

# Caring for your new puppy

**Congratulations on the new addition to your family. Owning a puppy is hard work but very rewarding. We hope that by reading the following information, we can help you to give your new puppy the best start towards enjoying a long, healthy and happy life with you.**



## Why Vaccinate?...

Dogs and puppies are at risk of infection by a number of viruses. A simple vaccination program can protect them from most of these diseases. Vaccinations are a cost effective way of protecting your furry family member, and prevent the high costs involved with the treatment of these diseases. All vaccines used are produced to the highest standards of safety and effectiveness.

DISEASE	SYMPTOMS	SPREAD
Parvovirus	Fever, vomiting, diarrhea (with blood when advanced), dehydration and shock.	Contact with dog faeces and vomit in the soil, on concrete, pathways, parks, anywhere outside. Highly contagious, the virus can lie dormant for years.
Distemper	Fever, pneumonia, mucous discharge from the nose, bloody diarrhea, muscle twitches and seizures.	Close proximity to affected or unvaccinated dogs.
Hepatitis	Fever, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea, enlarged lymph nodes, jaundice.	Contact with affected or unvaccinated dogs
Kennel Cough	Harsh dry non-productive hacking cough, discharge from the nose.	Inhaling vapours of the virus in the air, close contact with affected or unvaccinated dogs.
Leptospirosis	Depression, lethargy, vomiting, fever, muscle stiffness, jaundice, labored breathing, vomiting and diarrhoea often with blood, blood in urine.	Bacteria spread by coming into contact with the urine of affected animals, by drinking or swimming in contaminated water.

## When can I take my puppy for walks?...

Please note that puppies are not fully protected until 2 weeks after the final puppy course vaccination, and until then, puppies should be kept on your own property at all times. This form of **quarantine** is

necessary to protect your new family member. Unfortunately, this means no walks to the park, swims at the beach or visits to friend's houses until the quarantine period is over. We recommend you socialise and train your puppy in a safe environment such as puppy pre-school.

## Worming...

Puppies should be wormed fortnightly from 2 weeks of age. We recommend a top quality true all wormer medication such as Drontal suspension specifically for puppies.

Worming medications come in both tablet and liquid form and need to be given orally with food. Please feel free to use our weigh scales to accurately dose your puppy.

Once your puppy reaches 12 weeks of age we recommend worming once a month due to our climate speeding up the intestinal worm life cycle.

Puppies and dogs are wormed against:

- Roundworms** - causing diarrhoea, a potbelly, poor coat condition, and painful tummy
- Hookworms** - causing blood loss (anaemia), diarrhoea, iron deficiency and low protein
- Whipworms** - causing blood in stools, mucous diarrhoea, poor body condition and vomiting
- Tapeworms** - causing irritation around the bottom (encouraging "scooting") & poor growth

Intestinal worm infestations can make your puppy very sick and in some cases (such as hookworm and heavy infestations) are fatal. Intestinal worms can also be spread from your puppy to your family - the only way to protect your family is by encouraging hand washing after handling pets, and by regularly worming your pets.



## Heartworm...

Heartworm is a disease spread by a worm called *Dirofilaria immitis*. Immature worm larvae are injected under the dog's skin by mosquitoes and take 6 months to grow into an adult worm, which lives in the heart and surrounding blood vessels.

If not on a heartworm prevention, heartworm positive dogs can remain undetected for a long time – it is only later in the disease that signs of heart disease (coughing and poor exercise tolerance) is noticed.

In the case of heartworm, prevention is definitely better than cure. Treatment is expensive and not without risk. If your pup is less than 6 months old, they can start on a heartworm prevention immediately. If your dog is 6 months or older, a heartworm detection test is strongly recommended, prior to starting on prevention.

Heartworm prevention is available as a yearly injection (Proheart), a monthly topspot application, or monthly tablet or chew. Some medications, such as Interceptor, will protect your dog against both heartworm and intestinal worms. It is important that your pet is kept up to date with heartworm prevention, whether it be monthly or yearly. If your pet misses a monthly heartworm prevention, we recommend a blood test six months from the time of the missed treatment.

# Ticks & Fleas...

Ticks and fleas are a problem in the NT as they love a warm, moist climate. Infestations can be difficult to control - what you see on your pet is only a very small percentage of the flea or tick population in your house and garden. Treatments need to be administered every month and even when the infestation seems under control. There are a number of treatments available for tick and flea control.

