



High Plains Veterinary Hospital Canine Handbook



Congratulations on your new dog!

Whether this is your first dog, or it's been a while since you've had a puppy, we are here to make sure you don't miss a beat when it comes to your dog's veterinary care. This handbook serves as a basic guide of our recommendations on your dog's healthcare needs.

- Congenital & breed related disease
- Vaccinations & preventative care
- Parasite control & heartworm disease
- Nutrition & feeding recommendations
- Oral health & chew options
- Safety: emergency contacts, puppy proofing, microchipping
- Spaying/neutering or pre-breeding considerations
- Age-appropriate exercise
- Training: house-training, crate-training, puppy classes
- Grooming needs
- Socialization & environmental enrichment
- Pet insurance & meeting costs of care
- Happy veterinary visits
- Contacts for grooming, boarding, training



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Training, Boarding, & Grooming Recommendations



Training

All Breeds Rescue and Training

haveanicedog.org
410 ½ E Fillmore St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
719-264-6460

Sunrise Kennels and Training

sunrise-woodmenpetcare.com
780 Dublin Boulevard
Colorado Springs, CO 80918
719-598-8220

Colorado Springs Dog Training Center- Pamela Leland

cosdtc.com
KPA Certified Training Partner
719-499-8294

Wells Family Dog Boarding & Training

springsdogs.com
Facebook.com/wellsfamilydog
719-648-1138

Train With Trust – Megan Phillips

trainwithtrust.com
In home behavior consultations & one-on-one
training
Email: megan@trainwithtrust.com
855-552-8787

Veterinary Behavior Consultants (for severe behavior cases)

behaviorvetco.com
Animal Care Center of Castle Pines
Castle Pines, CO 80108
Email: info@behaviorvet.com
720-484-5000

At Home Pet Sitting & Dog Walking

Play Time Pet Sitters & Dog Walkers of CO Springs

playtimepetsitters.com
719-475-7297

Boarding

A Paw Above

apawaboveboarding.com
1447 Woolsey Heights
Colorado Springs, CO 80915
719-386-7291

Sunrise Kennels and Training

sunrise-woodmenpetcare.com
780 Dublin Boulevard
Colorado Springs, CO 80918
719-598-8220

Camp Bow Wow (East)

campbowwow.com
1075 Ford St. Unit 120
Colorado Springs, CO 80915
719-573-9247

Lucky Dog Daycare & Boarding

bealuckydog.com
2801 Janitell Rd
Colorado Springs, CO 80906
719-527-9663

Catology (cat boarding only)

kittycatology.com
4703 Centennial Blvd
Colorado Springs, CO 80919
719-602-6081

Grooming

Tailored Tails Grooming Salon & Pet Spa

tailoredtailsgrooming.com
4027 Tutt Blvd
Colorado Springs, CO 80922
719-596-8245

A Paw Above

Apawaboveboarding.com
1447 Woolsey Heights
Colorado Springs, CO 80915
719-386-7291

Friendly Paws Grooming

5740 N Carefree Cir #130
Colorado Springs, CO 80917
719-380-8500



Your dog's health is our top priority. Here's a list of preventative care measures we recommend to help your dog live a long, healthy, and happy life. During your pet's visit please be prepared to discuss your pets' diet, any medications or supplements they may take, any behavior or health concerns you may have such as lumps/bumps, lameness, or gastrointestinal concerns. Please remember that to ensure your pet's health, an annual exam is legally required to keep the doctor-patient relationship active, which allows for prescribing & refilling prescription foods, medications, and giving medical advice.

Puppy (up to 1 year of age)

Series of 3-4 wellness exams starting around 7-8 weeks of age to monitor growth and development. During each visit we perform a nose to tail check during which we monitor weight; look for any congenital abnormalities such as hernias, heart murmurs, oral health; assess behavior; make recommendations for spaying or neutering and address any specific questions or concerns.

8 weeks of age

- Distemper/Parvo/Parainfluenza/Hepatitis vaccine (Da2PP/DHPP)
- Fecal test: to check for intestinal parasites such as roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, tapeworms and giardia.
- Start monthly heartworm prevention, +/- flea/tick prevention

12 weeks of age

- Da2PP/DHPP booster + 1st leptospirosis vaccine
- Bordetella & influenza (optional)
- Start puppy classes
- Updated weight for heartworm prevention, +/- flea/tick prevention

16 weeks of age

- DHLPP booster
- Rabies vaccination
- Updated weight for heartworm prevention, +/- flea/tick prevention

6-7 months of age

- Recommend spay or neuter + microchipping (age dependent on breed & size expectations)
- Perform 1st heartworm test (after 7 months of age, before 1 year of age)
- Continue monthly heartworm prevention +/- flea/tick prevention

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE PUPPY SERIES IS COMPLETE?

Adult (1-6 years of age)

Annual wellness exam

- At 1.5 years of age your dog will receive a rabies 3-year vaccine and a DHLPP vaccine which will thereafter be broken into rotations of distemper, parvo, and rabies vaccine; leptospirosis is an annual vaccine
- Annual boosters for optional vaccines: bordetella, influenza, rattlesnake
- Annual heartworm testing & monthly heartworm prevention, +/- flea/tick prevention, +/- fecal test

Senior (7 years and up)

Annual wellness exam (may be recommended every 6 months depending on your pet's needs)

- Annual leptospirosis vaccine and either rabies, parvo or distemper vaccine & annual boosters for optional vaccinations
- Annual heartworm test and monthly heartworm prevention +/- flea/tick prevention, +/- fecal test
- Bloodwork and urinalysis recommended annually to screen for early changes to organ health – please discuss options with your vet. More extensive screening options are also available such as x-ray and ultrasound when indicated
- Consider gradual transition to a senior food and consider a daily joint supplement

What about a city license? A city license is your pet's ticket home if lost, and it is required by law for dogs and cats 4 months of age and older living in the City of Colorado Springs. Licensing is available online: hsppr.org, via mail, in person, or with us at High Plains. Your pet will need proof of up-to-date Rabies vaccination. Licenses can be purchased for 1 or 3 years.



Why vaccinate? Vaccines are important to keep both you and your puppy safe from a variety of viral and bacterial illnesses that can be passed between dogs, wildlife, and humans. Puppies get some immunity through their mother's milk, but this starts to wane around 8 weeks of age; this is when vaccines should be started to prime their immune system. Vaccines should be boosted every 3-4 weeks to stimulate their immune systems until reaching 4 months of age when antibody production is achieved. Vaccinations can help avoid costly treatments for preventable disease.

Why avoid public places until fully vaccinated? Dog germs live in feces and the environment and are easily transmissible from pet to pet. Until your puppy is fully vaccinated at 4 months of age, it is best to keep them away from dog parks, pet stores and other public places while their immune systems are still developing. Puppy classes are okay after at least 2 sets of vaccines and being around adult vaccinated dogs is okay too.

How will my pet feel after vaccines? Your pet might be a little tired and a little tender where the vaccine is given. Sometimes they will get a small bump that will go away in couple weeks. Although rare, more serious signs of a vaccine reaction include swelling of the face, lethargy, hives, difficulty breathing, and/or vomiting or diarrhea. If your dog has a vaccine reaction, please recheck with your vet immediately for additional care.

