet when they obey.
- If you want to pet your dog, call him to you, don't go to him.

2. Practice "Look Aways"

Don't let your dog demand play, food, or petting. If your dog gets pushy, simply cross your arms, turn your head upward and to the side away from your dog – This is an example of the body language mentioned earlier. If your dog counters by moving to your other side, turn your head the other way.

This is good practice to do any time your dog approaches you if they are very dominant and pushy. It is especially important if your dog has been aggressive toward you.

3. Teach Lie Down, and Stay

A good, solid down and stay is one of the best learning tools. It teaches your dog to be patient and to wait for your command. You can practice while watching television. Start with one-second stays for the first few days and work up to longer and longer ones. After three weeks, most dogs can handle a half hour down stay during a quiet time of day.

Correct breaks with a body block (act like a traffic cop), or a downward leash correction – not by simply repeating "down" and "stay" over and over again. If your dog gets up 25 times, then correct him or her 25 times with the same actions and tone of voice. Do NOT include anger in your correction. Be very matter of fact.



4. Wait at the door

Alpha (pack leader) dogs have priority access to limited resources, which means they get to push out the door first to get something they want. This is why a lot of dog fights occur at doorways over who gets to go out first.

Control the space in front of the dog and you control the dog – use body blocks again to herd him away from the door. Or head toward a door or doorway and then suddenly turn and go the other way if your dog tries to get ahead of you. This puts you back in the lead. Praise and pet your dog when he starts to turn around after you and keep moving until he reaches you. Practice this as you move around the house until your dog is content to stay behind you and follow your lead.

5. Four on the Floor

Dogs interpret an increase in height as an increase in status. Dogs that sleep up on the bed are especially impressed with themselves. Keep dominant dogs on the floor, not up on chairs, couches or beds. If you want to cuddle, get down on the floor, ask for obedience and then pet when your dog complies.

6. Teach "Heel"

Leaders are in the lead. Teach your dog to stay at your side while you initiate pace and direction.

This basic 6-part obedience program should make treating any other behavioral problems easier, if there are any. A dog that looks to you for direction can be taught almost anything. They will be happy to work for what he wants, and it keeps his mind occupied constructively. Integrate this training into your day by asking your pet to perform some action whenever it wants to go outside, get dinner, play ball, etc. Letting you be in charge will soon become second nature to your dog.

Much progress has been made in the past few years in understanding how dogs think and learn. We are able to deal with problem behaviors much more effectively when we understand a dog's mind processes signals and information. Most problem behaviors are NORMAL dog behaviors that are simply unacceptable to the humans they live with. Redirecting and retraining can make our canine companions better and happier pets.

Problem behaviors which we can help you deal with via proper training include:

- Barking
- Aggression
- House soiling, submissive urination
- Separation anxiety
- Digging
- Running away, boundary training
- Fearfulness



Here are a few more tips to make training more effective:

Do your homework! There are reams of books available to assist in training. Be cautious, as some are better than others. Outdated or cruel methodologies are still widely available in print. Read more than one and pick the methods that seem to make the most sense to you.

Consult with us, a good dog trainer, or a behavioral specialist. What works for one dog may not work for another. The experience and training of those educated in the field of canine behavior and training is invaluable.

Consider using a Gentle Leader halter. This is a different style of training collar, which take advantage of the dog's natural response to pressure over the muzzle and behind the ears (points dogs use to signal each other about status and control), rather than a choke collar. Gentle Leader halters are more humane and more effective and can aid in solving several behavior problems.

Using food occasionally as a reward for learning a new command is fine but don't give a food reward every time. Giving food intermittently means your dog will perform commands for you even when you don't have food, and also prevents weight gain.

Keep all training positive and consistent. There is no need to scold or punish your dog if you tap your dog's inborn need to follow a leader and respond eagerly.

Please call us any time you have questions or problems with your dog's behavior. We have information on most problems and can refer you to a trainer or specialist if we can't help you ourselves.



Puppy Learning and Socialization

The first months are the most important months in your new puppy's life. During this time, your puppy is growing at a phenomenal rate – both mentally and physically. The experiences they have now will shape their outlook and personality for the rest of their life.

The period between 8 and 12 weeks of age is called the socialization period. Your puppy learns during this time how to relate to people and other animals. Good experiences with people and other dogs will help foster a lifetime of positive interactions and minimize the risks of problems with fighting, biting, and other problem behaviors.



Take your puppy with you to busy places and introduce them to lots of strangers, children, and other pets (make sure you know that any other dogs your puppy interacts with are current on their vaccinations). Give them lots of praise and petting when they are friendly and interested. Frequent short trips in the car will accustom your pup to traveling. You can also bring them in to our hospital on a weekly basis for treats and attention and your pup will be happier to visit here for the rest of their life!

You don't need to worry that all this socialization will make your dog a poor watchdog. Most older puppies learn on their own to bark at the doorbell or a knock from a stranger. What you don't want is a dog that bites the furnace repairman or your children's friends.

Positive social interaction leads to positive relations with people later in life. So, spend the extra time now while he's young and reap a lifetime of reward in good behavior!

The other important lesson to teach your puppy at this age is his place in the "pack". Dogs are pack animals - they socialize in small groups and have a definite hierarchy that tells each dog in his status as a pack member. A dominant dog is in charge.

Your puppy will come to see your household members, be they people or other dogs or both, as the members of his pack. The number one rule to remember is that your dog should NEVER be the dominant member of his pack! YOU are the one in charge. You have the right to tell your dog to sit or stay or come. You are the one who decides when it's time to eat, to get the nails trimmed or to go to the veterinarian for a shot. Your puppy must learn now where its place is in your household.

More animals are put to sleep because of behavior problems than any other reason. A primary factor in behavior problems is dominance behavior.



So, what should you do to avoid these problems?

Whether you own your dog as a pet, to show, to hunt, or for protection, your dog requires formal training. An unruly pet is not a pleasure to live with. Proper training teaches your dog their position and duties as a member on the household, and also serves as an outlet for their energy. It teaches your pet to accept frustration and attain patience, and it creates a love and bond between animal and human that is impossible to duplicate any other way.

Obedience is simply a repetition of exercises for both dog and handler resulting in a unified team. The owner will learn to control the dog both by voice and on leash. Training can start when your puppy is very young, by teaching the basic commands of “sit” and “come”.

Sit is the simplest thing to teach



The difficult thing is to teach when to quit sitting! The goal is to teach that sit means sit until you give permission to get up. Say your pet’s name and then the command “sit” while tilting his chin up and at the same time pressing gently down on the rump. Do this whenever your puppy wants attention or play, and he will quickly learn the command. You should soon be able to forego pressing on the back end and substitute an over-the-head motion with one hand. Your pet should follow this movement and tip his head up while starting to sit down. This over-the-head motion is the hand signal

for sitting. The instant they sit, praise and pat the chest and throat.

