

Your guide to

PUPPY CARE



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PUPPY HEALTH INFORMATION

Vaccination

Several serious and contagious diseases occur in dogs in Sydney. Vaccination is the best way to protect your dog. We vaccinate against Canine Parvovirus, Canine Distemper Virus, Infectious Canine Hepatitis and Infectious Canine Tracheobronchitis (kennel cough).

Puppies require a series of three vaccinations at ages:

- 6-8 weeks
- 10-12 weeks
- 14-16 weeks

Puppies will not be safe from these diseases until 10-14 days after the final booster



Adult dogs require booster vaccinations:

- Every 12 months for infectious Canine Tracheobronchitis
- Every three years for the remaining diseases (sometimes known as the C3)

If your puppy or dog is going into boarding kennels regularly it is important to check with the kennels if they have any specific vaccination requirements prior to your vet visit.

Intestinal worms

Intestinal worms cause puppies to grow poorly or even die. Pups can be born with worms already inside them. Puppies must be wormed repeatedly as follows:

- Every 2 weeks until they are 12 weeks old, then
- Every month until 6 months old, then
- Every 3-6 months for life (more often if associating with young children)

There are a variety of products available to worm puppies. These include:

- a All wormer tablets or chews e.g. Drontal, Milbermax.
- b All-wormer and Heartworm combination tablets e.g. Interceptor

Heartworm

This worm is spread by mosquitos and can cause fatal damage to the lungs and heart of infected dogs. All dogs in Sydney must be protected against heartworm at all times of the year. Puppies must start heartworm protection at 10-14 weeks of age.

Recommended heartworm preventatives:

- Monthly tablets e.g. Interceptor
- Yearly injections for adult dogs e.g. Proheart Sr12 (usually aligned with yearly vaccinations and can start from 3 months)

Fleas

Fleas are the most problematic parasite in the world. They cause problems ranging from annoyance to severe skin disease can be difficult to diagnose. A pet suffering from flea allergy may never actually be seen with fleas! All products must be used every month all year to be effective.

Flea prevention can be started at 7 weeks of age with these products:

- Oral chews e.g. Bravecto 3 monthly or Nexgard monthly (from 8 weeks)
- Comfortis tablets kill adult fleas
- Nexgard spectra



Ticks

Paralysis ticks are common in certain areas of Sydney, especially near bushland and water. They cause paralysis of all the muscles and if untreated, pets die from asphyxiation. Treatment can be expensive and involves the administration of an intravenous antitoxin. Ticks are most prevalent from August through to March but they can be found all year round, and all year round prevention is recommended.

Suitable tick prevention products for dogs:

- Oral chews e.g. Bravecto 3 monthly or Nexgard monthly (from 8 weeks)
- Nexgard spectra

No matter which product is chosen the pet must be checked for ticks everyday. This is done by running your fingertips over the skin, feeling for lumps. Most ticks are found on the head, neck and ears but you must check the skin all over the dog.

Signs of tick paralysis may include one or more of the following:

- Wobbly back legs
- Not eating
- Vomiting or retching
- Change of voice or bark
- Coughing or grunting sounds
- Weakness climbing stairs
- Difficult or fast breathing
- Reluctance to jump or even to walk



Desexing

Desexed pets are less likely to roam, mark their territory or get certain cancers. We recommend male and female dogs be desexed at 6 months of age. The pets come in to hospital in the morning (without breakfast), have their operation under general anaesthesia and go home the very next day.

Pet identification

All dogs must be microchipped by law, but in addition to the compulsory NSW register, you can have your pet registered on the national private database (the Australian Animal Register, AAR). Make sure your details are kept up-to-date on both registers so that your dog can be reunited with you quickly if he/she is ever lost. Pets are returned home faster if they always wear a collar with your phone number engraved on the tag.

Feeding

There are many commercial foods designed to meet the exact nutritional requirements of growing puppies. The brands do vary in quality, with the premium brands aiming to provide additional beneficial ingredients to the growing dog. Choose a "puppy" or "growth" variety until the pet reaches 12 months (small breeds) or 18 months (large breeds) when he/she change over to "adult" or "maintenance" food. For breeds expected to grow to more than 25kg we recommend you choose a "large breed puppy" formulation to reduce the incidence of skeletal problems such as hip dysplasia, in later life.

At 8 weeks old most puppies need to be fed 3 times per day. This can be reduced to 2 meals per day by 12-16 weeks, and then if desired you may drop to one feed per day after 6-12 months of age. Meal size guidelines can be found on the food label, but they are often overly generous. Any change of diet must be made gradually, over 3-5 days, to prevent your new puppy getting diarrhoea. We recommend Hills Vet essentials or Royal Canin.

Diet and dental care

Your dog's diet can influence the health of his/her teeth and gums. Many people feed their pets raw bones or dental chew toys each day to help clean the teeth (e.g. chicken necks or wings then larger bones as the pet grows). The pet should be supervised when eating bones or chewing on toys but it remains possible the bone or toy could become stuck in, or irritate the digestive tract.

The "gold standard" in dental health is daily brushing with a pet toothpaste, and puppyhood is the perfect time to introduce this to your dog.

SOCIALISATION, TRAINING AND PET INSURANCE

Socialisation and training

The experiences your puppy has during its first 16 weeks of life will greatly influence the sort of adult dog it grows into. It is important that your puppy interacts with other people, dogs and puppies during this time to help prevent it developing antisocial behaviour.

Puppy preschool is an ideal way to socialise puppies of this age because all the pups attending classes have started their vaccination program and the sessions are moderated by dog trainer who ensures the puppies learn to play nicely. It is preferable to complete the four week course by the time the puppy is 16 weeks old.

Encourage your puppy to meet new people and dogs under supervision in a 'clean' environment such as a backyard (where all dogs that have been in the yard have been vaccinated). Dog parks and beaches should be avoided until 2 weeks after your pup's final vaccination due to the risk of contagious diseases.

Toilet training involves frequent positive reinforcement rather than punishment. When the pup starts to sniff and circle, and always after eating, playing or sleeping, take the puppy outside to the area you want it to eliminate and stay with it until it does. After the puppy toilets reward him/her with praise and a food treat. Ignore mistakes because the puppy will not associate any punishment with the mess on the floor.

We run puppy school in clinic on a weekly basis. The class is run by Libby Young of The Sound Hound
www.thesoundhound.com.au

Dog training classes are stimulating for dogs and owners! Local training clubs include:

- www.northernbeachesdogtraining.com.au
- www.nsdogtraining.org.au
- www.easternsuburbsdogtraining.org.au
- www.deltasocietyaustralia.com.au

Pet Health Insurance

Pet insurance can be a life saver. Modern veterinary care is surprisingly advanced and we can offer a high level of care if your dog becomes seriously ill or injured. However, unlike the human health care system there is no government funding to help pay for the treatment, and it can become expensive. A number of companies offer pet health insurance to help you give your pet the best care when they need it. All of our vets strongly recommend you take out pet insurance when your pet is 8 weeks of age.