CORE VACCINATIONS: Recommended for all puppies and adult dogs

- **Distemper** – Distemper is an easily transmissible virus and is often fatal. It causes diarrhea, fever, respiratory disease, appetite loss and neurologic signs like muscle spasms, paralysis. It can also cause changes to skin, foot pads and teeth. While vaccines have significantly controlled this disease, stray/unvaccinated dogs, wild animals, and puppies of unvaccinated mothers are at high risk for getting and passing on the infection.
- **Hepatitis** – Hepatitis is caused by the canine adenovirus that infects the liver, kidneys, spleen, and lungs. It can be a serious and fatal illness. Vaccines may be written with “H” for hepatitis or “a2” for adenovirus-2; they are the same.
- **Parvo** – Parvo is a virus that exists everywhere and can live for up to a year in extreme temperatures. It is most often spread in fecal matter and causes severe vomiting, diarrhea, and dehydration that can be fatal.
- **Parainfluenza** – This virus causes mild respiratory illness of dogs but is highly contagious.
- **Leptospirosis** – Also known as “lepto,” this is a bacteria shed in the urine of wildlife and affects the liver and kidneys causing fever, anorexia, depression, pain and can be fatal. Leptospirosis is common in Colorado; water sources & soil serve as reservoirs. It is transmissible to people and we recommend vaccinating all dogs against it. Lepto is an annual vaccination started around 12 weeks of age.
- **Rabies Virus** – Rabies is a viral disease that can affect all mammals including humans. It is usually transmitted through bite wounds and it attacks the central nervous system. Once signs of rabies appear, the disease is always fatal. Rabies vaccine for your dog and cat is required by state law in Colorado.

OPTIONAL VACCINATIONS: Recommended case to case

- **Bordetella** – Better known as “Kennel Cough,” this is a common bacteria easily transmitted through the air or by direct contact. Upper respiratory disease can limit the dog's activity and progress to pneumonia. Although the vaccine is not 100% effective, the vaccine will decrease the severity and longevity of symptoms if your pet becomes infected. This vaccine is recommended for any dog that goes to the groomers, gets boarded, starts puppy classes, or is around other dogs. This is most often given annually.
- **Canine Influenza** – This is a newly emerging infectious disease caused by “the flu” virus. In dogs, a highly contagious strain of the virus known as H3N8 & H3N2 are known to cause respiratory illness. Because of the current rarity of this virus, we usually only vaccinate for this if boarding facilities require it. It is an annual vaccination.
- **Rattlesnake vaccine** – This vaccine may provide some protection against certain snake bites and is only intended to decrease the severity of bites & improve recovery – it is still essential your dog receive veterinary care if bitten! This vaccine commonly causes a sterile abscess or small bump where given which resolves with time. If you hike in remote areas prone to rattlesnakes, this vaccine may be a good idea. It is an annual vaccine, best given in the spring when rattle snakes are most active.



Emergency Care



Our normal office hours are Monday-Friday 7:30 am to 6:30 pm and Saturday 9 am to 12pm. We will always try our best to see your pet. If your pet needs care after hours, or if we are booked and unable to meet your pet's needs, here are a list of local emergency hospitals.

Powers Pet Emergency & Specialty

5886 Tutt Blvd
Colorado Springs, CO 80923
Phone: (719) 473-0482
powerspetemergency.com
Open 24 hours

Uintah Pet Emergency

1635 W Uintah St, Suite E
Colorado Springs, CO 80904
719-633-3214
Uintahpetemergency.com
Hours vary, call ahead

Animal ER Care

5520 N Nevada Ave #150
Colorado Springs, CO 80918
Phone: 719-260-7141
animalERcare.com
Open 24 hours

Tri-Lakes Animal Emergency Care

1150 Baptist Rd, Suite 120
Colorado Springs, CO 80921
719-434-1118
Trilakesanimalemergency.com
Hours vary, call ahead

K9 1st Aid Kit

Bring the kit with you on long trips or outings. Check your kit at least once a year to ensure it stays stocked and up to date. Remember, it is always best to seek vet care for any of your pet's emergency needs – the items in the kit should only serve as quick care if you are in a remote area. Do not ever give your dog any human medications, including pain medications, (such as ibuprofen, or aspirin) unless advised by your vet.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- ASPCA's Animal Poison Control: 888-426-4435 or Pet Poison Helpline: 855-213-6680
- Veterinarian and emergency vet phone #'s and location
- Medical records including medications, vaccine history, and allergies

WOUND CARE & BANDAGE MATERIALS: Keep in mind that a bandage should never be placed too tightly as it may inhibit circulation. It should never stay on longer than 24 hours and it should be removed or changed immediately if it gets wet, dirty, or causes the toes or limb to swell.

- **Sterile saline** – for flushing wounds and foreign material out of eyes
- **Tweezers** – for removing foreign material such as stickers and splinters
- **Absorbent gauze pads** – to control bleeding, cleanse wounds, or apply topical medication
- **Telfa pads** – a non-adherent pad to place over wounds before bandaging
- **Rolled gauze** – to wrap around the limb or wound to secure the telfa in place and help control bleeding
- **Self-cling bandage wrap** (VetWrap or Coflex) to secure the bandage – do not place too tight!
- **Bandage tape** – to secure the bandage in place – do not place too tight!
- **Bandage scissors** – to remove bandage or cut away potential hazards

OTHER ITEMS

- **Leash & Muzzle** – to safely handle your pet if they are painful and need to be moved or transported
- **Disposable gloves**
- **Eye dropper or large syringe without needle** – to give oral treatments or flush wounds
- **Styptic powder** – A powder which promotes clotting to help stop bleeding of minor wounds i.e. broken toenails
- **Digital thermometer & petroleum jelly lubricant for taking rectal temp** – normal canine temperature ranges from 99-102.5F
- **Antihistamine** – such as Benadryl (diphenhydramine) to treat acute allergic reactions. Make sure it does not contain any decongestant! The dose is around 1 mg per pound every 8-12 hours, i.e. 25 pound dog gets 25 mg.
- **Dog whistle & flashlight**
- **Collapsible water bowl & water**
- **Blanket or towel**
- **Poop bags** – help keep our trails and parks clean and parasite free!
- **In case of rattlesnake bite** – Stay calm, most dogs survive with treatment. Contact the nearest vet office or emergency vet (even if your pet is vaccinated for rattlesnake) and make sure they have antivenom. Keep your pet as calm and still as possible and carry them if you can. You may need to place a muzzle if they are painful. Do not try to drain the bite site or wrap it.



Despite your best efforts, your pet may accidentally become poisoned and being prepared can save their life. If your pet poisoning emergency occurs after normal business hours, or we are not able to help, please contact an emergency clinic listed on previous page, or you can contact the ASPCA poison control. A consultation fee may apply. Don't wait! Time is critical for successfully treating accidental poisoning.

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center's 24-hour emergency hotline: 888-426-4435

Be prepared to answer:

- Your name, address, telephone #
- Your pet's species, breed, age, sex, and approximate weight
- If you know what substance your pet has ingested, have the product container/packaging available for reference. You'll also need to provide information, if you know it, about the amount ingested and the time since exposure.
- All symptoms your pet is experiencing.

Dog Proofing Your Home and Yard

Indoors

- Keep clothes, shoes, socks, underwear, children's toys, and small objects off the floor and out of your dog's reach.
- Take objects off any surface the dog can reach – this includes food on countertops.
- Keep closets, drawers, toy boxes, and the pantry closed. Some dogs may figure out how to open cabinet or pantry doors and childproof locks may be necessary.
- Make sure every trashcan has a lid that completely closes and cannot be opened by your dog.
- Make sure electrical cords are hidden and out of reach.
- Seasonal decorations can pose a threat – ribbons and Christmas tree ornaments can cause intestinal blockage.
- Make sure medications, cleaning products, and food items are inaccessible.
- Baby gates may serve to keep them away from certain rooms such as the litterbox room.
- Make sure indoor houseplants are not toxic – visit aspc.org for a list with pictures.
- **If you are not directly observing your dog, the safest place they can be is in their crate.**

Outdoors

- Make sure your fence is secure with no gaps or holes present.
- Make sure outdoor plants (bushes, flowers, mushrooms, & weeds), are not toxic – visit aspc.org for a list with pictures
- Ponds can grow a toxic blue-green alga in the summer & can be dangerous in winter w/ potential of falling thru the ice.
- Check the yard for sharp objects which can cut paws such as metal lawn edging – a frequent cause of ER visits!
- Make sure pavement & composite decking are not too hot. Outdoor temps of 77F + can result in pavement temps which can burn feet! Place the back of your hand on the pavement – if you can't hold it there for 5 seconds, it's too hot.
- Caution if ever leaving your dog in the car – If it's just 75F outside, within 10 min indoor car temps can reach 100F.
- Make sure your dog is not eating rocks, excessive mulch or bird seed, compost materials, or drippings from the grill.
- Follow guidelines for pet safety regarding fertilizers, pesticides, ice melt products.
- Make sure rat bait products, anti-freeze, and other toxic chemicals are inaccessible.

