

DUNDAS
WEST
ANIMAL
HOSPITAL



Welcome to the Pack!

Everything you need to know for your puppy's happiest, healthiest start.



Table of Contents

»»» Introduction	_____→	<u>Page 03</u>
»»» The Puppy Pathway	_____→	<u>Page 04</u>
»»» Vaccines	_____→	<u>Page 05</u>
»»» Parasites- Worms	_____→	<u>Page 06</u>
»»» Parasites- Fleas & Ticks	_____→	<u>Page 07</u>
»»» Nutrition	_____→	<u>Page 08</u>
»»» Dental Health Basics	_____→	<u>Page 10</u>
»»» Pet Insurance	_____→	<u>Page 11</u>
»»» Emergency Clinics	_____→	<u>Page 13</u>
»»» Socialization & Obedience	_____→	<u>Page 14</u>
»»» Appendices	_____→	<u>Page 16</u>
»»» Understanding Vaccines	_____→	<u>Page 17</u>
»»» Know Your Parasites	_____→	<u>Page 21</u>
»»» Contact Us	_____→	<u>Page 22</u>

WELCOME!

We want to congratulate you on the addition of your new puppy.

Owning a dog can be a gratifying experience, but it also carries many responsibilities. Here at Dundas West Animal Hospital, we take the health and safety of your new furry family member seriously. We are grateful that you have chosen us to help you with your puppy's health care.

We have created a document that will act as a roadmap and a source of information for all new puppy owners.

If you have questions about your puppy's health, please call our hospital. Our entire professional staff is willing and happy to help you.

**Monday**

8:00am - 8:00pm

Tuesday

8:00am - 8:00pm

Wednesday

8:00am - 8:00pm

Thursday

8:00am - 8:00pm

Friday

8:00am - 8:00pm

Saturday

8:00am - 2:30pm

Sunday

Closed

The Puppy Pathway

A step-by-step guide through your puppy's first year of care.



Initial Puppy Appointment

Visit One: Initial Puppy Appointment

At your puppy's very first appointment, we'll perform a full nose-to-tail exam to make sure they're off to a healthy start. Your pup will receive their first DAPP vaccine to protect against several contagious diseases, and we'll also collect a stool sample to check for common parasites. This is the perfect time to start the deworming process and chat about puppy insurance options to help protect your furry family member for the long haul!



Second Puppy Appointment

Visit Two

We'll do another full exam and give your puppy their second DAPP booster along with their first Leptospirosis vaccine. We'll also discuss the oral Bordetella vaccine (for kennel cough), provide a nail trim demo, and give the next dose of dewormer to keep things on track.



Third Puppy Appointment

Visit Three

Your puppy will receive their final DAPP and Leptospirosis boosters to complete their core vaccine series. We'll also do an ear cleaning demo and talk about ongoing parasite prevention, tailored to the season and your pup's lifestyle.



Final Puppy Appointment

Visit Four

At this appointment, your pup will receive their Rabies vaccine. We'll also discuss plans for their spay or neuter surgery and talk about the benefits of microchipping for permanent identification and peace of mind.

What's Next?

We'll see your pup again one year after their final vaccines for their annual exam and adult vaccine boosters. Future vaccine schedules will be personalized and discussed with the veterinarian at that visit.

The Puppy Vaccine Adventure:

Why So Many Visits?

Born with a Boost

At birth, your puppy gets some natural protection from mom. But as that fades, they'll need help building their own immune system — and that's where vaccines come in.

Why Boosters?

Mom's early protection is great — but it can block vaccines from working if we give them too soon. Boosters help us hit the sweet spot when her protection fades and your pup's immunity kicks in.

What Are We Protecting Against?

Think of these vaccines like shields:

- **DAPP** – Defends against distemper, hepatitis, parainfluenza & parvo
- **Leptospirosis** – A bacteria found in water and soil contaminated by the urine or body fluids of infected animals.
- **Bordetella** – AKA kennel cough
- **Rabies** – Legally required and lifesaving
- **Lyme** – For pups who love the outdoors



Want to learn more about these diseases? [\[Click here to find out more.\]](#)

The Worm War:

Keeping Your Puppy Parasite-Free

Do all puppies have worms?

