

## New Puppy Handout

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Congratulations on your new puppy! We feel that your initial visit with your new puppy is very important. Since a lot of information will be covered, we have written down some points you may wish to remember.

### 1. Vaccinations

**6-8 weeks= Puppy Shot (DHPP, Cv)**

**12-14 weeks= 2<sup>nd</sup> Adult (DHP-Parvo, 4L)**

**9-11 weeks= 1<sup>st</sup> Adult (DHP-Parvo, Cv)**

**15 weeks+ = 3<sup>rd</sup> Adult (DHP-Parvo, 4L)**

**DA2PPv or DHPP:** Distemper, Hepatitis or Adenovirus type 2, Parainfluenza, Parvo-virus, and Coronavirus). This vaccine is given in a series and is one of the most important things you will ever do to protect your dog's health. Many of these diseases, such as the Parvo-virus, can even be picked up by you walking around outside and tracking it back in.

**Coronavirus (Cv):** Canine Coronavirus is one of the leading viral causes of diarrhea in puppies. It invades the rapidly growing cells of the intestinal lining causing nausea, lack of appetite, vomiting and diarrhea. It is primarily a disease of young puppies.

**Leptospirosis (4L):** Leptospirosis is a bacteria spread by wildlife and ingested by dogs drinking out of water sources, including puddles. It can be contracted by people so it is also a human health concern. It is given in a series of two injections 3 weeks apart followed a 2 boosters 6 months apart then by a yearly booster.

**Rabies:** Is a fatal disease that can be passed to your pet by wildlife. Once contracted, it can be passed to humans. This vaccination is first given at or after 12 weeks of age. The next booster is given in one year.

**Bordetella:** This vaccination is given to prevent contagious tracheobronchitis or "kennel cough."

### 2. Internal Parasites

We routinely administer worming medication at each puppy visit because puppies are frequently born with ascarids (roundworms) and several treatments may be necessary to eliminate them. **It is a good idea to have a fecal exam done as soon as possible and then yearly thereafter.**

Puppies can become infected with parasites before they are born or later through their mother's milk. Modern deworming preparations are safe and effective and we recommend their use at two week intervals starting at two weeks of age. It is important that the medication is repeated since it is usually only the adult worms that are killed. Within 3-4 weeks, the larval stages will have matured and will need to be treated.

Round worms pose a small but definite risk to immunologically susceptible children therefore it is good practice to regularly administer deworming preparations to your dog throughout its life.

Tapeworms are a common intestinal parasite of dogs. Puppies become infected with them when they swallow fleas; the eggs of the tapeworm live inside the flea. When the puppy chews or licks its skin as a flea bites, the flea may be swallowed. Dogs infected with tapeworms will pass small segments of the worms in their feces. The segments are white in color and look like grains of rice. They are about 3 mm (1/8 in) long and may be seen crawling on the surface of the feces. They may also stick to the hair under the tail. If that occurs, they will dry out, shrink to about half their size, and become golden in color. If you find them at any time, please let us know and we will provide the appropriate treatment.

### 3. Heartworm/Flea Preventative

Dogs are considered the definitive host for heartworms. When a mosquito carrying infective heartworm larvae bites a dog and transmits the infection. The larvae grow, develop and migrate in the body over a period of several months to become sexually mature male and female worms. These reside in the heart, lungs, and associated blood vessels. As

mature adults, the worms mate and the females release their offspring (microfilaria) into the blood stream. All dogs, regardless of their age, sex, or habitat, are susceptible to heartworm infection. While treatment of canine heartworm disease is usually successful, prevention of the disease is much safer and more economical. There are a variety of options for preventing heartworm infection, these products are extremely effective and when administered properly on a timely schedule, heartworm infection can be prevented. We recommend Sentinel Flavor Tabs. Sentinel works as a heartworm preventative by killing the immature form of the heartworm. Sentinel is a flea control by acting as a flea egg sterilizer, which breaks the flea life cycle. They also control adult hookworms, and remove and control roundworms and whipworms. It is given every 30 days with a meal. The American Heartworm Society recommends year-round prevention, even in seasonal areas. Most monthly heartworm preventives also have the activity against fleas and intestinal parasites. Many of the same intestinal parasites that infect dogs can also infect people, with estimated infections occurring in three to six million people every year. So this added benefit of monthly deworming makes great sense.

#### **4. What should I feed my puppy?**

Diet is extremely important in the growing months of a dog's life, and there are three important criteria that should be met in selecting food for your puppy.