Common Household Hazards

Foods

- Alcoholic beverages
- Avocado
- Caffeine
- Chocolate
- Fatty foods
- Garlic, onions & powders
- Grapes & raisins
- Macadamia nuts
- Moldy or spoiled foods
- Salt (in excess)
- Xylitol (artificial sweetener)
- Yeast dough

Medications

- Pain killers (NSAIDs such as aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, acetaminophen)
- Cold medicines

- Vitamins/diet pills
- Prescription meds/anti-depressants
- Narcotics, nicotine & marijuana

Indoor Hazards

- Fabric softener sheets
- Mothballs
- Certain cleaning products
- Pennies minted after 1982 (contain zinc)
- Electrical cords & batteries
- Ribbons & tinsel (cause intestinal blockage)
- Glass ornaments & shards
- Certain plants: Lilies (toxic to cats), sago palms, shamrock, foxglove, yew.

- **Visit aspc.org for a complete list of toxic & non-toxic plants with pictures.**

Hazards in the Garage & Outdoors

- Antifreeze (especially ethylene glycol) & Ice melt
- Insecticides: fly baits containing methomyl & slug/snail baits containing metaldehyde
- Mouse & rat bait
- Weed killers, fertilizers & compost piles
- Paints, solvents, & gasoline
- Blue-green algae in ponds
- Snakes, spiders, scorpions, insects
- Citronella candles, certain outdoor plants & bulbs, mushrooms



Spaying & Neutering



Spay – This surgery is performed in female dogs and involves an incision into the abdomen removing the uterus and ovaries making her unable to reproduce, it eliminates heat cycles, and reduces breeding instinct behavior. While it is a major surgery, it is commonly performed.

Neuter – This surgery is performed in male dogs and involves a small incision in front of the scrotum to remove each testicle resulting in sterilization. Neutering will reduce or eliminate male breeding behaviors.

Why spay and neuter?

Spaying and neutering helps fight pet overpopulation. Every year, millions of cats and dogs of all ages and breeds are euthanized or suffer as strays. These high numbers are the result of unplanned litters that could have been prevented by spaying or neutering. You can become part of the solution by getting your pet spayed or neutered. In addition, both spayed females and neutered males tend to live longer healthier lives and are generally better-behaved making them more desirable companions.

Will my pet gain weight because of the spay or neuter? Energy requirements change after a pet is fixed because removing their sex hormones lowers their metabolism. This means they most likely will not need the same amount of food to maintain their normal weight. It may be necessary to reduce food a little and continue to exercise your pet to keep them fit and trim.

What is the best age to spay or neuter? This is a controversial question, and you may get a slightly different answer from vet to vet. In short, there are a variety of factors at play which include breed predispositions, behavioral changes, cancer risks and orthopedic disease, to name a few. In general, we support the spaying and neutering of most dogs (expected to be less than 50 pounds adult weight) around 6 months of age. Most agree that large and giant breed male dogs may benefit from neutering later (9-18 months of age) to reduce risk of joint disease and some cancers. Large breed female dogs are less straightforward as their chance of mammary cancer increases with their heat cycles. However, their risk of urinary incontinence, orthopedic disease, and certain cancers may increase with early spay. It may be best to consult your veterinarian and to discuss your circumstances and your individual pet. If you would like more information, please visit: source.colostate.edu, aaha.org, or veterinarypartner.com.

Health Benefits of Spaying

Mammary cancer prevention in females. A female dog spayed before her first heat cycle will have a near zero chance of developing mammary cancer. After the first heat cycle risk of tumors increases to 7%, and after the second heat cycle 1 in 4 female dogs will develop mammary cancer. Even if a dog has had numerous heat cycles it is not too late to spay – tumors are stimulated by estrogen, a hormone produced by the ovaries, so removing the ovaries and uterus will still slow tumor spread and reoccurrence.

Pyometra prevention in females. Pyometra is a life-threatening infection of the uterus that generally occurs in dogs six weeks following their heat cycle. The hormone progesterone, which primes the uterus for potential pregnancy, causes proliferation of the blood-filled uterine lining and suppresses the immune function. Bacteria from the vagina ascends into the uterus causing it to swell with pus, dying tissue, and toxins. Treatment involves immediate spay to prevent rupture of the uterus to save her life. Pyometra is very common – one in four unspayed females age 10+ years will get it and without treatment most dogs will die.

What to expect if you choose not to spay. Female dogs come into heat every 6-8 months. During their heat cycle their vulva enlarges and they will have a bloody discharge that may last a couple weeks. During their heat cycle intact male dogs will be attracted to them so you must avoid dog parks, and any other possible interactions with intact male dogs. There is no end to cycling compared to human menopause. Older, unspayed females have irregular heat cycles that continue sporadically. You should be familiar with the signs of pyometra which include loss of appetite, lethargy, vomiting, excessive thirst, and possible vaginal discharge.

Health & Behavioral Benefits of Neutering



Prostate gland & testicles. The prostate gland, which sits below the colon of dogs, is under the influence of testosterone which causes it to gradually enlarge (benign prostatic hyperplasia) over the course of the dog's life. The enlargement can cause discomfort and make it more difficult for an intact dog to defecate and sometimes urinate. Neutering shrinks the prostate and significantly decreases the risk of prostatitis (infection of the prostate). Neutering will not prevent cancer of the prostate, but it will eliminate the risk of testicular cancer.

Will neutering change my dog's personality? Intact male dogs will do just about anything to find a mate. This may include digging out to roam for females, marking territory with strong smelling urine, mounting other dogs and people, and aggression. Neutering will not affect their ability to learn, play, work, or hunt. While neutering will not change his personality, numerous studies have shown that neutering consistently decreases inappropriate mounting, urine marking and fighting – behaviors that most owners wish to curtail.

What if my dog has an undescended testicle? This is also referred to as being “cryptorchid” and neutering is especially important because the retained testicle has an increased tendency to grow tumors. The undescended testicle may be in the groin or in the abdomen of the dog. The procedure is more complicated than a routine neuter and may take some exploration to find it. If there is one descended testicle the dog can still breed but since retaining a testicle is a hereditary trait, it is important he is not bred and is neutered.

What to Expect on Surgery Day

We take all precautionary measures to ensure a safe and comfortable surgical experience for your pet. Your dog will need to be fasted (no food) for about 12 hours prior to their morning surgical check in. Your pet will have a blood panel drawn to make sure organ function is normal before surgery. They will be given a sedative injection to help them relax. A technician/nurse will be assigned to your pet and will monitor their vitals before, during, and after surgery. A small spot on their leg will be shaved and an intravenous catheter will be placed to administer drugs, give IV fluids, and for use in case of an emergency. A medication is given through the IV to induce sleep and a tube is placed down their airway which is hooked up to the anesthesia machine, so they continue to remain asleep and get oxygen throughout the procedure.