After about 5 seconds of sit, say “OK” and step away to communicate that your pup can now move out of the sitting position. Crouch down and praise and then keep repeating the entire procedure until sitting is achieved on the first command. Do short sessions, gradually lengthening the time of sitting. If your dog starts to get up, repeat the word “sit” and use the hand motion over his head to restore the sitting position.

If your puppy starts to lie down by your side as the duration of the sit increases, do not correct them at first. It is the duration of the sitting you want to concentrate on at first. Once five minutes of sitting has been achieved, you may then stop the lying down behavior by using your hand motion to correct it the instant the puppy shows a sign of beginning to lie down. Be patient and consistent. Weeks are necessary to build up to a consistent sit.

To teach “come”

To teach “come” take your pup to an area that is fairly open and free of distractions. Go to the center of the area and watch the puppy closely. The instant he takes his eyes off you, call: “Spot, COME!” Immediately crouch down, turn sideways to the puppy, clap your hands and gleefully praise; “Good dog, Good dog, Good

dog.” Keep up the praise and clapping until Spot comes all the way to you. Pet sincerely but briefly. Then stand up and step away behind the puppy.

If his attention does not stay on you, instantly call “Spot, COME!” again and repeat the entire procedure. If Spot gets distracted, repeat the call and the praise-crouch procedure.

Continue until Spot will not leave you no matter where you walk. Then stop that teaching session. Do not hold another for at least two-and-a-half hours. Hold three daily sessions at the most for six weeks, varying the location and increasing the amount of noise and distractions as you progress.

Leash training



Leash training is another skill your puppy can start learning early on. Start by introducing him to the collar – most puppies will scratch at it at first. Give him a few days to adjust before moving on to the leash.

You probably wouldn’t like it if someone 20 times your size suddenly put a collar around your neck and started dragging you around. Be gentle and patient at first with leash walking. Let the puppy drag the leash around at first (don’t let him get tangled or choke himself). Once they’re not bothered by the leash, take them out in the yard and let them walk you for a few sessions – 10 minutes or so in length.



Work gradually up to leading the puppy, with lots of praise and encouragement when he follows you and gently tugging to get him moving. Don’t expect a great deal of success at first, but with time and patience most dogs soon come to love their outings with their owners. Beginning leash sessions should be short and fun. Don’t walk on sidewalks or pavement at first, as this is hard on a little puppy’s soft bones and joints. Do your first leash walking on the grass.

To teach your dog you are the leader



To teach your dog that you are the leader, make sure that as you go about your business at home, you are ahead of your dog. With dogs, the leader of the pack goes in front. To avoid teaching your dog that it is the leader of your household pack, you must be the one in front. Each time the opportunity comes up, such as when the doorbell rings, mealtimes, going outdoors, or when you leave the room, try this exercise: Whenever your dog starts to go ahead of you, abruptly back up, then turn around and walk in the opposite direction. The instant your dog starts to turn around toward you, say “Good dog” and keep moving until they reach you. Then praise again and pet for a few seconds. Then, start in the original direction and repeat the process the instant your dog starts to get ahead of you. Keep up this routine until the dog follows you or waits for your invitation to follow you.

The most difficult place to practice this exercise is at the front door, so start with the easier room-to-room times first. This exercise of turning away also works as you begin to train your pup on a leash. Turning abruptly and heading in a new direction corrects tugging forward and lagging behind and teaches your pet to follow your movements.

Handy tips for obedience

Use your pet's name only to give him a command. Use a nickname or code word when talking about, instead of directly to, your dog. This way he will not learn to ignore his name because it is used in casual conversation but will know he needs to respond whenever you say it.

Also, be sure that every member of your household is using the same commands and is consistent in their training. Everyone needs to agree on whether your puppy will be allowed on the furniture or beds, how many treats they'll get, what rooms they're allowed in, etc. If everyone is doing something different, he'll get confused and stressed by the mixed messages he's getting.

Training your family to train your pet

Starting your puppy on this simple training program at a young age will prepare him well for more advanced obedience work as he becomes older and his attention span lengthens. Six months is a good age to begin more formal training. If you have not trained dogs before, or even if you have, we recommend an obedience class for you and your dog, and also for the children in your household. Children need to understand the proper way to train their dog, and they often derive a great deal of pride and satisfaction from participating in their dog's training program.

However, children can be very cruel to small pets. Usually this is unintentional, sometimes it's not. Children must be taught how to be gentle and patient. Too many times we see children in our office hitting, dragging around or yelling at their puppy. This should not be acceptable behavior. Toddlers should never be left unsupervised with a pet. We see lots of injuries to pets that are dropped, stepped or fallen on, and also bite wounds to children inflicted by hurt or frightened puppies.

In summary:

Starting on an obedience program early is the quickest way toward a lifetime of pleasure with a happy, well-behaved pet. Integrate obedience into your dog's day, such that it becomes part of life to him. Simply ask the puppy or dog to perform some action whenever it wants something (to open the door, play ball, get dinner, etc.) Dogs will work to get something they want, which keeps you in charge and your dog interested and occupied constructively.

We want to encourage you to devote the necessary time and energy to this project while your puppy is still young, to ensure that you have many wonderful, problem-free years with your pet. A good trainer and a good training program will solve, or avoid altogether, the many behaviors that fill our nation's humane societies and shelters with unwanted pets. Your dog needs your help to learn to become a good canine citizen!



How to choose a pet food

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One of the most common questions we are asked is “What should I feed my pet?” Since the most important contribution you can make to your pet’s health and well being is his or her daily diet, it’s a question that deserves a good answer.

Think quality!

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With pet foods, as with most things, you get what you pay for. Cheap dog and cat foods use cheap ingredients, have poor quality control, are not well digested and may have excesses or deficiencies in vital nutrients, which can harm your pet. When analyzed in a laboratory, many generic and store brand foods do not actually contain the level of nutrition stated on the label. So, to get the nutrition you are paying for, choose a well-known name brand.

Ask us for a recommendation, and keep in mind that a fancy pet store brand is not necessarily better – it may just have a higher price and a fancier brochure. The pet food industry is highly competitive and cut throat. Government inspection of pet foods is not very good. Where the ingredients come from and how they are processed makes as much difference as what the ingredients are. Therefore, it’s better to trust us for advice on which companies are reputable and which products make the most sense for your pet.



Your pet will usually do best if you pick one complete food that is appropriate for his or her age and activity level and stick with it. For a puppy or kitten, this means a puppy or kitten food. Young, rapidly growing animals need more nutrition than adult food can provide. As a pet ages, gains weight, or develops health problems, nutritional needs may change.

Raw and homemade diets are popular now, but it is extremely difficult to meet a pet’s exact nutritional needs with home cooking, and raw diets can lead to Salmonella or E. coli poisoning in both pets and people. If you are interested in this option, please discuss it carefully with us. Also, be aware that “natural” is a meaningless term as far as pet food labeling regulations – the fact that it says the food is all natural on the bag doesn’t mean a thing as far as quality or nutrition, so be wary of hype and advertising.