1. The diet should be nutritionally adequate for puppies.
2. The diet should be complete, balanced and AAFCO tested
3. The diet should have physical qualities (texture & abrasiveness) that will help control plaque and maintain oral health.

Feeding a dry, canned, or semi-moist form of dog food is acceptable. Each has advantages and disadvantages. Dry food is definitely the most inexpensive form. It can be left in the dog's bowl without drying. The good brands of dry food are just as nutritious as the other forms. Semi-moist and canned foods are also acceptable. However, both are considerably more expensive than dry food. However, diets consisting largely of soft foods, be they commercial or home prepared, even if nutritionally complete, may be physically inadequate. This can favor development of periodontal disease. If you choose to give your puppy table food, be sure that at least 90% of its diet is good quality commercial puppy food.

When soft foods form the basis of your pup's ration, additional methods are advisable to remove plaque. These could include combinations of the following:

1. Replacing part of the diet with biscuits of appropriate size, shape & texture to encourage chewing, such as Hill's T/D.
2. Adding large pieces of raw fibrous vegetables to further encourage chewing
3. Additional home dental care such as daily rubbing or brushing of teeth and gums

#### **5. Dental Care**

Appropriate dental care may be the most important thing that you can do to improve the quality and longevity of your dog's life. Our first area of concern is that your puppy's permanent teeth erupt in a proper fashion. All of your puppy's permanent teeth should be present by six months of age. If primary (baby) teeth are still present (retained), they will need to be extracted or they will cause bite and periodontal disease problems.

For long term dental health a combination of home care (brushing) and periodic professional cleanings is recommended. Now is the time to gradually train your puppy to allow you to handle his/her mouth. Since your puppy is still teething, simple handling of the mouth is all that is recommended until six months of age. Brushing the teeth should begin after six months of age and should be done daily. Remember that only the outside surfaces of the teeth need to be brushed and that pet toothpaste (dentifrice) is optional. Soft bristled brushes, finger-brushes, gauze or a dedicated wet washcloth around one's finger are all acceptable. Try to make it a fun and positive experience with plenty of praise and treats. Dental diets are also available. Please feel free to ask about these diets.

## **6. Chew toys**

Avoid chew toys that are very hard or that are less than 3 inches in diameter. The rule of thumb is that a chew toy should be soft enough to bend or be able to indent with your thumbnail. We do not recommend real bones as they have the potential to fracture teeth or cause serious issues in the digestive tract, as do nylabones and even fresh rawhide bones. Avoid fabric toys that can be chewed up and swallowed. Puppies like to chew on almost anything! Be very careful of what your puppy is allowed to chew and swallow as intestinal foreign bodies requiring surgical removal are most common in dogs under one year of age.

## **7. Why should I have my female dog spayed?**

We recommend that female dogs not intended for breeding be spayed at approximately 6 months of age (prior to their first heat cycle). Spaying offers several advantages. The female's heat periods result in about 2-3 weeks of vulvar bleeding. This can be quite annoying if your dog is kept indoors. During this period she is attractive to any neighborhood male dogs and these can sometimes cause considerable nuisance. Your female will have a heat period about every 6 months. In some cases, despite of your best efforts, she will become pregnant. Spaying is the removal of uterus and ovaries. Heat periods no longer occur and thus unplanned litters of puppies are prevented. Female dogs spayed prior to their first heat cycle enjoy a 99% reduction in the incidence of mammary (breast) cancer.

## **8. Why should I have my male dog neutered?**

Neutering offers several advantages. Male dogs are attracted to a female dog in heat and will climb over or go through fences to find her. Male dogs are more aggressive and more likely to fight, especially with other male dogs. As dogs age, the prostate gland frequently enlarges and causes difficulty urinating and defecating. Neutering will solve, or greatly help, all of these problems that come with owning a male dog. The surgery can be performed any time after the dog is 6 months old.

## **9. If I choose to mate my female dog, when should that be done?**

If you plan to mate your dog, she should have at least one or two heat periods first. This will allow her to physically mature allowing her to be a better mother without such a physical drain on her. We do not recommend breeding after 5 years of age unless she has been bred from prior to that. Having her first litter after 5 years of age increases the risk of problems during the pregnancy and/or delivery. Once your dog has had her last litter, it is worth considering spaying in order to prevent uterine infections and other reproductive problems.

