

Suggestions For Puppies

- 1) We need to know the vaccination and worming history of your puppy so that we can develop a worming and vaccination program for your puppy. Also, we need to know where it came from (breeder, humane society, farm, etc.) so that we can evaluate any risk to disease exposure. It takes a series of vaccinations to properly immunize your puppy. Puppies will need to complete a series of immunizations before they are fully protected from these diseases. Core vaccinations include Distemper, Leptospirosis, Hepatitis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza, and Rabies (required by law). Your puppy may also need non-core vaccinations such as: A Bordetella vaccine for boarding and, grooming animals, and for any dog that is exposed to other dogs, for example walking in the park; or Lyme disease vaccine for hunting dogs, or dogs that will be out in the woods, or near rivers and lakes and have high potential exposure to ticks.
- 2) It is important that a veterinarian correctly administer the vaccination to your pet. Insurance will not assume the liability for the vaccination if there is a problem, and a non-veterinarian has vaccinated your puppy. It is also important that the correct type of vaccine has been used, and that it has been stored properly. Remember that puppies are not immune from these diseases until two weeks after the last vaccination given in the puppy series (usually about 17-19 weeks).
- 3) Puppies begin to develop their socialization skills as early as the fourth week of age. It is very important at this time to have a lot of human contact with your new pet. Spend at least 20-30 minutes a day playing and talking to your new puppy. It is better to have several short 10 minute play times, than one longer playtime. Play with their feet, paws, mouth, face, and ears frequently. Look in their mouth. Trim their toenails. Reward him or her with a treat when he or she cooperates with your handling. Also, have many new and different people handle them. This allows your puppy to get used to meeting and interacting with other people. This can also be a good time to practice sit and stay while rewarding with treats. You can also teach your pet to stand still and get used to being restrained at this time.
- 4) It is best to spay or neuter your puppy around 4 to 6 months of age to avoid unwanted litters and future health problems, but it can actually be done at any age (they recover best at this age). Neutering males greatly reduces roaming behavior, helps to decrease territorial marking behavior, and also reduces the incidence of prostate disease. By spaying females it eliminates any chance of an infected uterus which is life threatening and can be very costly. Spaying also reduces the incidence of breast cancer. We can provide you with an estimate to have your puppy spayed.
- 5) We encourage you to enroll your puppy in a puppy class. This will help with socialization, as much of their socialization behavior is already learned and imprinted at 4-5 months of age. Most puppy classes will also teach some basic obedience such as come, sit, and stay. The Class will also teach you how to shape your pet's behavior through positive reinforcement and avoid such common puppy problems such as biting, chewing, digging, and house soiling.
- 6) We recommend that you feed your puppy a high quality pet food, because the protein concentration and digestibility are very important to rapidly growing pups at this young age. We recommend premium foods such as Iams, Hills Science Diets etc. Puppies between the ages of 2-5 months should be fed 2-4 times a day. Avoid table scraps as this upsets their diet, cause bad habits such as getting into the garbage, and can lead to obesity.
- 7) If you have difficulty getting your puppy housetrained, consider the use of an airline crate (they also make an excellent bed). Puppies consider a crate like their den, and a safe place to go. It also prevents them from getting into something that may hurt them, especially if they get into things when you are gone. When house training, always remember to take your puppy to the same area in the yard to go to the bathroom. When your puppy is learning this, or has learned this, continue to praise him or her as he or she goes to the bathroom in the appropriate area. (Note: if food is left out continually, housebreaking will be much more difficult to achieve).

8) Fleas are summertime pests, but can actually live on your pet and in your house the entire year. If you have any problems with them, please ask one of our technicians or receptionists about the products that we have for all situations. We have Revolution, and Frontline for monthly flea protection on your puppy. We also have Ectokyl to treat the house and bedding. Many wild animals such as opossums, raccoons, and mice that venture through yards and neighborhoods at night naturally carry fleas, and plenty of them. If your pet goes outdoors at all, he is at risk for exposure to fleas and flea eggs that have fallen or jumped off of these animals. Once your pet is infected, it will take at least three to four months of treatment of your puppy and his environment to get rid of the fleas. For this reason, monthly prevention with topical adulticide containing Fipronil or Selamectin is best.

9) Your puppy should be bathed frequently (once or twice a month) to keep the skin and hair dirt-free. To help accommodate you, we carry high quality pet shampoos for your puppy's needs. If your puppy will require frequent grooming, we recommend starting grooming at young age (3-4 months). This will help your puppy become accustomed to grooming procedures and being brushed out. We have grooming services available and our groomers will be glad to answer any questions that you may have.