Switching foods

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Animals do not really need variety in their diets if they are eating a good quality food. They are more prone to digestive upsets such as diarrhea on varied diets or table scraps. These problems usually appear in middle-aged pets, who may by then be accustomed to a healthier diet. Both dogs and cats are prone to becoming finicky eaters when fed a varied diet, causing problems for their owners later on, so do not switch foods every other week. If you do need to change from one product to another, do so gradually by mixing the two diets together for a few days. This will help prevent diarrhea from a too-sudden change in food.

The exception to this is with kittens. Cats choose their food based on “mouth feel” – the size and shape of the nugget and how it feels in their mouths when they chew or swallow it. They may get fixated on one size or shape of nugget and refuse to eat anything else; that’s why different pet food

manufacturers have their own special shape for their cat foods – so the cat gets used to that food and won't eat anything else. It's a good idea to switch foods several times during a kitten's first year of life, so that he or she gets accustomed to a variety of shapes and textures, and both canned and dry foods. That way if a special diet is needed later in life, the cat is less likely to refuse to eat the new food. It's very frustrating, for example, if a cat has had teeth extracted or a broken jaw but refuses to eat canned food. Likewise, what happens when a cat could live two years longer on a renal diet for kidney disease, but you can't get him to touch the food with a ten-foot pole?

Don't base your food choices on what you would like to eat, as many pet food manufacturers would like you to do. Dogs and cats are color blind, so they don't care whether their food is red or brown. They also don't care if it looks like beef stew or little pork chops! The fancier the food looks, the more you are paying for unnecessary artificial coloring, flavoring, and preservatives.

A dry food is best for your pet's teeth and gums, so the majority of your dog and cat's nutritional needs should be met with a chow-type food, unless specific health problems dictate otherwise. Canned foods are much more expensive to feed, as you are paying for a lot of water and extra packaging. Many people like to supplement their pet's diet with some canned food, and this is fine as long as you pick a good one, and don't overdo it. Canned foods are more likely to have excesses of protein which can cause or contribute to kidney disease as your pet ages, as well as being worse for your pet's teeth.

Recommendation

We usually recommend Royal Canin and Hill's Science Diet because of its consistent high quality. Premium foods contain superior nutrition over grocery store brands. They are extensively tested and meet rigid standards with no ingredient substitutions. The finest pet foods are formulated with controlled levels of key nutrients like fat, protein, phosphorus and magnesium to help reduce the risk of such problems as obesity and kidney disease.

That is why, even though grocery store brands provide adequate nutrition for many pets, we still recommend that you feed your pet the best you can buy. Not only are you getting better nutrition for your pet, but the daily cost to you is not any greater than if you were feeding a cheaper brand. Better foods may cost more per bag, but the superior nutrition and better digestibility of these foods means you feed less per day, you clean up less stool later, and your veterinary bills for nutritionally related diseases will be less as well.



What about treats?

Most dog owners, and an increasing number of cat owners, feed treats to their pets, as well as their regular food. Treats are rarely "complete and balanced", and are often loaded with salt, fat, artificial colorings and preservatives – all of which comprise "junk food" for animals. For example, pig ears contain an average of 800 calories, almost all of it from fat! A daily vitamin and some biscuits every day will not harm your pet unless it has a diet related disease, but it's best to give these items in moderation (no more than 10% of a pet's calorie intake should come from treats and snacks).

Stick with a crunchy biscuit type of treat for your dog, and your cat too, if she'll eat them. Some of them, such as Hill's® line of life stage biscuits or Greenies cat treats, are better than others.

Grocery store brands are often high in both fat and salt, even then they look like a healthy, dry biscuit. Read labels before you buy. Also, these treats help slow the build up of dental tartar, but they cannot remove tartar once it is present. Your pet will still need dental care even if you feed him this type of snack. Some dogs, like carrots, cherry tomatoes, green beans or other vegetables, and these are great low-calorie snacks. Fruit is OK in moderation too (many cats seem to like cantaloupe!)

Check rawhide treat labels and stay away from brands not made in the USA. Foreign manufacturers are allowed to use formalin as a preservative in these chews, which is harmful to pets. Grapes and raisins can cause kidney failure in dogs and should never be fed. Onions and garlic, even as flavorings, can cause anemia in cats. Chocolate is toxic to both dogs and cats, although dogs are more likely to eat it. Xylitol, an artificial sweetener found in gums, candies, baked goods, and some peanut butters, is extremely poisonous to cats and dogs. In short, be careful what you feed your pet and ask us if you aren't sure!

Supplements & calories

Do not give any vitamin or mineral supplements to your dog or cat without your veterinarian's advice. These types of supplements can easily cause harmful nutrient excesses, especially calcium and the fat-soluble vitamins – A, D, E and K.

Puppies and kittens need lots of calories to grow on, and plenty of fresh water. Until they are 4 months old, feed at least three meals a day, giving as much as the animal will consume in a ten to fifteen-minute feeding. Kitten food may be left out all the time, but it's much easier to housebreak a puppy if you feed them at set times every day. Puppies will then have regular, predictable potty times as well.

Senior pets often benefit from glucosamine supplementation, but this nutrient has always been present in pet foods. The fact that it says "contains glucosamine" on the label doesn't mean that the food has enough of it to have a beneficial or therapeutic effect. The same is true for many fancy pet store brands – how much yucca, aloe, cranberry extract, chicory or licorice is actually in the food and what amount, if any, has been shown to have a beneficial or toxic effect? Ask us for advice regarding all these ingredients.

Frequency

Once your young dog is 4 months old, you can cut back to two meals per day, and at 6 months you can reduce that to one meal per day if desired. We recommend delaying a little longer in large breeds of dogs, which may still be growing rapidly at 6 months of age.

Cats are nibblers and need at least 2 meals a day throughout their lives. Continue to feed a diet made for puppies or kittens until your dog or cat is 1 year old – again; go longer for large dogs, who won't mature until 15-18 months of age.

The most important daily contribution you will make to your pet's health is his or her diet. So, choose wisely, and feel free to consult with us about any nutritional questions you may have.



How to choose chew toys

Dogs love to chew! Giving your dog appropriate things to chew on is good for their teeth and gums, keeps them occupied, and decreases the tendency to chew on things they shouldn't. But did you know that some chews you can buy for your pet are actually harmful? Unlike toys for children, there are no rules or regulations regarding toys or treats for pets. Just because you can buy an item in a store does not mean it's good for your pet! So, what should you watch for and what should you avoid?

Toys with small parts that your dog could swallow or choke on are common. Avoid any toy for dogs or cats that has strings, googly eyes, feathers, or any other part that could come off.

Avoid items that are too hard. The most common items on which dogs break their teeth are cow hooves/chew hooves, bones and ice cubes. Biting down just right on an object that is too hard causes a flake of tooth to shear off. If the tooth breaks such that the tooth root is exposed, the tooth will be very painful and subsequently become infected. Because this usually happens to the large back premolar that is difficult to see, your dog may be in pain for many months before you even know there is a problem. Do not give your dog chew hooves or raw bones – period. It does not matter how big your dog is. If your dog like ice cubes, switch to shaved ice instead.