## **10. Can I trim my puppy's sharp toe nails?**

Puppies have very sharp toe nails. They can be blunted and shortened using an emery board or a piece of carpenter's fine sandpaper. They can also be trimmed with nail scissors or with clippers made for dogs and cats. However if you remove too much nail, you will cut the quick and cause bleeding and pain. If the puppy has clear or light colored nails it is possible to see the quick as a pink line running through the nail. With black nails this is more difficult and therefore these should be trimmed at only about 1 mm a time until the puppy is beginning to resist it. This is when it is likely you are getting very near to the quick. It is useful to have a men's shaving styptic pencil or cornstarch available so that if you inadvertently cut the quick you can stop the bleeding without causing pain or discomfort to the puppy. If in doubt, please consult us and we will show you exactly how to trim the nails .

## **11. Training**

Responsible ownership involves having a well-trained dog and this training should be commenced as soon as the puppy is acquired. Puppies are continuously learning from the moment their eyes are open and responsible breeders will ensure that the elements of training have commenced long before you acquire the puppy at 6-8 weeks of age. Remember training is not a formal process but should occur all the time we are together with a dog. Training and socialization are intermixed, a well socialized dog is invariably a well trained dog and vice versa. Thus puppies should be socialized. They should be handled by family members and strangers as soon as possible and then be introduced to other dogs, preferably to puppies, as soon as their vaccination status allows. Many training clubs today run puppy classes in order to initiate training and ensure adequate socialization takes place. Basic training of a puppy is straightforward provided certain simple rules are followed:

1. Keep the tasks simple and only go one step at a time.
2. Teach sounds and words as commands and not sentences.
3. When trying to train the puppy to respond to your command, avoid distractions and competing activities, for example you will never get your puppy to learn to walk round the garden on a collar and lead if your neighbor is playing ball with her mother in another part of the garden.
4. Be effusive with your praise and don't be afraid to use food rewards.
5. Ignore failures and certainly do not punish the puppy.
6. Be consistent and this applies to all members of the family.
7. Take frequent breaks, as puppies have a very short attention span.

Local training clubs or puppy pre-schools are an ideal way of ensuring socialization with both the dog and owner participating in basic training methods. Other means of training are available and involve one to one methods, ideally involving both owner and dog with a trainer or sometimes sending the dog away to be trained. However these are certainly less fun and sometimes not as successful as the owner/pet participation and are often reserved for problem animals that have to undergo behavioral therapy.

#### **12. How do I ensure that my puppy is well socialized?**

The socialization period for dogs is between 4 and 12 weeks of age. During that time, the puppy is very impressionable to social influences. If it has good experiences with men, women, children, cats, other dogs, etc., it is likely to accept them throughout life. If the experiences are absent or unpleasant, it may become apprehensive or adverse to any of them. Therefore, during the period of socialization, we encourage you to expose your dog to as many types of social events and influences as possible. However since the puppy will not have built up a complete immunity from the vaccination series until approximately 16 weeks of age you have the dilemma of endeavoring to socialize him on the one hand and trying to isolate him from exposure to potentially harmful diseases on the other. The aim is to strike a balance and obviously not expose him to the risk of disease but at the same time ensure that as much socialization as possible.

#### **13. Can I discipline a puppy?**

Disciplining a young puppy may be necessary if its behavior threatens people or property, but harsh punishment should be avoided. Hand clapping and using shaker cans or horns can be intimidating enough to inhibit undesirable behavior. However, remote punishment is preferred. Remote punishment consists of using something that appears unconnected to the punisher to stop the problem. Examples include using spray bottles, throwing objects in the direction of the puppy to startle (but not hit) it, and making loud noises. Remote punishment is preferred because the puppy associates punishment with the undesirable act and not with you. Positive reinforcement is the preferred method to help end unwanted behaviors. Only reward the dog when appropriate behaviors are observed.

#### **14. Identification**

We offer Avid microchips, a permanent form of identification. This is given by a simple injection during an office visit or while under anesthesia during your dog's routine spay or neuter. Visit their website at [www.AvidID.com](http://www.AvidID.com) to find out more.

#### **15. Emergencies**

For after hours emergencies contact Northeast Indiana Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Hospital (NIVES) at 260-426-1062. (This is a 24 hour emergency/critical care/referral center and provides excellent care).

It is our goal to provide you with the highest quality services and information so you can have the best possible relationship with your dog. Please call us if we can help you in any way!