If a spay is performed the abdomen will be shaved and cleaned, if a neuter is performed the scrotum will be shaved and cleaned – a complimentary nail trim is also performed. Your pet will be hooked up to monitoring equipment which checks their heart rate, respirations, oxygen levels, EKG, temperature, and blood pressure to name a few. The doctor will then perform the surgery and will close the body wall and skin with several layers of stitches. The anesthesia technician stays with your pet and removes their airway tube. Your pet will be closely observed until they go home with you that afternoon or evening. Sometimes your pet may cough from irritation of the airway tube – this should resolve after a couple days; anything that persists longer they should be re-evaluated.

Post-surgical care. Your pet will probably be sleepy when you pick them up, and you may notice a decrease in their appetite for 24hrs. Your pet will go home with pain medication to take for a few days. You should expect about a one-week recovery period for your pet after a spay or neuter. Excessive activity can lead to swelling or fluid accumulation under the skin, or more serious, a tear in the internal incision line. During the recovery time, you will need to restrict their activity and ensure they are not licking or chewing at their incisions; Elizabethan collars (“the cone”) are always recommended. You may need to take your pet outdoors on a leash to prevent running, jumping, and playing. Stair climbing is okay if they are doing it slowly. If your pet is especially rambunctious, we may recommend an oral sedative medication. Most stitches will be hidden under the skin and will absorb on their own, sometimes external stitches are placed which will need to be removed according to your vet's recommendation.

Elective Procedures to Consider During Surgery

Why Microchip? Did you know 1 in 3 pets will become lost in their lifetime? You may think your pet will never become lost, but accidents happen. Tags and collars can be lost or removed and are not reliable. Microchips are about the size of a grain of rice and are inserted under the skin of the shoulder blades. Microchips can be implanted as early as 8 weeks of age but we recommend during spay or neuter so they will not feel the sting of the implant needle. Microchips have no internal power source so once implanted it will remain in place and stay active for the remainder of your pet's life. The microchip is smooth, nontoxic and nonallergenic. If your pet is found by the local shelter or vet clinic, a hand-held scanner is used to read your pet's unique identification number registered to you. It is important to maintain the microchip registration with current contact info.

What is a gastropexy? You may be familiar with “bloat” in a dog. Bloat is a life-threatening condition in which the stomach fills with air (dilatation) and/or twists upon itself (volvulus). It's also called GDV - gastric dilatation volvulus. It is treated with aggressive medical and surgical intervention which is not always successful. Signs of bloat may include drooling, vomiting, pacing, pain and eventually shock and death. A gastropexy or “stomach tuck” is an elective preventative surgery which involves surgically attaching the stomach to the inside of the abdomen to help prevent rotation – it is typically performed at the time of spay or neuter. Your dog will have a longer incision into their belly, but recovery time is generally expected to be similar to spay/neuter. Breeds at increased risk for bloat are large breed dogs with deep chests such as Great Danes, German Shepherds, and Standard Poodles to name a few. Ask your vet if a gastropexy may be recommended for your dog.



Is pet insurance a good idea? Pet insurance protects against the unexpected and can be a life saver. Most owners pay out-of-pocket for their pets' medical expenses. An emergency visit may cost several thousand dollars. Pet insurance allows your pet to get the care they need without the sudden financial burden. In addition, many pet insurance companies also cover expenses for chronic conditions. Keep in mind, most insurance will not cover pre-existing conditions so the best time to get the insurance is when your dog is young and healthy. A variety of companies are available and their coverages, payout limits, and deductibles vary. While pet insurance may not help with a current expense your pet is having, it can help protect their future expense needs. Some of the more common pet insurance companies include Trupanion, Nationwide, & Embrace.

What should I feed? We recommend food brands formulated by veterinary nutritionists that have excellent sourcing of ingredients, strict quality control, and extensive feeding trials to ensure they meet your pet's nutritional needs. Some of our favorite brands that meet these standards include **Royal Canin, Hill's Science Diet, and Purina Pro Plan**. Puppies have different requirements for amino acids, vitamins, and minerals than adult dogs, therefore feeding a specific puppy food is important. For small dogs, a small breed puppy food will have an appropriate kibble size and calorie content. For puppies anticipated to be larger than 70 pounds, a large breed puppy food is recommended to meet their specific growth needs. The aim is to provide nutrition that allows steady, not rapid growth, so they can reach their full size at a healthy rate. Large breed puppy foods are lower in fat, and calories, and are carefully balanced with calcium and phosphorous to help avoid bone and joint growth disorders.

How much food and how often? In general, it is ideal to feed most puppies 3x a day until around 3 months of age, then feed 2x per day for most. The amount your puppy should be fed varies by their age, breed, and food type – ****you should check the feeding recommendations on their food bag for the best guideline****. You should adjust food amount based their body condition score – you want to be able to feel their ribs but not see them. Also keep in mind calories your puppy is getting from treats, especially during training.

Does my puppy need milk replacer, vitamins, or supplements? Once a puppy reaches 4-6 weeks of age, they should be starting to eat solid food, so once they are home with you, they do not need any supplemental milk replacer. A vitamin is not necessary if they are eating a balanced commercial diet. Supplements are most likely not necessary unless otherwise recommended by your vet.

What are good treats options? Treats are an important part of training, but keep in mind they do add calories. Good treat training options include 1 calorie training treats, Lean Treats, unseasoned popcorn, fresh veggies such as carrots and zucchini. Avoid grapes, raisins, macadamia nuts – these are toxic. Some very food driven dogs and puppies can even be treated with their own kibble – a good way to ensure they are not getting over treated.

When should I start training my puppy? Training should start as soon as you get your puppy home. Basic commands sit and stay can be mastered at home. It is also important to get them used to having their feet, ears, and mouths handled. Remember, short sessions with positive reinforcement work best. We recommend formal training classes starting around 12 weeks of age, after they have at least 2 sets of vaccines. It is important to make sure vaccines are required if other puppies and dogs are attending the training sessions. We do not recommend taking your dog to other public places such as dog parks until the vaccine series is complete.

What about shampoo, bath frequency, and grooming? Use an oatmeal or aloe-based dog-specific shampoo which will have a balanced pH designed to keep their skin and coat happy. Bathing once monthly will help remove dirt, debris, and excessive oil from causing odor and inflammation of skin. Bathing more frequently may strip the coat's natural protective barrier, but of course, if they get dirty rinse them as often as needed. Certain breeds like Poodles, Cocker Spaniels, and Yorkies need their coats groomed every 6-8 weeks to prevent matting. We recommend waiting until your puppy is fully vaccinated at 4 months of age before having them professionally groomed. If you have them groomed sooner, you should make sure the groomer facility requires vaccines to reduce risk of exposure to infectious disease. Remember, you can start basic grooming at home anytime with nail trims, baths, and brushing. Keep sessions short and offer lots of praise and treats.



Is my puppy sleeping a normal amount? Puppies play hard and nap hard too. Most puppies need between 15-20 hours of sleep per day. Sleep is important time for their bodies to recuperate and allow continued growth and development. Provide a quiet place for them to rest.

Why does my puppy drink so much water? It is normal for puppies to drink a lot of water. In fact, they may drink about 1 oz of water per pound of weight per day. Water is necessary for them to grow, develop, and digest their food. It takes time for puppies' kidneys to become fully functional, usually 11-16 weeks of age. This means they cannot concentrate their urine yet, so most of what they drink gets urinated out, making it difficult for them to stay hydrated. Because of this, it is important to not limit their water intake. Though less likely, excessive thirst in a puppy may be caused by a urinary tract infection or a metabolic disease.



