

PET CARE

BRINGING YOUR PUPPY HOME:

When bringing a new puppy home, ensure that you are able to keep the dog securely confined to your own property. For the first few nights, the puppy will fret for the company of its littermates and may whimper during the night. Make sure that the puppy has a snug, warm and secure bed in a confined area. We use a radio, with volume on low, for the puppies to listen to and hear the sounds of music and soft voices.

When you bring your puppy or dog home, make sure that the house is quiet and allow it to settle in without too much interference. Once your puppy has settled in to its new home it should be familiarized with all the normal household noises and activities and introduced to visitors to ensure that it becomes confident and well socialized. Other pets should be introduced to the new arrival slowly and under close supervision.

FEEDING:

To maintain your puppy's health and well being it must have a balance diet. Puppies and dogs fed an all meat diet will develop nutritional deficiencies and growth problems. The most reliable and convenient way to provide a balanced and palatable diet is to feed high quality prepared dog food, both canned and dry.

Puppies have different nutritional requirements to adult dogs and for this reason it is essential to feed your puppy with specialty formulated puppy foods in canned and dry forms. Cow's milk is unnecessary and may cause diarrhea. Commercially prepared pet milk with low lactose is available.

Puppies need frequent small meals and for details of appropriate amounts to be fed for your dog's age refer to the feeding guides on the packaging of the prepared products or be guided by the recommendations of your veterinarian. Any changes to diet should be made gradually over several days. You will be provided with a small bag of their current puppy chow to make a gradual change in their diet should you wish to do so by mixing the old and new puppy food together.

Water is essential to your dog's well-being and clean water must be available at all times. Your dog should have its own sturdy food and water bowls which should be placed near the sleeping area.

Puppies and dogs enjoy chewing on large raw bones, but remember never to offer cooked bones or those likely to splinter.

DENTAL HYGIENE

Clean teeth are important for healthy gums and fresh breath. Some dog's teeth need more attention than others. Ask your veterinarian for the best approach for your dog. It may be a regular check-up and cleaning, tooth brushing, feeding large sterilized bones or giving specialty designed chews.

HEALTH CARE

Dogs are hardy animals but require a few precautions to ensure they remain healthy:

Vaccinations:

When you purchase your puppy ask for its shot records. Puppies should receive vaccinations for Canine Distemper, Adenovirus Type 2, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus, Leptospira and Kennel Cough (Bordetella). Puppies receive their first vaccinations at 4 weeks of age with the second at six weeks of age just before going to their new homes. Follow-up boosters are recommended at nine, 12 and 16 weeks of age. All dogs require "booster" vaccinations every 6 and 12 months. The first rabies shot can be given at six months of age. Follow your veterinarian's advice.

Worms/Parasites:

Dogs need to be wormed regularly to control roundworms, hookworms, and tapeworms which live in the intestine. This is easily done by using one of the many available preparations, either as tables or liquids. All dogs should be wormed every three months, although puppies must be done more frequently. Follow the instructions on the preparations or consult your veterinarian. Puppies receive their first worm/parasite treatment at three weeks of age.

Heartworm is transmitted by mosquitoes and is present in many areas and can be fatal. There are several preventative products now available including daily or

monthly tablets. All dogs other than very young puppies must be tested by a veterinarian before starting a heartworm prevention program as the medication can be fatal to dogs already infected.

Fleas and Ticks:

Fleas and ticks are often a problem during the warmer months. Adult fleas present on the dog may be killed using either sprays, powders, rinses or flea collars, but is necessary to treat other pets and also the environment, especially the dog's bedding. Precautions and directions on the packaging of the flea control products must be followed exactly. Paralysis ticks occur in some areas and can be fatal to dogs. If you live in an area where there are paralysis ticks, you should check your dog daily and remove any ticks. If a tick is found, consult your veterinarian.

TRAINING YOUR DOG:

A dog who has been taught a few simple rules will become a well adjusted and well behaved family pet. Just as with children, puppies and dogs need to be taught manners and the rules of the household. From the time you bring your new puppy home it must be taught not to bite or chew humans – even in play. It must be taught that unnecessary barking is not allowed. Always make the puppy obey the command “sit” before being petted or fed. The key to training your dog is to realize that it really does want to please you. Praise and reward your dog for appropriate behavior and use a stern “no” when you wish to correct behavior. As the puppy grows you should seek assistance with more formal training. Contact your local obedience club for details of their training classes. Joining such a club is inexpensive and not only provides instruction on training your dog to obey basic commands such as stay, down and to come when called, but also allows it to socialize with other dogs. Training will not only make your dog a more pleasurable companion, but it may also one day save its life.

GROOMING:

Regular grooming is a must to keep your dog looking and feeling its best. Naturally, long-haired or densely coated breeds require brushing more frequently than short-haired dogs. Some breeds require regular professional clipping. Puppies should be accustomed to being brushed and combed from an early age. Your veterinarian can assist with cutting nails and cleaning teeth.

BREEDING :

If you are not planning to breed your dog, it is advisable to have it desexed by the age of six months.

NEIGHBORLY MANNERS :

Dogs which are allowed to bark excessively disturb the neighborhood and neighbors will be unlikely to investigate a disturbance should something be amiss. Constant barking can often be a sign of boredom and dogs need regular walking for physical and mental stimulation. When walking your dog it should be kept on a lead and you must observe all city regulations. Comply with the regulations regarding registering your dog with your local community and be sure that your dog wears his registration tag and identification at all times. Your dog should never be allowed to wander or roam. The consequences can be severe, ranging from a fine from your local community to the dog becoming lost or even injured or killed by a motor vehicle.

CLEANING UP AFTER YOUR DOG :

Responsible dog owners must ensure that their dog does not soil parks, gardens, beaches, or streets by giving the dog every opportunity to relieve itself in its own backyard before being taken for a walk. Accidents may happen and it is your responsibility to be prepared by carrying plastic bags or commercially available "pooper scoopers" to clean up and dispose of your dog's feces.

LOST DOGS :

Unfortunately dogs sometimes do get lost. You can help prevent this by making sure your dog always wears a collar and identification tag with your telephone number. You may also want to consider having your dog microchipped. Confine your dog during thunderstorms and fireworks displays. If your dog is lost, check with your neighbors, your local veterinary clinics, animal welfare organizations, the pound and the local community. Check with these organizations in the neighboring suburbs as lost animals may travel some distance.

BOARDING :

You will need to consider how best to care for your dog while you are absent from home. Your veterinarian can possibly recommend a reputable boarding establishment. You should make arrangements well in advance if you intend boarding your dog during vacation periods. The dog's vaccinations will be required to be up to date. If you are only absent for a few days, you may arrange for a neighbor or a home feeding service to visit, feed and walk your dog.

DOGS IN CARS:

Never leave your dog in the car. Cars can become very hot even on moderately warm days, and a dog can die quickly from heat exhaustion.

DOGS AND CHILDREN:

A dog can truly be a child's best friend if the child and the dog are taught how to play together. Running and chasing games with children and the dog should always be supervised by an adult until an understanding has developed between the dog and child. Most dogs are loyal and trustworthy companions, but if your dog is not used to children, it should be introduced to them under careful supervision.