Many puppies are **infested with parasites at a young age**, or pick them up through their mother's milk — even if they seem perfectly healthy. That's why **routine deworming and fecal testing** are an important part of your puppies early care.



Information on
Nexgard Spectra —
[Click Here](#)



Information on
Interceptor Plus —
[Click Here](#)

How do we check for worms?

We'll ask you to bring in a **stool sample** so we can test for common parasites like **roundworms, hookworms, giardia, and more**. Two types of testing are performed:

- **Fecal Floatation:** Looks for parasite eggs under the microscope
- **Fecal Antigen Testing:** Detects parasites even before eggs are present

What's the deworming process?

Since parasite eggs aren't always visible early on, we follow a **routine deworming schedule** for all puppies. Medications are given **multiple times** to catch any developing worms and stop the life cycle. Some parasites can also affect humans — so regular deworming helps keep the **whole household safe**.

What dewormers will my puppy get?

Your puppy will likely receive a combination of:

- **NexGard Spectra** — covers fleas, ticks, heartworm & some intestinal worms
- **Interceptor Plus** — covers roundworms, hookworms, whipworms & tapeworms

Additional medications may be recommended depending on fecal test results.

 Have questions?

We'll help you build the best parasite prevention plan for your puppy's lifestyle — just ask at your next visit!



Fleas, Ticks & Tiny Hitchhikers:

What Puppy Parents Need to Know

How Does My Puppy Get Fleas?

Fleas are small but mighty and can come from **parks, sidewalks, wildlife, other pets, or even your home**. Their life cycle includes eggs, larvae, pupae, and adults—and they love warm, cozy spots like carpets and pet beds.

Even if you don't see fleas, they might still be hiding. Eggs are nearly invisible, and pupae can stay dormant for months until the conditions are just right.

? How Do I Treat Fleas?

We recommend at least **three months of NexGard or NexGard Spectra**, given once every 30 days. This ensures you're killing newly hatching fleas as they emerge.

? Don't Forget the House!

Fleas don't just live on pets—they live in your home too. To help stop the cycle:

- Wash your puppy's bedding
- Vacuum carpets, furniture & favorite spots regularly
- Empty the vacuum bag right away
- Repeat weekly during treatment

? Why Do I Still See Fleas?

Seeing fleas after the first treatment is normal. The medication kills adult fleas, but new ones may still hatch from the environment. Stick with treatment for at least three full months for complete control.

What About Ticks?

Ticks might look like insects, but they're actually **arachnids**, related to spiders, scorpions, and mites. Unlike insects (which have six legs and antennae), **adult ticks have eight legs and no antennae**. They're parasites that **feed on the blood** of animals—including your puppy—and sometimes even humans.

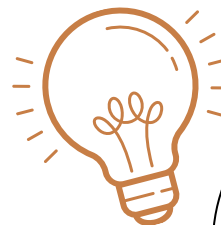
? How Ticks Find Your Puppy

Ticks **don't jump or fly**—they wait on grass or shrubs for your puppy to walk by, then climb aboard. Some can even crawl several feet toward a warm body. Ticks are active in the spring, summer and fall as well as any mild winter days.

? How Do I Remove a Tick?

Use a Tick Twister or similar tool to grasp and gently twist the tick until it releases.

- ✓ Wear gloves
- ✓ Disinfect the area after removal
- ✓ Avoid home remedies (like Vaseline or heat)



Did You Know!

Ticks don't hibernate! If the temperature is above 0°C, ticks can be active—even in the middle of winter. That's why we recommend year-round prevention for your pets.

Fueling Your Pup's Big Adventure:

A Guide to Growing Up Strong

Why Nutrition Matters for Your Growing Pup

Proper nutrition is *essential* for healthy development during puppyhood — a time when your dog's bones, muscles, organs, and immune system are rapidly growing. Choosing the right diet now sets the foundation for lifelong health, helping to prevent growth-related problems and ensuring your puppy reaches their full potential.

What Should I Feed My Puppy?

Your puppy should be fed a **complete and balanced commercial diet** that is:

- **Specifically labeled for "growth" or "puppy" life stage**
- Formulated by a reputable company with veterinary nutritionists on staff
- Backed by feeding trials or formulated to meet **AAFCO** or **FEDIAF** guidelines

We understand that some pet owners prefer to feed homemade or raw food diets, and we respect your commitment to your pet's nutrition. If you're considering one of these options, we're happy to have an open discussion about how to do so as safely as possible. It's important to know that raw and home-prepared diets can carry increased risks, such as bacterial infections (like Salmonella) and nutritional imbalances if not carefully formulated. We recommend working closely with your veterinarian to ensure your pet's diet is both safe and complete.