Another popular item is the rawhide chew. Rawhides come in all different sizes and shapes and sometimes even in flavors. Unfortunately, many of them are preserved in formalin or formaldehyde, which are carcinogens and can also be toxic to the liver.

Most of the rawhides that contain these toxic preservatives are from foreign countries. Their use is restricted in the U.S so rawhides made here in the states are usually safe. Look for "Made in the U.S.A." on the label. Keep searching until your find the ones made here and don't buy any made in other countries.

If your dog swallows large pieces of rawhide that could cause choking, switch to a smaller or larger form that prevents this. Do not give your dog rawhide if it gives him diarrhea or an upset stomach. The same guidelines also apply to pigs' ears, turkey feet and other preserved animal parts. Beef bones are only safe if they are boiled and softened. Raw meat or bones are not safe for dogs or people. Not only can uncooked bones break teeth, but they can also give your dog Salmonella, Toxoplasmosis, E. coli or other food poisoning. Chicken, turkey or other small bones can splinter and cause punctures in the mouth, esophagus or intestines so these also should never be fed to pets.

Pieces of rope with a knot at each end are popular now. These are a good choice, as they are soft and gentle on teeth and gums. Throw them away when they start to unravel. Soft plush toys usually don't last long and if the stuffing is swallowed it can cause an intestinal blockage. Take these away as soon as they start to come apart. In large dogs that may be in a matter of minutes!

Nylabones, Gumabones, and other nylon bones are also good, although some of these are hard enough to fracture teeth. Pick one on the softer side – if you can bend it, it's probably OK. If it's rigid, put it back on the shelf.



If your puppy is teething, try placing a soft nylon toy in the freezer for a few hours. A chilled one helps numb the gums. Squeaky toys are also good as long as the squeaker can't come loose and be swallowed and there are no parts that can be chewed off. Make sure any plastic or vinyl toys you choose are sturdy, heavyweight, and large enough that the pet can't choke on it. The same goes for balls. Balls should be larger than the dog can fit in the back of its mouth.

Kong toys are highly recommended. They are heavyweight, come in several sizes and have a hollow center in which you can stuff a little peanut butter, cream cheese, liver sausage or other food treat. Your dog will spend hours working at getting the food out with its tongue. A dog thus occupied is much less likely to be getting into trouble chewing on other things, especially if the Kong toy is brought out only as a special treat whenever you leave the house.

Old, well-washed and rinsed plastic milk or soda bottles make good chew toys. Frisbees are always popular and another good choice, especially for large dogs. Old socks and shoes are NOT good choices – your dog can't be expected to understand the difference between old shoes and your best shoes.

Whatever toys you choose, look for tough, long-lasting and durable choices. If your dog likes what you've chosen, they'll be sure to put it to the test!





Tooth Brushing 101

- Plaque and tartar buildup are at the root of many dental conditions in dogs and cats.
- By the time they're 2 years old, 90% of dogs and 70% of cats have plaque and tartar buildup.¹
- The keys to prevention are a professional dental cleaning with your veterinarian and daily home care.

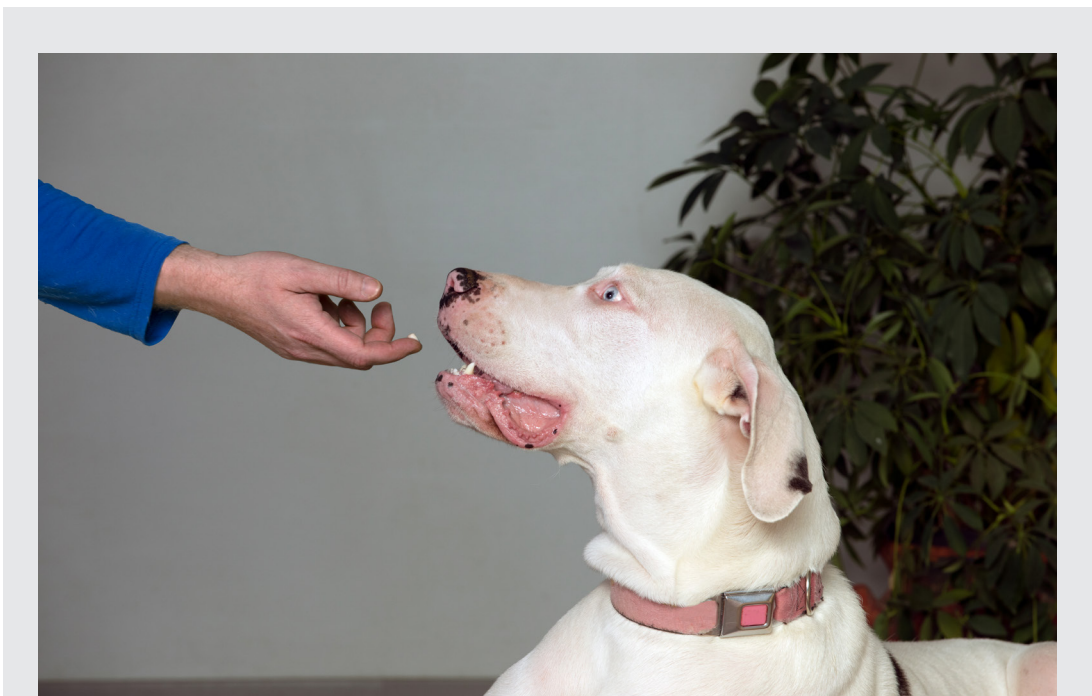
A VETERINARIAN SHARES PRO TIPS FOR BRUSHING UP

Dr. Heidi B. Lobprise (DVM/DAVDC) has the touch — and some easy-to-understand tips for brushing your pet's teeth at home.

On page 2, you'll also find links to videos of Dr. Lobprise demonstrating the techniques she describes in this handout.

PRO TIPS FOR BRUSHING YOUR DOG'S TEETH

- Move slowly to gauge what your dog will allow you to do.
- Let your dog taste the toothpaste by letting them lick it off your finger (or the toothbrush).
- Gently hold your dog's mouth closed with your nondominant hand. Using your dominant hand, rub some toothpaste on your dog's upper and lower teeth. This step lets your dog get used to a little handling around the mouth.
- After that, introduce the actual toothbrush into your dog's cheeks. Brush on both sides — mainly on the outsides.
- Tell them what a good dog they are!





PRO TIPS FOR BRUSHING YOUR CAT'S TEETH

- Try working from behind your cat's head.
- Start slowly with basic face rubs or ear scratches.
- Then, place a finger inside your cat's lips, between the lips and the teeth, gently pulling back. This step mimics the action of brushing.
- After that, you can use a toothbrush, or just a bit of toothpaste on your finger or on a gauze pad to brush against the teeth, using the other hand to scratch your cat's ears, chin or another favorite spot.
- Tell them what a fine cat they are!