How much exercise is appropriate? Excessive or forced activity like jogging can stress your pup's immature skeletal system and may result in long term damage in dogs predisposed to hip dysplasia and cartilage disorders. A good rule of thumb is not to exercise your puppy more than they would do if they were playing with an age-mate. So, avoid prolonged fetch, long jogs with you, or other hard impact activities. Wait until they are around 12 months of age (up to 15-18 months for large/giant breeds), when most growth plates close. Acceptable activities include leash walks, swimming, scent work, and coursework. See puppyculture.com for age-appropriate exercise ideas.

What about baby teeth? Puppies have baby teeth that fall out just like human babies. Their baby teeth start coming in around 3-4 weeks of age. Around 5-6 weeks of age they should have all 28 baby teeth. Around 12-16 weeks of age their baby teeth (also known as deciduous teeth) start to fall out as their permanent adult teeth erupt. You may notice their gums are red, bleed, and have an odor; you may find tiny teeth around the home, or they may swallow them – this is okay. Around 6 months of age, most puppies should have all 42 adult teeth. Some puppies may not lose all their baby teeth and if they are still present around the time of spay or neuter your vet may need to remove them. Baby teeth that do not fall out may affect the eruption of the adult tooth and will build up tartar causing dental disease.

Is it normal for my puppy to get car sick? Motion sickness in dogs, especially puppies is quite common. Signs may include whining, pacing, excessive drooling, lip smacking, vomiting or diarrhea. The reason may be due to inner parts of their ear involved with balance not being fully developed. Most puppies outgrow motion sickness by 1 year of age. You can help ease their symptoms by with-holding food (not water) for 12 hours before the car ride. Keep car rides as short as possible. You may need to stop along the way and let them have a short walk. They may benefit from either a prescription or over the counter anti-nausea medication – ask your vet for details.

How can I make my pet less anxious in the car?

If your pet is especially anxious in the car, some counter conditioning may be needed as they may associate the car with a negative experience (such as a once yearly vaccine visit). Try to make the car a comfortable place for them – if they use a crate at home, put them in it in the car. Give them a familiar scent from home such as your t-shirt or their bed. Make sure the car is cool and quiet when they enter it. Start the engine but do not leave. The next day start the engine and back out of the drive, then return. Each day repeat the same exercise until each day you are going further distances. Take them somewhere they enjoy like the dog park or hiking so they are rewarded after riding in the car. Give lots of treats and praise and do not yell or punish if they are whining or anxious. Some dogs may benefit from an over-the-counter calming supplement or may need a prescription anxiolytic medication which can be discussed with your vet.

What about chewing? Chewing is a natural and important puppy behavior common until around 8 months of age. Puppies learn about their world by putting things in their mouth and chewing on them. Puppies chew because they're teething, they're playing, and they're learning about their environment. Although it can be a nuisance, it is unlikely that you will be able to stop normal chewing completely and trying to do so can cause stress and anxiety. Instead, you should provide safe chew toys for teething such as C.E.T. chews, Oravet chews, or rubber-based chews like Kongs. Puzzle toys and food dispensing toys will keep their mind and muscles occupied. Avoid any toys that can be easily broken or torn up such as fabric/stuffed animals, rope toys, plastic toys, and toys with squeakers. Bones, antlers, and plastic bones are hard and can damage teeth. Rawhides can cause a choking hazard or blockage if swallowed. The fuzz on tennis balls can be abrasive and wear teeth over time. Chews should be given under supervision only. Visit vohc.org for a list of veterinary approved chews and dental health products.





We all want to make sure our pets are getting the best nutrition to live their longest, healthiest lives. With a huge variety of options available, picking the right diet for them can seem overwhelming. Your pet may have specific nutritional requirements which can be discussed with your vet. Here are some key points to consider and look for.

- **Is commercial dog kibble really okay?** While kibble may not look appetizing to us, most products contain meat, grains, vegetables, fruits, and vitamins which are important to meet your dog's needs. Commercial dog food is considered a safe and healthful option and is recommended by the American College of Veterinary Nutrition as designed to meet all dog's nutritional needs.
- **What is an AAFCO statement?** Not all commercial kibbles are alike. It is important to check the food bag for an AAFCO statement, "Association of American Feed Control Officials." This is basically a stamp of approval that the food is "complete" – has all nutrients that dogs of that life stage require, and "balanced"- meaning the nutrients are in correct ratios.
- **What else should you look for?** We recommend food brands formulated by veterinary nutritionists that have excellent sourcing of ingredients, strict quality control, and extensive feeding trials to ensure they meet your pet's nutritional needs. Some of our favorite brands that meet these standards include **Royal Canin, Hill's Science Diet, and Purina Pro Plan.**
- **What about life stages?** Life stage foods are important because they contain specific nutrients important for growth and energy requirements. Puppies should generally be fed puppy food until they are around 1 year of age. Pregnant or nursing dog should be fed puppy food or a food specific to pregnancy. Adult kibble should generally be fed until around 7 years of age, when you should then consider a senior food.
- **What about large breed puppies?** Puppies expected to reach more than 70 pounds should be fed a large breed puppy food specially formulated to meet their specific growth needs. The aim is to provide nutrition that allows steady, not rapid growth, so they can reach their full size at a healthy rate. Large breed puppy foods are lower in fat, and calories, and are carefully balanced with calcium and phosphorous to help avoid bone and joint growth disorders.
- **What about grains?** As grain and gluten-free diets gained popularity among humans, dog food manufacturers tried keeping up with the trend, churning out food containing potatoes, peas, and lentils in place of grains. Unfortunately, this turned out to be devastating as recent research is finding some of these dogs fed grain-free diets now have a form of heart disease called dilated cardiomyopathy, or DCM. To help prevent this life-threatening disease, ***we recommend all dogs be fed diets containing grains*** such as wheat, oats, barley, rice, corn, and rye. Grains are an excellent source of nutrition for dogs, and, unlike people, it is extremely rare for dogs to have a grain allergy. Research continues into this topic, please visit avma.org for the most recent additions.
- **What about Organic, Human-grade and Holistic?** Organic food describes the process with which plants and animals are raised; it does not refer to the quality of materials. Human-grade and holistic are not defined by AAFCO and cannot accurately describe a pet food.
- **How fast and often should I change foods?** While eating the same food again and again may seem dull to us, it is not necessary to buy a different flavor of food when the bag runs out – in fact, changing foods often may cause GI upset and make your dog more prone to developing a food allergy. If you do decide to change foods, it is best to do a gradual transition over the period of a week. Start with 75% old food and 25% new, gradually increase until reaching 100% new food.

- **What about raw diets?** While raw diets may seem appealing because our dog's ancestors lived on a similar diet, our dog's needs have changed over time. Raw diets are generally considered unbalanced and may damage the health of dogs. They often are unbalanced in calcium and phosphorous which can cause bone and teeth problems, especially in puppies. Diets containing whole bones or pieces may cause choking, an internal puncture, or may break teeth. In addition, the bacteria often found in the raw meat such as salmonella and E. coli can threaten both you and your dog.
- **What about home-cooked diets?** Knowing what goes into your pet's food may bring peace of mind but creating a complete-balanced meal is difficult. Providing a meat, vegetable, and carbohydrate source is not enough – your pet will still be missing the vitamins and minerals necessary for a healthful life. If you feel home-cooking is best for your pet, we recommend visiting a website called balanceit.com. They provide pet specific recipes and a supplement to help ensure a balanced diet. Alternatively, you can have recipes formulated by a nutritionist certified by the American College of Veterinary Medicine by visiting acvn.org.
- **What about by-products, chicken meal, & fillers?** While by-products are not something we may eat, organ meats provide a valuable source of energy, vitamins, and minerals and are suitable for animal consumption according to AAFCO. Chicken meal provides a highly digestible source of concentrated protein. Fillers are hard to define but generally thought of as unhealthy ingredients with little nutritional value. However, ingredients typically thought of as "fillers" such as corn, soy, wheat, and rice do not fit the description and often provide essential protein, vitamins, and minerals.
- **What about treats and table food?** As a general rule, it is best to avoid feeding your dog food from the table. Human food is often too high in fat and may contain garlic and onions which can be toxic. Treats should not make up more than 10% of your dog's diet. Healthy treat options include Lean Treats 1-2 calorie training treats, baby carrots, squash/zucchini, apple slices, unsalted green beans, and plain popcorn. See vohc.org for a list of approved dental treats.
- **How much food and how often should you feed?** Most dogs should be fed 2x per day. The amount your dog should be fed varies by their age, breed, and food type.