How Do I Know It's a Good Brand?

Here are a few questions you can ask about your puppy's food:

- Does the company **employ a board-certified veterinary nutritionist**?
- Are **feeding trials** or published research done on the food?
- Does the company **manufacture its own food** and follow strict quality control?

Look for this info on the brand's website or contact them directly. You can always ask your vet team for help evaluating your pup's diet.



Avoid foods labeled for "all life stages" unless your vet has specifically recommended them — these diets are often more calorie-dense and may not suit every breed or size of puppy.



*Free-feeding
(leaving food out
all day) is not
recommended
for most puppies.*

How Much Should I Feed?

Feeding guidelines on the food bag or can are a starting point, but every puppy is different. We recommend:

- Feeding **3–4 meals per day** until 6 months of age
- Using **body condition scoring** and regular weigh-ins to adjust portions
- Avoiding overfeeding, especially in **large-breed puppies** to prevent joint issues

Treats & Extras

Treats are okay — but should make up **no more than 10%** of your puppy's daily calories. Healthy options include:

- Small pieces of carrot, apple (no seeds), or green beans
- Commercial training treats (low-calorie ones are best!)

Avoid foods with **xylitol, chocolate, onions, garlic, grapes, or raisins**, which are toxic to dogs.

Common Myths

✗ “Cereal grains are fillers.”

✓ Not true! Properly cooked grains provide energy, fiber, and essential nutrients.

✗ “High protein means better food.”

✓ More isn't always better. Excess protein doesn't mean better growth — it just increases calories, and often cost.

✗ “By-products are bad.”

✓ Not at all! Many by-products like liver and kidney are rich in nutrients and help reduce food waste.

Still Unsure?

We're always happy to help with food recommendations tailored to your pup's breed, size, and lifestyle. Feel free to ask us about:

- Feeding large-breed puppies
- Choosing between dry, wet, or mixed diets
- Transitioning to adult food at the right time



Say Cheese!

Caring for Your Puppy's Smile

Start Early, Smile Often!

Puppy breath may be adorable now — but just like people, dogs need regular dental care to stay healthy throughout their lives. Starting dental routines early helps prevent problems down the road and makes your pup more comfortable with handling.

Why Puppy Dental Health Matters

- Dental disease can start as early as 1 year of age
- Bacteria from plaque can affect the heart, liver, and kidneys
- Preventing dental issues means less pain, fewer extractions, and lower long-term costs

What You Can Do Now

1. Get your pup used to mouth handling

Start by gently lifting their lips and touching their teeth and gums with your finger. Do this daily — pair it with treats and praise!

2. Introduce a toothbrush

Use a soft-bristled pet toothbrush or finger brush and start with just water or a dab of pet-safe toothpaste (never human toothpaste!).

3. MAXI/GUARD Oral Cleansing Wipes

An easy, effective way to support your pet's dental health! These taste-free wipes use a unique zinc formulation to fight plaque, reduce inflammation, and neutralize mouth odors. Textured for gentle cleaning without irritating gums, they're a great option for pets who aren't fans of brushing.

4. Make brushing a habit

Aim for **daily brushing**, even if it's just a few teeth at a time. Consistency matters more than perfection.

Other Ways to Help Their Teeth

Offer safe dental chews and toys

- Look for products with the VOHC seal (Veterinary Oral Health Council), which meet standards for plaque and tartar control.

Try dental diets (if recommended by your vet)

- Some kibble is specially shaped to help reduce buildup.

Regular checkups matter

- Your vet will assess your puppy's teeth at each visit and guide you on when a professional cleaning might be needed later in life.



**VOHC Approved Dog
Products —**
[Click Here](#)

Teething Tips

Puppies begin to lose their baby teeth around **12–16 weeks of age**, and their adult teeth should all be in by **6–7 months**. During this time, you may notice:

- Mild gum bleeding
- Increased chewing
- Loose or missing teeth

Give them safe things to chew and let us know if you see **retained baby teeth**, excessive discomfort, or bad breath — all worth checking out!