WHAT SHOULD I USE TO BRUSH MY PET'S TEETH?

Talk with your veterinarian, and ask what they recommend for your pet's home care. For example, we designed our C.E.T.[®] Brand dental products to be easy for you to use at home.

Seeing Is Believing

Watch Dr. Lobprise demonstrate the techniques she describes.

Each video is less than two minutes long.

Dog demo: Buddy

<https://youtu.be/BaCiMUJgwpQ>

Cat demo: George

<https://youtu.be/yU5rJ-MoeA4>

Be sure to use a toothpaste that's formulated especially for dogs and cats. Many toothpastes made for humans aren't safe for pets to swallow! You can find pet-formulated toothpastes (in pet-friendly flavors) at dental.virbac.com.

Reference

1. Animal Wellness Center of Bonita. <https://awcbvet.com/periodontal-dental-disease/>. Accessed May 24, 2021.



Keep Your Pets Stress-Free During Fireworks Season

Any loud noise can cause a pet's anxiety to skyrocket, especially fireworks. It doesn't help that on July 4th, the festivities and fireworks can go on for hours and hours; usually the fireworks on New Year's Eve are of a shorter duration. Read the tips below on how to make your pet as comfortable as possible during this stressful time.

TIRE THEM OUT

A physically and mentally tired pet will be less likely to expend nervous energy. Start early in the day by taking your dog on a run, walk, or hike and spend the rest of the day playing with your dog (or cat). Hopefully, they'll be able to sleep or relax through the main event at the end of the night—fireworks displays.

WRAP THEM UP

Pets are often treated like our babies and benefit from some of the same calming techniques, such as being swaddled and hugged. Applying pressure with a blanket or anxiety vest causes a calming effect by releasing feel-good endorphins in the brain. However, it's important to get your pet accustomed to a pressure wrap. Put it on for a short amount of time each day about a week before the fireworks festivities, making sure it's not too tight that it restricts movement, breathing, or blood flow. Anxiety vests, such as ThunderShirt, can be used on cats or dogs.

NOISE-TRAIN THEM

The best way to keep your pet calm during loud noises is exposure and training. This long-term solution works by intentionally making loud noises, whether physically or electronically, and rewarding your pet for good behavior. Start by making noises at a low volume while keeping eye contact with your pet. If they remain calm, reward them with treats. Work up to louder and louder noises until they can take a night of fireworks without becoming stressed. This technique could take weeks to months, so start early — and remember there are two holidays that celebrate with fireworks!

KNOW YOUR PET'S SCHEDULE

If your pet is just naturally anxious, make sure to work around the fireworks schedule. Take your dog out before nightfall for their potty walk. Feed your dog or cat earlier in the day so they won't be too anxious to eat at night and miss a meal. Invite them to cuddle with you once the fireworks start and during their bedtime so they feel safe and protected.

DISTRACTION AND COMFORTING

While fireworks can be very loud, you can be louder — in a comforting way of course. Put the TV on, plug in a white-noise machine, or play some calming music just loud enough to drown out the booms. You can provide more distraction by playing with your pet or giving them a bone or Kong. If they prefer to lounge in the evening, help them feel safe by closing the curtains or putting a blanket over their crate so they can't see out.

CONSULT A PROFESSIONAL

If your pet can't shake the symptoms of noise anxiety, involve a veterinarian or board-certified veterinary behaviorist. They can provide anxiety medication or a longer-term, multi-step approach to helping your pet improve their anxiety and responses to that anxiety. Veterinary professionals are better than any online resource when it comes to the comfort and safety of your pet, no matter the timeline or method of calming that works best for you and your pet. **TVN**

Signs and Symptoms

- Hiding
- Chewing
- Panting
- Pacing
- Digging
- Drooling
- Urinating or Defecating
- Barking/Talking
- Tucked Tail
- Flat Ears
- Wide Eyes
- Shaking
- Restlessness
- Attempted escape



National Pet Fire Safety Day — Tips for Keeping Your Pets Safe

National Pet Fire Safety Day is July 15th. According to the National Fire Protection Association, 500,000 pets are affected by house fires each year, with 1,000 house fires started by pets themselves. Whether the fire is caused by an appliance, outlet, or your pet, the following tips may help prevent your pets from causing a fire and keep them safe during and after a fire.

PREVENT YOUR PET FROM STARTING A FIRE

Supervise Open Flames

Candles, fireplaces, and stovetops are among the most common sources of home fires. Pets may knock over a candle or pan on the stove, setting the stage for the flames to jump to a flammable agent such as curtains. If you leave home, make sure to extinguish all flames.

Fire-Proof Your Home

Cats often chew on loose wires, which poses not only a fire hazard to your pet but also an electrical one. Hide all wires and secure all lamps, which can be knocked over by a climbing cat or running dog. Attach covers on stove knobs so they can't be turned on accidentally by your dog or cat.

MAKE A FIRE-PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Install Smoke Detectors

It's also important to check smoke detectors regularly to ensure they're in good working order.

Create a Pet Alert Window Sticker

On a piece of static cling or sticker, write down the number of pets you have (as well as your phone number) and affix it to a window on the front of the house. In the event you're not home when a fire breaks out, this critical information helps firefighters save time when locating your pets. Make sure to keep it updated. On July 15th, free stickers are available at local volunteer firehouses and from the ASPCA.



Keep Pets Near Entrances

When you're not home, keep your pets confined to a space that is near an entry/exit point, which will greatly increase the chances of them being rescued. Keep their leashes near the door—if you're home when a fire breaks out, you will be able to lead them out safely. Rescuers may also be able to grab the leashes and use them to help keep your pets from running away once outside.

Create a Plan and Practice It

Creating a fire safety plan is critical in case a fire breaks out while you are home. Identify exit points for every room of the house. Make sure all members of the household have practiced safely evacuating your pet. Plan a rendezvous point in case of separation.

Microchip Your Pet

In case your panicked animal runs away from your home, rescuers, or you during the chaos of a fire, chances of having them returned to you are greatly increased if your pet is microchipped. **TVN**



Canine Anxiety and How to Deal With It

There are many causes that could be triggering anxiety in your dog. When your dog exhibits signs and symptoms of anxiety, try these solutions.

SYMPTOMS

No matter the type of anxiety your dog is experiencing, symptoms are almost universal across the board. Pacing, hiding, excessive grooming, barking, chewing/ destruction, shaking, panting, tucked tail, and urinating/defecating inside are the most common symptoms. Another indicator that these are stress-induced actions is the repetitiveness— such as incessant barking, pacing, and grooming— which will clue you in that something is wrong if your dog does not usually exhibit these behaviors to this degree. Less common symptoms include unusual aggression, eating their own feces, attempting to escape, and excessive energy.

SOLUTIONS

There is no one-size-fits-all solution or cure for anxiety, and remember that punishment and aversion techniques do not work in the long run. Try some of these remedies and see if one works for your dog. If not, talk to your vet about other options.

