

The Good Companions

VETERINARY CLINIC



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Puppy Preventative Healthcare

Vaccination

Your puppy requires his/her first vaccination from 8 weeks of age, he/she needs a second vaccination 2 weeks later. Your puppy will have a full immunity 1 week after his/her second vaccination, until that time you should refrain from allowing him/her on the ground in public areas.

Side effects from vaccination are very rare. Puppies are sometimes a little quiet after their vaccination but this is probably due to having had an exciting and tiring trip to the vets! If you have any concerns please contact the surgery for advice.

Identichip

An identichip is a small implant that is placed under the skin, the chip has a unique number that can be read using a special reader. Your details are logged against this number on a central database, if your pet goes missing vets, police, dog wardens and rehoming charities are all able to read the chip and then contact the pet log to trace you and reunite you and your pet.

Additionally, our identichips contain a temperature sensor, this can be read by the identichip scanner to provide us information about your pet's body temperature. This is very useful at times when your pet is unwell – and avoids the indignity of a vet's thermometer!

We can place an identichip at the time of your puppy's second vaccination, or alternatively you can make an appointment with a nurse or vet specifically to have the identichip injected.

Worming

Puppies all pick up roundworms from their mothers, therefore we need to be diligent with our worming protocol until puppies are 6 months old.

We advise worming with Panacur paste for 3 days in a row at the time of the first vaccination, this worming should be repeated 4 weeks later.

You should then worm your puppy monthly until 6 months old. This can be done with Panacur tablets, or Stronghold spot on. The advantage of using Stronghold is that it also kills fleas. Your puppy will grow rapidly during this time, so we advise popping into the practice to weigh your puppy to ensure that we are prescribing the right size worming treatment.

After 6 months of age we would recommend using Stronghold monthly to prevent your puppy picking up fleas and roundworms, this is particularly important if your dog has contact with children. There are a couple of cases each year of children contracting illnesses due to roundworms, the risk is low but can be eliminated with appropriate worming. If your dog has no contact with children it is acceptable to undertake intermittent worming every 4-6 months.

Flea Control

Fleas unfortunately too often a hazard of owning pets. Dogs and cats can pick up fleas from mixing with other animals and in the warmer seasons fleas can be picked up from the outside environment. Once your pet has picked up fleas they can very quickly become established in the home, fleas lay eggs that can survive in carpets and soft furnishings for several years.

Ideally a flea treatment will kill fleas rapidly, before they have a chance to lay eggs, and will also kill larvae in the environment. We recommend using Stronghold once a month.

Socialisation

It is very important to socialise your puppy from a young age to assist with training and to help him/her develop into a stable adult dog. Many behavioural issues developing in later life stem from poor socialisation as a puppy.

We would recommend that you introduce your puppy to other dogs (even before the second vaccination if you know that the dogs are vaccinated, for example friends and relatives dogs), children, noises, car journeys and traffic.

We also advise 'crate training', there are many dog crates on the market so you will be able to find one that is the right size for your puppy as it grows. A crate provides your puppy with a 'safe area' that it can retire to if worried, a crate also prevents your puppy being able to cause damage when left alone – therefore you will be able to leave your puppy to learn to be self sufficient whilst happy that no harm will come to puppy or house!

Christina runs puppy parties that have proven to be very popular, owners gain a lot of information about socialisation and early puppy development/training whilst puppies learn to love the vets and have the chance to play with puppies of a similar age. To find out more speak with Christina.

Feeding

A lot of research has gone into the development of puppy foods. It is important to feed your growing puppy a balanced, appropriate dog food. Puppies should be on puppy food until they are about 6-8 months old, they should then be transferred onto a junior food before finally progressing onto an adult food. The nutrient levels in the different stages of food vary and are tailor made for the different nutrient needs as your puppy grows and develops into adulthood. Large breed dogs require different nutrient levels to small breed dogs, and as such it is very important that large breed dogs are fed a food designed specifically for them to ensure best joint and bone development.

Puppies can have treats for training purposes – however treats should be seen as such and not considered a major part of the diet. Dog biscuits may not look as appetising as our biscuits and sweets ... however they are equivalent in nutritional value, tending to be high in calories and fat. A dog that receives lots of treats risks becoming overweight and picky with their food. Be aware that many chews and treats claiming to have dental benefits are high in fat – chat with the nurses if you are unsure about the chews you are giving your pet.

Try to avoid giving your puppy 'human food' until you are happy that he/she is consistently eating dog food – if given the choice what would you rather eat?! We see a lot of puppies that refuse dog food in favour of an unbalanced diet of chicken, fish and other human foods, some of these puppies go on to develop medical problems associated with poor nutrition.

Exercise

Puppies are active and will seem never to tire – however we must not allow them to over exercise on their growing bones and joints. We would advise that your puppy gets about 20 minutes of exercise twice daily until about 6-8 months old. This is particularly important in larger breeds that can be predisposed to joint disease in later life. Large breed dogs should be restricted on stairs and from jumping up as this puts stress on their developing hip joints. Small breed dogs should not be allowed to jump down from furniture as they can fracture bones in their forelimbs when they have open growth plates.