The Importance of Pet Insurance

Peace of Mind for Life's Unexpected Moments

Bringing a new puppy into your life is an exciting journey full of love, play, and discovery. Along with the joys of puppyhood, it's important to prepare for the unexpected — and that's where pet insurance comes in.

Why Consider Pet Insurance?

Veterinary care in Canada is not subsidized or covered by provincial health insurance plans like OHIP. That means you are fully responsible for the cost of any care your pet may need — from vaccines and wellness checks to emergency surgeries or chronic disease management.

Pet insurance can help you:

- Afford emergency and unexpected care
- Focus on what's best for your pet, not your budget
- Spread out costs rather than paying out-of-pocket all at once
- Gain peace of mind during stressful times

When Should You Sign Up?

The best time to get pet insurance is when your puppy is young and healthy. Most insurance companies do not cover pre-existing conditions, so enrolling early ensures your pet is covered before any issues arise.

Some insurance providers offer free trials for new puppies — ask our team about what options may be available during your first visits.

What Does Pet Insurance Cover?

Coverage varies depending on the provider and the plan you choose. Most companies offer plans that include:

- Accident coverage (e.g., broken bones, ingestion of foreign objects)
- Illness coverage (e.g., infections, cancer, chronic diseases)
- Diagnostic testing, hospitalization, and surgery
- Medications and treatments
- Optional wellness or dental add-ons

Things to Consider

When choosing a plan, consider:

- Monthly premiums vs. out-of-pocket costs
- Deductible and co-pay amounts
- Whether you want illness + accident or wellness coverage too
- How claims are submitted and how quickly they are reimbursed

We recommend comparing providers and choosing one that best fits your lifestyle, budget, and the breed-specific risks for your pet.

Popular Insurance Providers in Canada

Some of the most commonly used pet insurance companies in Ontario include:

- Trupanion
- Petsecure
- OVMA Pet Health Insurance
- Desjardins Pet Insurance
- Fetch by The Dodo
- Pets Plus Us

We do not recommend one specific provider, but we are happy to share insights and help you review options.

Not Ready for Insurance? Consider a Vet Savings Plan

If pet insurance isn't the right fit, we strongly encourage setting aside a dedicated pet emergency fund. A savings plan can still help you prepare for surprise expenses and reduce stress when care is needed.

Have questions?

We're always here to help you understand your options and find what works best for your family.

Your puppy deserves the best care — and you deserve peace of mind. 🐾💙

Insurance Provider	Accident & Illness Coverage	Wellness Add-On	Waiting Period	Direct Vet Pay Option	Notable Features
Trupanion	✓ Yes	✗ No	5–30 days	✓ Yes (with approval)	No payout limits, lifetime deductible per condition
Petsecure	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	48 hours – 14 days	✗ No	Canadian-based, multi-level plans
Pets Plus Us	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	48 hours – 14 days	✗ No	Blue Ribbon Benefits (pet health helpline, grief counselling)
OVMA Insurance	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	48 hours – 14 days	✗ No	Endorsed by Ontario Veterinary Medical Association
Fetch by The Dodo	✓ Yes	✗ No	15 days	✗ No	Holistic care included (acupuncture, physio)
Desjardins	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	48 hours – 14 days	✗ No	Multi-pet discounts available

⚠️ This chart is a general overview. Coverage, exclusions, and pricing vary by provider. Be sure to read each policy's terms and conditions carefully before enrolling.

Emergency Clinic Information

Animal Health Partners - Lakeshore

Address: 806 Southdown Rd, Mississauga, ON L5J 2Y4

Phone: 905-858-6767

Main Intersection: Royal Windsor Drive and Southdown Road

Hours: 24h

Veterinary Specialties: Emergency services, neurology, ICU, internal medicine, medical imaging, surgery, dentistry and oral surgery, and anesthesiology

Animal Health Partners-North York

Address: 1 Scarsdale Rd, North York

Phone: 416-380-7400

Main intersection: Leslie St and York Mills Rd (Between Leslie St and Don Mills Rd)

Hours: 24h

Veterinary Specialties: Emergency services, neurology, ICU, internal medicine, medical imaging, surgery, cardiology and anesthesiology