Desensitization

Desensitization works by slowly exposing your dog to the cause of his anxiety. This mainly works with controllable issues, such as crate, car, and separation anxiety. Begin by exposing your dog to the stimulus, but do it slowly and for short periods of time. Work on eye contact and simple obedience commands that keep them focused. Reward them for good behavior to reinforce staying calm in the presence of anxiety-inducing triggers. Work up to longer periods of exposure, always with positive reinforcement, and eventually

Types of Anxiety

- Separation
- Travel
- Confinement
- Noise
- Illness-induced
- Rescue/Former Shelter
- General





around the house and creating loud/unnecessary noises. Leaving them a shirt or blanket that smells like you whenever you leave could also greatly reduce their stress during alone time.

Calming Equipment

There are products available that are specifically for reducing pet anxiety. Thundershirts and anxiety vests create pressure, reproducing the effect of being hugged or swaddled, which causes the release of feel-good endorphins. Essential oils have become increasingly popular—just make sure you are using canine-safe, high-quality oils. Never give essential oils for them to ingest and use carrier oils when applying straight to the body; diffusers are the safest option. Another fairly new option are CBD products. There is limited scientific data but lots of positive anecdotes from pet owners.

Medication

Lastly, standard medication works to calm your dog. You should only give your dog vet-prescribed medications in order to be fully informed on the dosage and possible side-effects. Medication is also not a long-term solution and should be used sparingly.

Although there are many causes of anxiety for your pet, there are also many solutions. Dogs are social animals by nature, have enhanced hearing and senses, and aren't always able to communicate to us what exactly is the problem. Make sure to show them lots of love, train them adequately, and reduce anxiety-inducing stimuli when possible for a happy, healthy pet. **TVN**

Some Dog Breeds Prone to Anxiety

- German & Australian Shepherds
- Labrador Retriever
- Border Collie
- Cocker Spaniel
- Bichon Frise
- Jack Russell Terrier

your dog will learn that they won't be hurt by the cause of their anxiety.

Fixed Routine

Some dogs with general anxiety or former rescue dogs become stressed over seemingly nothing. However, it could be the unpredictability of your actions that is causing them stress. Create a calm environment and a fixed routine to help your dog relax and stay calm. Wake up at the same time to bring them outside to go to the bathroom, feed them at the same time every day, take them for a walk and create play times at fixed intervals, and find some toys that bring them happiness. Also refrain from rearranging their belongings



Puppy Socialization

- *Socialization* is the learning process through which puppies become accepting of interactions with various people and animals.
- *Localization* is the learning process through which puppies become familiarized and accustomed to various novel objects and environments.
- Proper socialization can help prevent or eliminate behavior problems and help create a better bond between the dog and the family.
- When introducing puppies to new people, animals, or environments, provide treats proactively so the puppy associates a positive experience with each new stimulus.
- It's important for puppies to be socialized around other people and other pets at an early age (before they are fully vaccinated), but consult your veterinarian about disease risks before exposing your puppy to novel environments and other dogs with an unknown vaccine history.
- Group puppy socialization classes are a good way to socialize your puppy while minimizing disease risks, and they provide access to a training expert for guidance.

WHAT IS PUPPY SOCIALIZATION?

Socialization is the learning process through which puppies become accepting of interactions with various people and animals. Socialization includes localization and allows puppies to become familiar with and accustomed to various novel objects and environments. Socialization is easiest during the sensitive socialization period, or the first 3 months of a puppy's life. From 3 to 4 months of age, the socialization period wanes and puppies become progressively more fearful, especially in the absence of early positive socialization experiences. By exposing puppies to different stimuli in a positive way (using food treats) before they are fearful, puppy parents can reduce the likelihood of behavior problems in the future and can help to build a stronger human–dog bond.



WHY IS PUPPY SOCIALIZATION IMPORTANT?

Unfortunately, behavior problems remain the top reason that pets are relinquished to animal shelters or worse. Likely, many behavior problems can be prevented with early and appropriate socialization. Proper socialization helps make puppies more tolerant of changes in their environment and helps prevent common behavior problems related to fear, anxiety, and/or aggression. Lack of early proper socialization experiences can be just as detrimental as negative experiences for your puppy. Early socialization optimizes the chances for a dog to be friendly and well adjusted in a multitude of environments later in life.

WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER ATTENDING GROUP PUPPY PRESCHOOL SOCIALIZATION CLASSES?

Group puppy preschool socialization

The benefits of attending group puppy preschool socialization classes include:

- Empathy and understanding regarding normal behaviors
- Expert guidance and answers to questions or concerns regarding undesirable behaviors
- Introduction to positive reinforcement training
- Knowledge of how to implement problem-solving techniques
- Prevention of behavior problems related to fear, anxiety, and aggression
- A controlled and safe environment for puppy play, socialization, and exploration during sensitive periods of development

classes can be a safe and controlled place for socialization to other puppies and people, and they allow for the exploration of novel objects and environments. Reputable puppy classes will maintain strict health, vaccination, and disease risk management protocols, thereby minimizing health risks. Attending a group puppy preschool socialization class led by a training specialist has several advantages.

Group puppy preschool socialization classes are offered by many veterinary clinics, dog training facilities, and pet supply stores. It's important to find a course that emphasizes pet parent education and positive controlled socialization experiences and exploration. Classes should highlight appropriate management and supervision and emphasize positive reinforcement training rather than punishment or correction. Enrollment should begin during the sensitive socialization period (the puppy's first 2 to 3 months of life).

Older puppies outside their socialization period should be enrolled in group puppy kindergarten classes with age-appropriate activities and positive reinforcement training.

Ask your veterinarian for recommendations regarding group puppy preschool socialization classes and for positive puppy training resources. Your veterinarian can help you determine when your puppy is ready for class.

Among other things, good group puppy preschool socialization classes should cover:

- Proper socialization and environmental exposure
- Play biting and mouthing
- Destructive chewing
- Prevention of food and resource guarding
- Crate training and exercises fostering independence
- Handling and restraint exercises
- Houstraining tips and techniques



Kenneth Martin, DVM, DACVB, puppystartright.com.



Kenneth Martin, DVM, DACVB, puppystartright.com.

- Basic training for good manners

HOW ELSE CAN I SOCIALIZE MY PUPPY?

The goal of proper socialization is to expose your puppy to different people, animals, environments, and stimuli in a safe and positive manner, without overwhelming your puppy.

Start by familiarizing your puppy with touch and handling by familiar people. Whenever possible, when handling your puppy's paws, ears, mouth, and body, offer special food treats. This helps to foster positive associations with being handled rather than just learning to tolerate it, or worse, becoming overly sensitive to handling.

Next, in a positive manner, using food treats, expose the puppy to people of

different ages, sexes, heights, and races. If your puppy is enjoying the social interaction, he or she will readily eat the treats and/or display affection with a desired interest in social interaction. It is important for your puppy to become comfortable with being handled by others at the veterinary clinic or grooming facility. Adding food to social interactions helps foster positive associations.