#1: Use a standard 8 oz measuring cup.

#2: Check the feeding recommendations on their food bag for the best guideline.

Keep in mind that feeding guidelines are calculated based on highest energy needs possible (intact sporting dogs). Often our spayed/neutered and more sedentary pets need less than the feeding guide lists.

#3: Adjust your pet's food amount based on their body condition score.

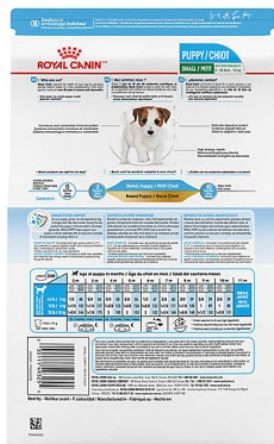
Ribs should be palpable with minimal fat covering; their waist should be easily visible when viewed from above.

#1



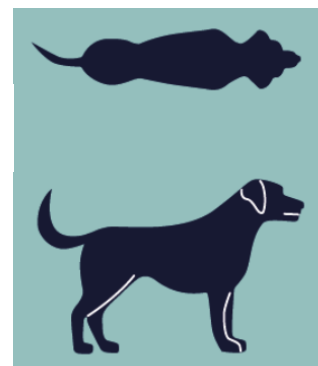
Standard measuring cup

#2



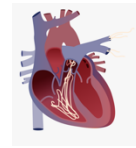
Check guidelines on back of food bag

#3

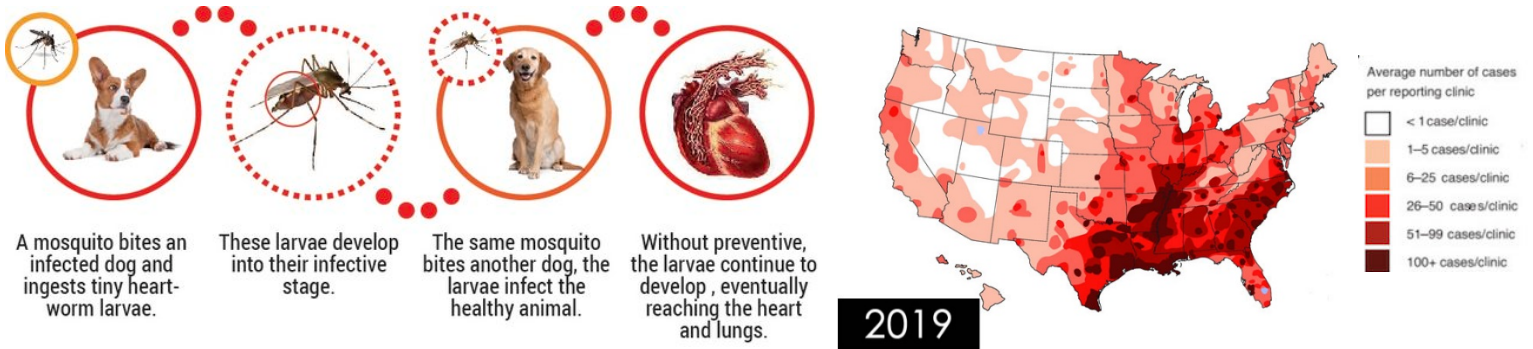


Adjust food amount based on body condition

Heartworm Disease in Dogs



- **What is heartworm disease?** It is a serious and potentially fatal parasitic disease in pets in the United States and many other parts of the world. It is caused by worms that grow up to a foot in length that live in the heart, lungs, and blood vessels of affected pets, causing severe lung disease, heart failure and damage to other organs in the body. Heartworm disease causes lasting damage that affects the dog's health and quality of life long after the parasites are gone.
- **How is heartworm transmitted?** Heartworm is transmitted by mosquitos when a mosquito bites an infected animal and ingests "baby" worms, called microfilaria. When the same mosquito bites another animal, the microfilaria are passed into the new host. Once inside a new host, it takes approximately 6 months for the larvae to develop into sexually mature adult heartworms.



- **What are the signs of heartworm disease in dogs?** In the early stages of the disease, many dogs show few symptoms or no symptoms at all. The longer the infection persists, the more likely symptoms will develop. Signs may include a mild persistent cough, reluctance to exercise, fatigue after moderate activity, decreased appetite, and weight loss. As heartworm disease progresses, pets may develop heart failure and the appearance of a swollen belly due to excess fluid in the abdomen. Dogs with large numbers of heartworms can develop a sudden blockages of blood flow within the heart leading to a life-threatening form of cardiovascular collapse.
- **I didn't think heartworm disease was really a problem in Colorado?** Unfortunately, this is changing, and we are seeing more heartworm cases across our state. Heartworm disease is spreading to new regions of the country each year and has been diagnosed in all 50 states. Reasons for this change include: 1) stray dogs, coyotes, wolves, and foxes can be carriers of heartworms, 2) climate change increasing the range of mosquitoes, 3) the relocation of infected pets.
- **My dog doesn't spend much time outdoors and is rarely around other dogs, does he/she really need heartworm prevention?** Yes, because infected mosquitoes can come inside, both outdoor and indoor pets are at risk.
- **How is heartworm disease detected?** Detection is simple and requires a small blood test that checks for the presence of heartworm proteins. The earlier heartworm disease is detected and treated, the better the chances your pet will recover. All dogs should be tested every 12 months for heartworm infection.
- **Why is annual testing necessary if my dog is on prevention year-round?** To ensure that the preventatives are working. Heartworm preventatives are highly effective, but not 100%. If you miss just one dose of monthly medication – or give it late – it can leave your dog unprotected allowing heartworm larvae to molt into a juvenile/immature adult stage, which cannot be effectively eliminated by preventives. If your dog becomes heartworm positive, the heartworm prevention can lead to a rare but possibly severe reaction.
- **When should heartworm prevention be started?** Preventatives should be started as early as the product label allows, typically around 6-8 weeks of age. The risk of puppies getting heartworm disease is equal to that of adult pets. Puppies should remain on the prevention monthly and when they are 7-12 months of age, they should get their first heartworm test. Heartworm prevention is given based on weight, so puppies will need updated monthly weights to continue the correct dose.
- **What does prevention do?** It does not prevent mosquito bites. The goal of prevention is to constantly kill off the baby worms, or microfilaria, to prevent adult worms from developing. Because heartworms must be eliminated before they reach the adult stage, it is extremely important that heartworm preventives be administered on a strict monthly schedule.
- **How often should my dog get heartworm prevention?** We recommend once monthly preventive products be administered year-round. One of our favorite products is Interceptor Plus. It is a flavored chewable product that prevents heartworm disease and treats and controls most intestinal parasites. If your pet does not like the oral medication, a variety of topical monthly products are available too such as Revolution and Advantage Multi. You can pick up Interceptor Plus at our office or order any of the heartworm products on our online pharmacy – just visit highplainsvet.com.
- **What happens if my dog tests positive?** Most infected dogs can be successfully treated. Once the diagnosis is confirmed, heartworm treatment involves several months of treatment including at least three injections of a medication to kill adult worms. Treatment involves significant activity restriction, is expensive, and is not without risks.