Central Toronto Veterinary Referral Emergency Clinic

Address: 1051 Eglinton Ave West

Phone: 416-784-4444

Main intersection: Eglinton Ave W and Allen Rd (between Allen Rd and Bathurst)

Hours: 24h

Veterinary Specialties: internal medicine, oncology, diagnostic imaging and surgery

King Animal Hospital

Address: 1265-19th Sideroad, King City, Ontario

Phone: 1-888-622-7345

Main intersection: Dufferin St. and 19th Sideroad

Hours: 8-am-8pm for patient intake (MUST CALL BEFORE ARRIVING! Walk-ins not accepted)

Veterinary Specialties: Surgery, Rehabilitation, Neurology, Ophthalmology, Oncology, Dermatology, Diagnostic Imaging

Mississauga Oakville Veterinary Emergency Hospital

Address: 2285 Bristol Circle, Oakville

Phone: 905-829-9444

Main intersection: Winston Churchill Blvd and the QEW

Hours: 24h

Veterinary Specialties: Anesthesiology, cardiology, clinical pathology, critical care, dentistry, dermatology, internal medicine, neurology/MRI, oncology, ophthalmology, rehabilitation and surgery

Toronto Veterinary Emergency Hospital

Address: 21 Rolark Dr

Phone: 416-247-8387

Main intersection: Birchmount Rd and Ellesmere Rd (east end)

Hours: 24h

Veterinary Specialties: Anesthesia, critical care, diagnostic imaging, internal medicine, neurology, oncology, surgery and emergency service

Veterinary Emergency Clinic

Address: 920 Yonge St, suite 117

Phone: 416-920-2002

Main intersection: Yonge and Davenport

Hours: 24h

Veterinary Specialties: Anesthesia, cardiology, dentistry, dermatology, emergency and ICU, I-131 radioiodine treatment, imaging and diagnostics, internal medicine, neurology, oncology, ophthalmology, surgery, and rehabilitation

Veterinary Emergency Hospital of West Toronto

Address: 755 Queensway E, Mississauga

Phone: 416-239-3453

Main intersection: Queensway East and Cawthra Rd (Take Cawthra exit from QEW)

Hours: 24h

Veterinary Specialties: Surgery, ophthalmology and emergency services

Next Steps:

Socialization & Obedience

All About Dogs

All About Dogs is a comprehensive canine care and training center located in Toronto. Their 16,000 sq. ft. facility offers a wide range of services, including group obedience classes, private training, behavior modification, agility, rally obedience, and an indoor heated dog pool. Their puppy program, "First Paw Forward," focuses on early socialization and foundational skills for puppies aged 8 to 16 weeks. Emphasizing positive reinforcement, All About Dogs provides flexible scheduling options, including evenings and weekends, to accommodate various lifestyles. Additional services include professional grooming and canine chiropractic care.

For more information, visit www.allaboutdogs.ca

Freshpuppy

Freshpuppy offers personalized, science-based puppy and adolescent dog training in Toronto and virtually. Led by Sydney Bleicher, a Karen Pryor Academy Certified Training Partner and Fear Free Certified Professional, Freshpuppy provides private coaching tailored to each dog's needs. Services include pre-puppy consultations, foundational training for puppies under 15 weeks, and adolescent dog programs, all emphasizing positive reinforcement and real-life solutions. Comprehensive support materials and personal guidance between sessions ensure a supportive training experience.

For more information, visit www.freshpuppy.ca

Raising Rover

Raising Rover is a premier dog training service in Toronto, led by Caroline Applebee, Toronto's first Certified Professional Dog Trainer (CPDT-KA) since 2004. With over two decades of experience, Caroline specializes in positive reinforcement methods, offering both group classes and private sessions tailored to puppies, adolescent dogs, and those with specific behavioral challenges. Her programs are designed to foster confidence and cooperation between dogs and their owners, ensuring a harmonious relationship. Whether you're introducing a new puppy to your home or addressing complex behavioral issues, Raising Rover provides expert guidance rooted in science-based training techniques.

For more information, visit [Raising Rover's website](#).