It's also important for your puppy to learn to be comfortable around other animals. Group puppy preschool socialization classes are a safe place to expose your puppy to other puppies because health and vaccination requirements should be mandatory for all participants. If your puppy is older, consider group puppy kindergarten classes.

In general, you should avoid taking your puppy to a dog park or other high-traffic public area where unfamiliar dogs roam. These experiences should be off-limits until your puppy has been fully vaccinated. Exposing your puppy to an infectious disease, such as parvovirus, when his or her immune system is still developing can have devastating results.

Puppyhood is also a great time to familiarize your puppy with all the sights and sounds of his or her world, from riding in a car to being around a vacuum cleaner. Once your puppy has been fully vaccinated, you can expand your destinations as the risk of infectious disease is greatly reduced. Each time you introduce your puppy to a new stimulus, make sure to provide positive reinforcement in the form of

Human foods that can poison pets

- Alcohol
- Avocado
- Broccoli
- Chocolate
- Cigarettes, tobacco, cigars
- Coffee grounds, beans, tea (CAFFEINE)
- Cooked bones
- Corn cobs
- Fatty foods
- Garlic
- Grapes
- Hops
- Macadamia nuts



- Molds/spoiled foods
- Nutmeg
- Onions
- Pear and apple core pips, kernels of plums, peaches, apricots
- Potato peel and green potatoes
- Raisins
- Raw salmon
- Rhubarb leaves
- Salt
- Tea leaves
- Tomato leaves and stems
- Xylitol

Hazardous items for pets around the house

- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (ibuprofen, aspirin, etc.)
- Acetaminophen
- Cold and flu medications
- Antidepressants
- Vitamins
- Home insect products
- Rat and mouse bait
- Bleach
- Diet pills
- Disinfectants
- Fabric softener
- Lead
- Lighter fluid
- Mothballs
- Anti-cancer medications
- Solvents (paint thinner)
- Drain cleaners
- Liquid potpourri
- Slug and snail bait
- Oven cleaner sprays
- Lime/scale remover
- Fly bait
- Detergents
- Batteries
- Twist ties
- Buttons
- Algae
- Antifreeze/coolant
- Fire pit/grill
- Fences/gates/lattice with openings
- De-icing salts
- Compost
- Gasoline
- Oil
- Pesticides
- Cocoa bean shell mulch fertilizer
- Swimming pools/hot tubs



Poisonous Plants

- Alfalfa
- Aloe
- Amaryllis
- Andromeda japonica
- Angel's trumpet
- Arrowgrass
- Asian lily
- Asparagus fern
- Australian nut
- Autumn crocus
- Azalea
- Bella donna
- Bird of paradise
- Bittersweet
- Black locust
- Bleeding heart
- Branching ivy
- Buckeye
- Buddhist pine
- Buttercup
- Caladium
- Calla lily
- Castor bean
- Ceriman
- Cherry tree
- Cherry
- Chinaberry
- Chrysanthemum
- Clematis
- Clover
- Cordatum
- Correa
- Corn plant
- Creeping Charlie
- Crown of thorns
- Cycads
- Cyclamen
- Daffodil
- Day lily
- Delphinium
- Devils ivy
- Dieffenbachia
- Dumbcane
- Easter lily
- Elderberry
- Elephant ears
- Emerald fern
- English ivy
- Eucalyptus
- Fern
- Florida bean
- Foxglove
- Glacier ivy
- Gladiolas
- Gold dust dracena
- Golden pothos
- Heavenly bamboo
- Hemlock
- Hemp
- Holly
- Honeysuckle
- Hurricane plant
- Hydrangea
- Iris
- Ivy
- Jack in the pulpit
- Jasmine
- Jerusalem cherry
- Jimsonweed
- Kalanchoe
- Lantana
- Larkspur
- Lily of the valley
- Locoweed
- Lupine
- Marble queen
- Milkweed
- Moonseed
- Morning glory
- Mother in law
- Mountain laurel
- Mushrooms
- Narcissus
- Needlepoint ivy
- Nettles
- Nephthytis
- Nightshade
- Oleander
- Panda
- Peach tree
- Philodendron
- Poinsettia
- Poison hemlock
- Pokeweed
- Precatory bean
- Privet
- Red emerald
- Ribbon plant
- Rhododendron
- Rhubarb
- Sago palm
- Satin pothos
- Schefflera
- Skunk cabbage
- Spinach
- St. John's wort
- Striped dracaena
- Sweetheart ivy
- Thorn apple
- Tomato vine
- Tulip
- Umbrella pant
- Water hemlock
- Wisteria
- Yew
- Yucca



Practice Preventative care for your pet and your wallet

- **Annual Exams are important.**

Some vaccinations are administered every three years now, however, the annual exam is where you catch illness, disease, parasites, etc. before they become serious and expensive problems.

- **Practice good dental care.**

Pets get cavities and periodontal disease just as humans do. Regular brushing and dental care are about more than just healthy teeth. Rotting teeth and gums are breeding grounds for harmful bacteria that can end up in the bloodstream and shorten a pet's life by damaging the heart, liver and kidneys.

- **Nutrition and Exercise can help your pet live a longer and more comfortable life.**

Keep your pet on a healthy, balanced pet food, and weight should be monitored regularly. A regular exercise routine helps both the physical and mental health of your pet. Your pet will be much less likely to be obese and have behavioral issues.

- **Pet proof your house.**

Please refer to the enclosed inserts for lists of foods, medications and household items that can be extremely harmful to your pet.

- **Practice good parasite control.**

It is important to check a fecal sample at each annual exam. Intestinal parasites can be harmful to your pet and your family. Checking blood work each year is important to monitor your pet for heartworm disease.



20 questions to help you choose a pet insurance provider



1. Is the company licensed in your state? Which of their policies are available in your state?
2. Does the company have a good reputation? What do the Better Business Bureau or other independent organizations have to say about it? How long has the company been around?
3. Are the policies and information provided reasonably easy to understand? Are the people you talk to knowledgeable and helpful?
4. Does the company offer customer service during reasonable hours?
5. Can you see any veterinarian you want?
6. Have premiums increased over the past few years? If so, by how much?
7. What happens to coverage and premiums as your pet ages?
8. Are there any reasons you wouldn't be able to renew your policy?
9. What type of coverage and coinsurance does the policy require?
10. Is there a "unusual and customary charges" clause? How are those limits determined?
11. What kinds of care are excluded or limited? Are congenital or hereditary diseases covered? What about cancer? Is dental care covered?
12. Are conditions diagnosed within one year excluded as pre-existing conditions the next?
13. Are benefits available for wellness or preventative care for your pet?
14. Can you choose a deductible? Can you change the deductible from year to year? Is the deductible annual or is it applied to each medical incident?
15. Are the waiting periods before coverage begins reasonable?
16. Is there a maximum age for enrollment?
17. Are there limits per incident, per year, per lifetime, or per body system? What are those limits?
18. Is a physical examination required for enrollment or renewal?
19. How quickly are claims processed and paid?
20. Are there any billing fees or discounts?