For more information, please visit heartwormsociety.org. Or ask your veterinarian any questions you may have.



Here are some parasites seen in Colorado. Keep in mind that some of these parasites are transmissible to people, though many infections are prevented with good handwashing and hygiene. It is important to pick up and dispose of your pet's feces to help prevent infection. The best way to keep you, your family, and your pet safe is to keep them on a monthly prescription parasite control product such as Interceptor Plus which controls hookworms, roundworm, whipworms, tapeworms, and heartworms. Fleas, ticks, and mites can be treated and prevented with monthly oral products such as Credelio. For more info about these parasites and products used to control them, visit veterinarypartner.com.

INTERNAL PARASITES: Fecal floats and/or blood tests can detect infections with the following organisms:

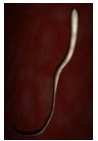
Hookworms – Adult worms live in the intestines where they latch onto the intestines and suck blood causing anemia. Eggs are passed in feces and are picked up in the soil. Pets can also become infected through skin penetration, eating infected prey animals, eating infected insects, and young puppies can get hookworms from their mother's milk. People can also become infected with hookworms; the most common route involves the parasite migrating through the skin.



Roundworms – These worms can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and general unthriftiness. They can grow up to 7 inches and resemble spaghetti. The worms live in the intestines and lay eggs which are shed in feces. Contaminated soil is a risk to pets and people. Routes of transmission include puppy embryonic development and during nursing, from eating infected meats and prey, and soil contamination. In people this parasite can be especially serious as it migrates through tissues.



Whipworms – These small worms live in the large intestines where they suck blood and cause diarrhea that is often bloody. They may also cause an inability to conserve salt leading to a dehydration crisis. Whipworms can be tricky to detect and treat because they only periodically shed eggs and they have a long maturation process. The eggs are extremely hardy in the environment. They can be treated/prevented with monthly deworming products such as Interceptor plus. Luckily, this parasite is not considered transmissible to people.



Tapeworms – These long ribbon-like worms are so named because they are long, and flat. They break into segments that may be observed around the anus or in fresh feces and look like rice grains. Tapeworms live in the small intestines where they attach and absorb nutrients from the host's gut. There are two different types of tapeworms – taenia, which are acquired from eating infected rodents and raw meat, and dipylidium, which are acquired from swallowing infected fleas. Distinguishing type can be important; flea control is essential to prevent recurring infection of dipylidium.



Giardia – This microscopic protozoan parasite can live in the environment for months, especially in water. It is infectious to many mammals, including humans. It causes diarrhea although some animals can be asymptomatic carriers. Treatment often involves prescription medications, separate from standard monthly heartworm preventatives. It is very important to pick up feces to prevent recontamination and bathe your pet during treatment to remove cysts from their anal area.



Coccidia – This microscopic protozoan parasite causes a watery diarrhea and is most common in young puppies. Dogs most often become infected when housed in groups such as shelter and breeding situations through fecal-oral transmission. They can also get it from eating infected prey or insects. It is unlikely for puppies to transmit this infection to adult dogs – their immune systems are usually sufficient to fight off the infection. It is treated with a medication separate from a standard de-wormer.



Heartworms – Heartworms are a blood parasite transmitted by mosquitos. Heartworms live and reproduce in the heart of certain mammals including dogs and cats. Patients are often asymptomatic in the early stages of disease but as it progresses, they may develop heart failure. Heartworm disease is becoming more common in Colorado. We recommend annual blood testing and heartworm prevention (such as Interceptor plus) monthly year-round.



EXTERNAL PARASITES:

Fleas – These pesky parasites are visible to the naked eye and affect a wide variety of mammals by sucking their blood. They can cause severe itching, skin infections, allergies, anemia, and transmit bacterial infections Bartonella & Plague. In addition, they can transmit tapeworms. Although fleas are not typically a common problem in Colorado, it is a good idea to treat for them during warm months of the year and anytime you travel outside of the state.



Ticks – These blood sucking skin parasites feed on the blood of their hosts and can transmit a variety of infectious to our pets and people including Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Lyme disease, and Tularemia to name a few. In general, if the tick is removed within 16 hours of attachment, the risk of transmission is low. If you go hiking, camping, have lots of wildlife in your neighborhood, or travel outside the state, tick prevention is recommended.



Demodex – This microscopic skin mite is a normal resident of dogs, acquired from close contact with their mother after birth. In some cases, these mites can cause problems leading to localized or generalized areas of hair loss and itching. It is most often seen in young dogs before their immune systems fully mature and is generally not considered transmissible to other dogs and cannot be transmitted to cats or people. It can be detected with a skin scraping and is treated with certain prescription medications.



Sarcoptic mange – These microscopic skin mites, better known as scabies, burrow into the skin causing severe itching and allergic response. They prefer hairless regions and often starts on ear flaps, elbows, and abdomen. They can infect humans and cats, but they are not the preferred host, so it does not persist. They can be difficult to detect on skin scrapes. If there is any suspicion of this parasite, treatment with prescription meds, such as Credelio, Bravecto, or Revolution, should commence.



Ear mites – These tiny infectious organisms resemble microscopic ticks and feed off ear secretions and cause a dark debris resembling coffee grounds. They are spread through physical contact and can be passed from cats to dogs and vice versa, therefore treating all pets in the home is imperative. It's important to remember that ear mites are less common than bacterial and yeast ear infections, therefore it's always important to have your pet's ears checked with the vet if you have any concerns.





Even though dogs have been domesticated for thousands of years, each new puppy must learn about humans. Socialization is the process of getting puppies used to people, other animals, and experiences that they will encounter frequently in their adult lives. The most sensitive period for successful socialization is during the first 3 – 4 months of life.

The experiences the pet has during this time will have a major influence on its developing personality and how well it gets along with people and other animals. It is very important for puppies to have frequent, positive social experiences during these early months to prevent asocial behavior, fear, and biting. Continued exposure to a variety of people and other animals, as the pet grows and develops, is also an essential part of maintaining good social skills.

Puppy socialization – what to do. As soon as your veterinarian determines that your puppy is adequately vaccinated, take it on as many walks and outings as possible. Put your pet in situations that they may experience as an adult, such as car rides, being in a carrier, toys, grooming procedures, meeting other animals, meeting new people, and trips to the veterinarian. Introduce your puppy to new people, animals, and things in a non-threatening manner, which means it's not scary. If your pet reacts with fear, you likely need to scale back the interaction to the level the puppy is comfortable. This could mean letting them watch instead of play, distracting them with treats, or moving them farther away from whatever they are afraid of until they become comfortable.

At home. Gently touch, hold or restrain, and physically interact with your pet every day. This is especially important at an early age because it helps your young pet become comfortable with humans and being handled, and it also helps to speed and enhance their physical and mental development. Handling your puppy should include gently touching the face, ears, and paws to make grooming and examinations easier. Restraining them means holding them in place gently and in a non-threatening manner so they can get used to being held and to promote calm demeanors for veterinary check-ups or grooming. Get them used to E-collars early (cones worn after surgery) so it won't be scary when they need it after spay/neuter procedure. Get them used to wearing t-shirts and wraps so bandages in future are not scary.

Puppy classes. Attending puppy classes is an excellent way of ensuring multiple contacts with a variety of people and other dogs. Training involves enrolling puppies early, before they pick up bad habits, and at an age when they learn very quickly. We recommend puppy classes starting around 12 weeks of age, after at least 2 sets of vaccines. These classes can help puppies get off to a great start with training and offer an excellent opportunity for important social experiences with other puppies and a wide variety of people. You can also arrange play dates with other animals you know are vaccinated.

