

Puppy Examination and Vaccination Series

During your dog's first four months of life, we recommend check-ups every 3 to 4 weeks for routine physical examinations, vaccinations, and deworming. These visits are also designed to provide you with an opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns about your new pet. Depending upon your puppy's age at the first visit, he or she may require either three or four visits. One of our outpatient technicians will call you the day after each visit to check up on your pet and to answer any additional questions that you may have. We tailor our care to each individual patient's needs; however, below is a list of what you can generally expect at each visit:

First Puppy Examination (6-8 weeks of age):

Comprehensive Physical Examination – Initial examination fee charged
Distemper-Parvo Combo Vaccination
Deworming and/or Fecal examination
Flea Medication
Appointment scheduled for: _____

Second Puppy Examination (9-12 weeks of age):

Comprehensive Physical Examination – Complimentary
Distemper-Parvo Combo Booster
Bordetella (Kennel Cough) Vaccination
Deworming and/or Fecal examination
Appointment scheduled for: _____

Third Puppy Examination (13-16 weeks of age):

Comprehensive Physical Examination – Complimentary
Distemper-Parvo Combo Booster
Rabies Vaccination
Deworming and/or Fecal Examination
Appointment scheduled for: _____

Vaccinations:

Your puppy will receive a series of booster vaccinations between 8 and 16 weeks of age. During this time, your puppy's immune system is building the strength to fight disease. There are many diseases fatal to dogs. Fortunately, many of these diseases are preventable by the use of vaccines. The following vaccines are available for your puppy:

- **DAP** – This stands for *Distemper*, *Adenovirus II (Hepatitis)* and *Parvo* virus.
 - *Parvovirus* – This is a viral infection that causes a severe debilitating gastrointestinal illness. The parvo virus is transmitted by oral contact with fecal material of an infected dog. The virus can live in the environment for up to 2 years. Until the vaccine series is completed at 4 months of age, please keep your puppy confined to your home and yard. When you do take your puppy outside of your home, carry him or her in your arms. After the final set of vaccinations at 16 weeks of age, your puppy will be ready to socialize with other dogs, go to the park, and enroll in training classes.
 - *Distemper* – Distemper can be a fatal infection but is preventable with vaccination. The virus attacks the central nervous system but can also affect the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts.
- **Rabies** – Rabies is a fatal viral infection. The virus is shed in saliva and is commonly transmitted from bite wounds by an infected animal. This vaccine is given once during puppyhood between the 12 – 16 weeks of age.
- **Bordetella** – This is a bacterial infection that is part of the Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex. A dry cough is the most common clinical sign. This vaccine will not prevent contracting the disease but will shorten the duration and severity of the disease.

After the puppy vaccine series is completed, all vaccines will be boosted again in one year. Adult dogs (older than one year) should receive the Bordetella vaccine every year and the Distemper-Parvo and Rabies vaccines every three years on a rotation.

Flea and Tick Prevention:

Fleas can make your young puppy miserable. It only takes one bite to cause itching, and some dogs even develop skin infections as a result of flea allergies. In addition, tapeworms are transmitted by ingestion of fleas during self grooming. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that you use a monthly flea control product to protect your puppy. Common signs of flea infestation include licking and biting at the base of the tail and the belly, and scratching around the neck and ears. If you see these signs, even if you do not see any fleas, it is likely that your puppy is suffering from flea bites! We have topical and oral flea control products available.

Heartworm Prevention:

We recommend that all dogs be given heartworm preventative medication throughout their lives. Heartworm is a parasitic disease that is transmitted between animals by mosquitoes. The parasite infects the heart and if left untreated, the disease is 100% fatal. In conjunction with preventative medication, we recommend that all dogs be tested yearly for heartworm infection. We have oral and topical heartworm preventatives available. Both types of preventives are given once monthly to help prevent heartworm disease and also provide routine intestinal deworming.

Fecal examination (for intestinal parasites):

We recommend that all dogs have yearly fecal examinations. This is especially important for households with children. Some intestinal parasites are zoonotic (able to infect humans), and transmission occurs with fecal/oral contact. A puppy or dog may be infected with an intestinal parasite without showing any symptoms.

The most common parasites seen are tapeworms, roundworms, *Coccidia*, and *Giardia*. A fecal sample (about the size of a grape) is all that is needed for testing. Results are reported in 1-2 days.

Spaying or neutering:

Young dogs should be spayed or neutered between 5 and 6 months of age. We use state of the art monitoring equipment throughout these surgical procedures. At the time of the procedure, the veterinarian can remove any remaining deciduous (baby) teeth.

It is behaviorally beneficial to neuter your pet early in life. For example, neutering male dogs before they develop unwanted behaviors associated with sexual maturity may prevent the development of these behaviors. However, if a dog is neutered after developing these behaviors, they may not cease after neutering. The veterinarian will help you to determine the best time to spay or neuter your pet.

The benefits of neutering your male dog include the following:

- reducing urine marking behavior
- eliminating mounting and aggressive behaviors
- eliminating the risk of testicular cancer
- reducing the risk of prostate disease
- reducing roaming behavior

The benefits of spaying your female dog include the following:

- eliminating unwanted heats and the messy discharge associated with heats
- reducing the risk of mammary cancer
- eliminating the risk of ovarian and uterine cancer
- eliminating the risk of pregnancy
- eliminating the risk of pyometra, a life-threatening uterine infection

Microchips:

A microchip is a device that is used to identify your pet if he or she is lost. The microchip, about the size of a grain of rice, is implanted under your pet's skin between the shoulder blades. Veterinary clinics and shelters scan for microchips on all stray pets. If your pet has a microchip, his or her individual identification number is used to reunite you with your pet. A microchip is also a requirement for international travel. We can microchip your pet at any time; however many pet owners choose to have the microchip implanted at the time of the spay or neuter surgery.

Pet insurance:

Starting dog insurance while your puppy is young can be beneficial. Pet insurance helps shield your budget from unexpected veterinary costs. There are numerous insurance companies and policies to choose from. Knowing that your dog's healthcare is covered helps allow you to determine the course of treatment based on what is most effective for the health and happiness of your dog (not on the size of your wallet).

Feeding your puppy:

Young puppies should be fed three to four times a day from the time they are weaned until 10 weeks of age. After 10 weeks, they may be fed twice daily. You should select a food that is specifically formulated for puppies. You can also choose to feed a diet formulated for a small, medium, or large breed dog as appropriate. There are many high quality dog food brands. In particular, we recommend Royal Canin, Purina, Science Diet, Blue Buffalo and Iams/Eukanuba brands.

The amount to feed a growing dog depends upon weight, age, and body condition. The manufacturer's recommended total daily amount is usually listed by body weight on the food bag. The total daily amount should be divided into equal portions to be fed at each meal. Keep in mind that the manufacturer's recommendations are often high. Dry kibble is convenient to feed and promotes dental health throughout life. Always have fresh water available for your puppy.

Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions or concerns about your puppy. Our outpatient technicians and veterinarians are always available for medical and behavioral consultations. We look forward to getting to know the newest member of your family!