Traveling with your pet

Traveling with pets can be traumatic, especially if preparations are not made beforehand. Here are a few suggestions for a safe and comfortable journey...

If you are flying with your pet... Contact us and the airline ahead of time. The airlines have special rules and regulations for pets and you will need health papers filled out ahead of time. If you are traveling or moving overseas, contact us at least 6 months ahead. The paperwork can get complicated.

If you are crossing state lines... Whether you are traveling by air or car, you will need a health certificate from us filled out within 10 days of your trip. Health certificates are required by law to help stop the spread of rabies and other diseases from state to state. Different states have different rules about the frequency of rabies vaccine administration, so your pet may need a booster shot before you leave. You should also carry a copy of your pet's rabies certificate with you. Without these papers, if you are stopped by police during your trip, you can be fined, and your animal quarantined for 10-14 days at your expense.

Be sure your pet is wearing a collar with ID tags while traveling in case he or she gets lost. An extra tag with the name and phone number of a friend or relative is also a good idea - remember, you won't be home to take the call if your pet is found again. Consider having a microchip injected for permanent identification.

Always leash your pet when they are not in the car. Do not let your dog become a pest or a hazard at gas stations or rest stops. Unless you are on private property and have permission to let your dog run loose, leash them at all times; at motels and campgrounds as well.

A crate is the best investment you can make for safe traveling. Ask us how to accustom your pet to the crate ahead of time if your pet hasn't used one before. Also, be sure your pet's crate is big enough for them to stand up, turn around and lay stretched out comfortably. Keeping your dog or cat confined to a tiny cage for hours on end will cause muscle soreness and potential anxiety. Cats need enough room for a litter pan and water bowl, as well as space to lay comfortably. Bed the cage with blankets or towels so your pet isn't laying on bare plastic. Lastly, your pet will need to get out and stretch his legs occasionally - every 3-4 hours for dog and every 6-8 for cats.



Never leave your pet unattended in the car for long. Heat and cold can kill an animal left alone. Don't park in direct sunlight. If you are traveling in the summer and your car is not air conditioned, think twice before taking your pet along. Brachycephalic breeds such as Pekingese, Pugs, Boston Terriers, Persian cats, etc. are especially prone to heat stroke and suffocation while traveling. Health problems or fear of strangers and unfamiliar things may also be a reason to leave your pet at home.

It's best to feed your pet lightly, or not at all, before traveling. Feed your pet once you arrive at your destination or stop for the night. It's better to eat lightly for a day or two than to spend the trip carsick.

What's next?

.....

Congratulations! Your puppy has completed their vaccination series and well-puppy exams. We hope that your pet is well on its way to a long and happy life as a member of your family. To keep your puppy healthy for a lifetime will require on-going care. The following list should help you understand what health care needs your pet will have in the years to come.

1. The vaccines your puppy has received will provide immunity against disease for about one year. Regular boosters are needed to keep his level of immunity high enough to protect them from illness. You will receive reminders from us when their next vaccinations are due.
2. Your pet will also receive an annual physical examination along with their yearly booster vaccinations. By the time we see your pet again for their yearly visit, they will be in the process of growing through the equivalent of his teenage years and on their way to becoming a young adult. Because a pet's lifespan is compressed into a shorter amount of time than that of a human, many changes can occur in your pet's body during the course of a year. The annual physical exams are very important to detect physical problems before they become serious. Once your pet reaches the age of seven to nine years, annual blood and urine testing are also recommended to detect the onset of age-related illnesses such as kidney and liver disease.
3. Every year from now on, you will receive a reminder via email or postcard in the mail for your pet's annual heartworm and tick-borne disease blood test. Annual testing is necessary along with giving preventative heartworm and flea and tick medication for the entire year. Remember, heartworm is a deadly parasite which is easily prevented with monthly medication.
4. We will also be asking you to bring in a sample of your dog's stool each year, to test for intestinal parasites which may have been picked up over the course of a year. Heartworm preventative medication can mask some types of intestinal parasites, so it is best to check for these before starting on prevention if you give heartworm medication seasonally. We need about 1tsp of feces. A fresh sample will keep about 24 hours refrigerated.
5. Your puppy should be fed a puppy food until he or she is about 12 months old. Then switch gradually to an adult food by mixing the old and new foods together for about two weeks. This helps avoid intestinal upset from changing foods too quickly. Your pet will have a longer, healthier life on a good quality diet, such as Hill's Science Diet or Royal Canin. Dry food is better for the prevention of dental disease. Too many treats and snacks lead to fussy eating habits, obesity and digestive upsets. Give your pet praise and affection for rewards, not food! They will love you just as much.



6. Spay or neuter your pet at six months of age. Altered pets live longer, are healthier in their old age, have fewer behavioral problems and don't contribute to the pet overpopulation problem.
7. If you haven't yet begun an obedience program with your pet, now is a good time to start. Pets that are well-trained are much nicer to have around. You can train your pet yourself if you have some training experience, but we highly recommend a professional trainer. Obedience classes are a lot of fun and you'll learn a lot of helpful tips for making the most out of your relationship with your pet.
8. Your puppy will soon have a full set of adult teeth. Good dental care is essential to your pet's well-being. Regular brushing will slow plaque and tartar build-up as your dog gets older. By the time they are 2-5 years old, however, he will probably have enough tartar build-up to begin needing annual dental cleanings here at the veterinary clinic. A dog that gets good dental care throughout its life will live an average of 15-20% longer than one that doesn't. He will also have fresher breath, less pain from periodontal disease and be healthier and more energetic.
9. Please call us with any questions or problems with your pet. Most medical problems are less costly to your pet's well-being and to your wall if they are dealt with early.
10. The same is true of behavioral problems. The earlier you contact us or your trainer regarding a problem behavior, the sooner you can solve it. Behaviors such as barking, digging, running away, chewing and over-aggression can almost always be changed, but you must ask for help.
11. Enjoy! Your puppy's boundless joy, love, and energy are a precious thing to have!



Emergency and specialty referral hospitals

Blue Pearl Veterinary Partners 180 Bear Hill Rd, Waltham, MA 02451	(781) 684-8387
Boston West Vet Emergency & Specialty <i>(Prev. IVG Metrowest)</i> 5 Strathmore Rd, Natick, MA 01760	(508) 319-2117
Massachusetts Veterinary Referral Hospital 20 Cabot Rd, Woburn, MA 01801	(781) 932-5802
Ocean State Veterinary Specialists 1480 S County Trail, East Greenwich, RI 02818	(401) 886-6797
Tufts - Grafton 200 Westboro Rd, North Grafton, MA 01536	(508) 839-5302
Tufts - Walpole 525 South St, Walpole, MA 02081	(508) 668-5454

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