10) When your puppy is presented for his or her vaccinations, we will go over what needs to be done to prevent heartworms. Heartworm preventative stops your pet from becoming infected with this deadly mosquito borne disease. Because of the recent mild winters, it is important to use heartworm preventative year round. Heartworm preventative also helps to prevent intestinal parasites and is given once a month for your convenience.

11) Every puppy needs to have a fecal examination to check for worms. Owners need to bring in a fresh stool sample every time they come in for vaccinations. This allows us to determine the parasite burden your pet is carrying, and check for any potential worms that may be able to infect humans also. We will also treat your pet for worms, whether or not we find worms in the fecal, to be sure that your pet is parasite free, because occasionally the level of worms is below the level of detection, or the worms have not become mature enough to lay eggs yet, which is what we look for on a fecal examination. Roundworms (one type of intestinal parasite in dogs) can be seen in the stool, they look like spaghetti.

12) If your puppy gets tapeworms, you may see small rice-shaped worms attached to the hair on his or her rectum, or you may see the worms in the stools. Please let us know if you see any of these segments. We often cannot find them in fecal examinations because they are passed intermittently in the feces. These are often encysted in fleas or rodents that your puppy has consumed. The cyst stages then develop into adult tapeworms and migrate to your pet's digestive tract.

13) Be sure to protect your puppy from temperature variations. Often, during the cold weather it is 8-10 degrees cooler on the floor of your house. If you have your puppy outside, he should have some type of artificial heat source in the winter and a place in the shade or a water pool in the summer to keep warm. All pets less than 30 lbs should be kept inside at nights during cold weather.

14) Veterinary Pet Insurance has several good insurance plans. They are available on the web at www.petinsurance.com

15) We recommend brushing the teeth and starting at an early age to help them get used to having their teeth brushed. Encourage owners to at least try this, if they can do it, it will really enhance the appearance and health of their puppy's teeth, and save on dental procedures in the future. Often times, though, it is not tolerated by the puppy, but should be attempted a few times. Use dog toothpaste, it comes in many flavors that dogs like. Brushing the teeth also helps puppies learn to tolerate having their face and mouth handled.

16) We encourage owners to have their pet micro-chipped. This is not a tracking device, but another form of pet ID. If your pet becomes lost and is picked up by animal control, they will be able to identify it by the microchip imbedded under the skin. Micro-chipping can be done at any time and does not require an anesthetic to do. It can be conveniently done when your puppy is spayed or neutered. We use AVID and Home Again microchips.

17) We recommend that you keep the address and phone number of the veterinary emergency clinic handy. This is a full service emergency veterinary clinic developed especially to handle after hours emergencies. It is the only veterinary hospital in Lincoln equipped to do so. It is located at 3700 South 9th Street, north of the State Penitentiary and is open all nights, weekends, and holidays.

18) The best way to train your puppy to do what you want is through positive reinforcement. This involves giving your puppy a treat, his favorite toy, or a nice round of petting when he/she does what you want him to. If he/she sits or stands on command give him a treat immediately. He will learn to sit and stand at your command much quicker this way. If your puppy performs an undesirable behavior, like inappropriate defecation, ignore it. The only time that it may be ok to punish your puppy would be if you caught your puppy in the act, and then only a sharp

vocal reprimand is necessary. Then you would take your puppy outside to defecate where you want him to go. Rubbing his nose in it will just cause him anxiety and make him afraid of you.

19) Our hospital is a full service hospital; the American Animal Hospital Association certifies us. Only 10% of the veterinary hospitals nationwide, and only three hospitals in Lincoln are certified by AAHA. We provide all veterinary services (surgery, medicine, dentistry, and diagnostics) full service grooming and boarding.

20) Puppies are curious by nature. Puppy-proof your house. Many houseplants are toxic to puppies and other pets. Take measures to make sure all houseplants inaccessible to your pet. Many of them contain oxalates and other chemicals that can make them sick. Also, it is important to make sure they cannot get into other things that could harm them like paints, sprays, chemicals, rat poison etc; or things that they could damage, for example, chewing on shoes or eating socks.

21) Do not give your puppy aspirin, or Tylenol, or other medication without your veterinarians consent. Pets do not metabolize drugs like people, and therefore we must be very careful in administering them to pets.

22) If you have any other questions regarding the raising of you puppy, please don't hesitate to call our office at 435-4947. We will be very happy to assist you.