- Puppies from 2 days of age can safely have Frontline Spray applied.
- Monthly topspot applications
- Tick and Flea Collars
- Washes/Rinses (we use Fido's flea & tick concentrate in our hydrobath)
- Monthly injection for tick control (requires a vet consultation)
- For complete tick and flea control, we also recommend having your yard and house sprayed

Ticks and fleas are not only irritating, but they can be life threatening in some instances. Severe infestations of fleas and ticks can cause anaemia requiring blood transfusions. While we don't have paralysis tick in the NT, ticks do carry blood diseases like Babesia and Erlichia. And just one single flea can cause skin allergies called Flea Allergy Dermatitis resulting in severe irritation and infections.

# Desexing...

We strongly recommend desexing male dogs (castration) and female dogs (spay) at 6 months of age. There are many reasons why vets recommend desexing.

- **To maximise life span** – desexing helps prevent mammary tumours, pyometra (infected uterus), prostate disease, testicular cancer, and helps prevent some hormone related diseases.
- **To prevent unwanted pregnancy**
- **To prevent seasons** – ie bleeding and attracting neighbourhood dogs. Palmerston City Council prohibits females on heat to venture outside their own boundaries.
- **To reduce unwanted behaviours** – such as inter-dog aggression, dog-people aggression, dominance and territory marking with urine.
- **To help prevent wandering and roaming**
- **To reduce council costs** – cheaper registration and lower “bailing out of jail” costs
- **To help reduce the stray dog population** – helps to reduce the number of animals that have to be put to sleep in shelters.

Please note that there are a few **false** ideas about desexing.

- **Female dogs will get fat** (weight gain is actually caused by overfeeding or under exercising)
- **Female dogs should have a season or litter before being desexed** (there is no evidence that this benefits the dog)
- **Males will be small** (their size is actually genetically pre-determined)
- **Desexing will change their personality** (your dog will still be the same dog that you love, but some socially unacceptable behaviours may improve)

# Microchipping...

We also recommend microchipping at the time of desexing. A microchip is a small, rice grain sized silicon chip inserted under the skin between the shoulder blades. It stores your dog's personalised ID number for life. This number is registered on an Australia wide and international database. When a found dog is scanned by a vet clinic, shelter or council, the microchip number will be linked to personal contact details, enabling a pet to be quickly and effectively returned to its owner. Remember that your dog will still need to be registered with your City Council.



# Socialisation & Training

We strongly recommend enrolling in puppy classes, as it provides your puppy with a safe environment for learning, playing and socialising. It also provides you and your family with a fun place to learn and socialise! At puppy school you will learn basic health care, basic obedience training, socialisation, how to prevent and identify behavioural problems early on, and diet advice. This is the best way to spend time finding out the answers to all your puppy care questions!

## Diet...

When you bring your new puppy home, it is best to feed your puppy the same diet it had prior to adoption for at least a few days. This helps to minimise stress and the chance of diarrhoea and an upset tummy. Any new food should be gradually introduced by mixing it with the original diet. Over the next couple of weeks, gradually increase the amount of new food and reduce the original.

Every breed of dog has its own individual growth rate, and small breeds mature earlier than large breeds. Please ask our nurses for puppy diet requirements specific to your puppy's breed – we stock a range of premium quality foods including Royal Canin. Feeding a growing dog a premium quality balanced diet, and the correct amount of food for weight and age, is the best way to prevent some health problems later in life. Rapid growth in large breed dogs is discouraged as it can predispose them to bone and joint disorders. Overfeeding in small breeds of dog can contribute to obesity.

Ideally, up to the age of 4-6 months, 3-4 meals should be fed each day. Follow the feeding guide on the reverse of the bag or tin, according to weight and age. Meals can then be reduced to 2 per day after 6 months of age.

You can slowly introduce a variety of foods to your pup such as lean meat, rice, veggies and raw bones. For small breed dogs, raw chicken necks are great, and for the larger breed dogs you can usually start on raw chicken necks then increase raw bone size as they grow!

Please **AVOID** certain items in your dog's diet:

- Cooked bones can splinter and cause nasty and painful gut and bowel problems.
- Corn cobs can cause blockages in the gut and bowel.
- Onions can cause anaemia.
- Chocolate is toxic.
- Grapes can cause kidney problems.
- Fatty foods can cause gastrointestinal problems, pancreatitis, and obesity.
- Weetbix and milk for puppies is a poor nutritional meal – a balanced commercial puppy food is strongly recommended.
- Calcium supplementation in a puppy's diet is not necessary if they are being fed a good quality puppy commercial food
- The lactose in cow's milk can cause tummy upsets.

**Above all – enjoy your new puppy and look forward to a long, happy life together. If you have any further questions about caring for your puppy, the vets and nurses at University Avenue Vet Hospital are here to help.**