People, people, people! It is essential that every puppy meets as many new people as possible (including babies, children, adults, and seniors), in a wide variety of situations, but be careful not to overwhelm it. They should be exposed to new sights, sounds, tastes, and smells. Keep things positive and non-threatening with treats, toys, and affection. Begin with calm introductions to one or two people at a time. If the pet handles this well, then more people, increased noise, and more activity can be added. It can be beneficial to ask each person who meets the puppy to give it a small piece of kibble or a tiny treat. This will teach the puppy to look forward to meeting people. It will also discourage hand shyness since the puppy will learn to associate new people and an outstretched hand with something positive. Once the puppy has learned to sit on command, have each new friend ask it to sit before giving the treat. This teaches a proper greeting and will make the puppy less likely to jump up on people. You should make certain that the puppy has the opportunity to meet and receive treats from a wide variety of people. The fear that might arise from the way a person looks, acts, sounds, moves, might be prevented by exposure during the socialization period.

More people, especially kids! Every effort must be made to see that the young pup has plenty of opportunities to learn about children. They can seem like a completely different species to dogs since they walk, act, and talk much differently than adults. Running, screaming, bicycles, roller blades and skateboards are also some of the varied stimuli that might be more common when children are around. Puppies that grow up without meeting children when they are young may never feel comfortable around them when they become adults. In addition, if you consider that perhaps you might want your pet one day to be a service or visitation dog, the range of possible sights, sounds, smells, actions, and interactions to which your dog might be exposed could also include riding on elevators, the sounds of hospital equipment, wheelchairs, etc.



See our socialization checklist for more ideas on what you should expose your dog to. Lack of experience with a variety of people during puppyhood is a common cause of social fear, avoidance, and biting. Take the pup to visit friends' homes to interact with them and with their pets. The ideal home is one with calm children and calm pets that don't go out to parks or other areas where they might pick up disease organisms and bring them back home, and where the pets have received appropriate immunizations and parasite control.

Avoid unpleasant experiences. A young puppy's interactions should always be supervised to ensure nothing happens that might make it afraid of people. Go slow with socialization exposure, and if the pet ever seems anxious, take some time out and then re-expose it to people in slightly calmer situations. In addition, avoid all physical punishment. Harsh scolding or punishing a young pet will damage its bond with you and weaken its trust in people. Techniques such as swatting the pup, shaking it by the scruff, rubbing its face in a mess, and roughly forcing it onto its back should never be used. Pets that are raised using these methods may grow up to fear the human hand and are more likely to display avoidance or become fear biters. Socializing takes time and patience, but the benefits are worthwhile, so be sure not to miss the opportunity to guide your pup through this important process.

Consequences of Not Socializing. Socializing puppies early within the socialization developmental period has been shown to decrease fear, aggression, and anxiety of new people, animals, or situations. Pets not properly socialized often have an increased sensitivity to new experiences. They are often fearful of people or other animals, even within their own species. This can result in avoiding people or other animals, anxious behaviors, or even aggression. Lack of socialization can also delay development and decrease the puppy's ability to learn and make connections about social norms. These issues can make it difficult for them to live easily with others and in some cases may lead to them being re-homed or sent to animal shelters. Giving your new puppy significant socialization during that critical stage will pay off by helping your pet become a confident adult that is friendly and well adjusted.

How Kids SHOULD NOT Interact with Dogs

It's common sense. Just imagine how people should interact with each other.

Avoid taking people's food	Avoid bothering dogs when they are eating
Avoid stealing other people's toys	Avoid taking a dog's bones or toys
Avoid putting your face right up to someone else's face	Avoid putting your face right up to a dog's face
Avoid bothering when asleep	Avoid bothering animals when they are resting. Let sleeping dogs lie.
Avoid pestering	Avoid grabbing tail/ears
Avoid climbing on or trampling	Avoid climbing on or trampling
Avoid pinching	Avoid hugging. Most dogs dislike it.
Avoid screaming around	Avoid hollering and shouting. Use your "inside" voice instead.

How Kids SHOULD Interact with Dogs

Use common sense.

Be polite and kind to pets	Learn to recognize when your dog is scared or anxious
Play appropriate games with pets, such as:	
Fetch	Training tricks (like roll over, shake, beg, etc.)
Walking and running with a dog	Playing hide-n-seek
Always remember:	
Supervise all interactions. Accidents can happen in a split second.	Train your dog to associate the kids with positive experiences so he'll be more likely to tolerate your child in case she accidentally interacts inappropriately.

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The Art and Science of Animal Behavior
For additional free dog bite prevention resources and more dog behavior books and products, visit www.drSophiaYin.com.



For additional Low Stress Handling information, posters, flyers, books, and DVDs, please visit our website at <http://DrSophiaYin.com>



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SOCIALIZATION is the process of introducing a puppy to the world in a way that will help him be confident and unafraid of people, places and things that he will encounter throughout his life. The most critical socialization window occurs before the age of 12 weeks, and that window is considered to be closing by 5 months. Generally the younger the puppy is when he is socialized, the more quickly and easily he gains confidence. Waiting too long can result in a need for the more difficult process of rehabilitation instead of socialization. Most aggression issues are simply a result of inefficient socialization.

RULES OF SOCIALIZATION:

Each socialization exposure must be fun for your puppy. If he is forced to confront fears he's not ready to handle, the process can backfire and create a fearful/aggressive response. Go at his pace, and at a distance he feels safe. Your puppy should be the one to initiate each approach to something new and be allowed to retreat when needed to feel safe.

Socialization includes generalization. Though your puppy may be fine with the toddlers or dogs in your home, that does not mean he is fine with all children and dogs. Even if he is in a class, he will need to meet new and different dogs and people, and in different places, after his classmates and their owners become familiar to him. You need to continue to expose him to new things, places, and contexts to best generalize his confidence with new things.

Pair treats with exposures to make good associations. If your puppy is worried about those children he sees running across the street, it can help if the sight of the children makes cheese suddenly appear. Or if he doesn't like her paws touched, a brief touch followed by a lick of peanut butter from a spoon can make paw touches easier to handle. If he will not take food, that is a good indication that you need to back up and lower the intensity of the exposure with more distance or less pressure.

If your puppy seems to be fearful of certain things and doesn't gain confidence quickly, please see a force-free trainer to help you. Remember that **socialization is a time-sensitive procedure.**

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Your Puppy Socialization Check List ✓



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Puppy Socialization Check List

Visual & Noises	Places	Interacting with people	Meeting People	People Sounds
Sirens	Veterinarians	Holding puppy	Men with:	Talking loudly
Fireworks	Boarding kennels	Touching paws	Hats	Laughing
Car horns	Daycare	Touching muzzle	Sunglasses	Crying
Traffic	Pet shop	Touching ears	Jewelry	Shouting
Thunderstorms	Maneuver & Touch	Touching tail	Helmets	Arguing
Fairs and festivals	Stairs	Hugging puppy	Cigarettes	Children playing
Shopping malls	Escalators	Touching collar	Hats	
Busy traffic	Tile	Checking teeth	Sunglasses	Meeting Animals
Crowds of people	Marble	Clipping nails	Jewelry	Puppies
Airplanes	Asphalt	Brushing teeth	Helmets	Male adult dogs
Helicopters	concrete	Checking between pads	Children:	Female adult dogs
Wheelchairs	Grass	Cleaning ears	in strollers	Kittens
Crutches, canes	Sand	Touching rear legs	2-4 years old	Cats
Bicycles	Carpet	Brushing, grooming	4-12 years old	Horses
Skateboards	Wood		13-19 years old	Cow
Radios	Smell		Adults with	Sheep
loud cars			Canes	Chickens
Motorbikes			Wheel chairs	Ducks
Parking lots			Elderly Person	
Door bells			Male	
Knocking on doors			Female	
Trucks				
Trains				



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