Fearless Tails

Fearless Tails specializes in compassionate, science-based training for anxious, reactive, and overexcited dogs. Led by certified trainer Tasha Shaw-Verbic, a Karen Pryor Academy graduate and Fear Free Certified Professional, they offer both in-person sessions in the Toronto area and virtual consultations. Services include private coaching, group classes, and specialized programs like "Roaring to Relaxed" for leash reactivity. Fearless Tails is dedicated to helping dogs and their guardians build confidence and trust through positive reinforcement.

For more information, visit www.fearlesstails.com

Liefdog Academy

Formerly known as The Centre for Canine Education Inc., Liefdog Academy is an online training and support community designed to guide dog guardians through every stage of their canine companion's life. It offers a comprehensive curriculum, including courses, tutorials, and live group sessions, all grounded in humane, science-based training methods. By fostering a supportive and non-judgmental environment, Liefdog Academy helps pet owners build strong, positive relationships with their dogs.

For more information, visit www.liefdog.com

The Toronto Humane Society

The Toronto Humane Society offers expert-led dog training and behaviour consultations designed to strengthen the bond between you and your canine companion. Their certified trainers employ humane, science-based methods, focusing on positive reinforcement to encourage trust and effective communication.

Whether you're welcoming a new puppy, addressing behavioural challenges, or seeking to enhance your dog's skills, the Toronto Humane Society provides a range of group classes and private consultations tailored to meet your needs. Their programs are accessible both in-person at their River Street location and virtually, ensuring flexibility for all pet owners.

For more information or to enroll in a class, visit their [Dog Training and Consultations page](#).

The Dog Logic Toronto

Dog Logic Toronto is a queer, female-owned dog training and boarding service founded in 2019 by Certified Professional Dog Trainer Maddy Hajek. Serving the Yorkville, Summerhill, Rosedale, Riverdale, and Broadview Danforth areas, Dog Logic emphasizes humane, science-based training methods and positive reinforcement tools to address each dog's individual needs. Their team is CPR and First Aid certified, bonded, and insured by ProFur Insurance Group. Whether your dog requires puppy basics, obedience lessons, or help with behavioral issues, Dog Logic aims to empower both you and your dog with the skills needed for effective communication and success.

For more information, visit www.doglogictoronto.ca

The Dog Mamaa

The Dog Mamaa is a Toronto-based dog training service led by Gabrielle Messuti, a certified professional dog trainer with a BSc. from TMU and credentials from the Karen Pryor Academy. With over nine years of experience, Gabrielle specializes in positive reinforcement techniques, offering personalized, in-home training tailored to each dog's unique needs. Services include reactive dog training, puppy consultations, leash training, and separation anxiety programs. Clients appreciate her empathetic approach and ongoing support, ensuring both dogs and their owners build lasting, positive relationships.

For more information, visit [The Dog Mamaa](http://TheDogMamaa).

When Hounds Fly

When Hounds Fly is one of Toronto's leading dog training schools, offering group classes and private lessons across multiple locations and online. Their certified trainers use science-based, positive reinforcement techniques to help you and your dog build lasting trust and communication. Programs range from puppy socialization and manners training to reactivity support and advanced skills — all taught in a welcoming, inclusive environment.

For more information, visit whenhoundsfly.com





APPENDICES

Curious about what those vaccines are really protecting your puppy from? Want to understand more about the creepy crawlies we're preventing with dewormers and parasite prevention? This section is for you! We've included extra info on common parasites, vaccine-preventable diseases, and why staying on schedule is so important for your pup's health.

Understanding Vaccines

Protecting Your Dog Against Serious Illnesses

What Does DAPP Protect Against?

1. Distemper

- What is it?
 - Distemper is a serious viral disease affecting a dog's respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems. It is often fatal and can also infect wildlife such as raccoons, ferrets, and skunks.
- Signs to Watch For:
 - Vomiting and diarrhea
 - Thick yellow discharge from the eyes and nose
 - Coughing
 - Severe cases: seizures and neurological symptoms
- How it Spreads:
 - Through direct contact with infected animals or through airborne particles from coughing or sneezing.
- Treatment:
 - There is no cure. Supportive care in a veterinary hospital (IV fluids, nursing care, and symptom management) is critical.

2. Adenovirus (Infectious Canine Hepatitis)

- What is it?
 - Adenovirus causes inflammation of the liver and can also affect the eyes and respiratory system.
- Signs to Watch For:
 - Decreased appetite and lethargy
 - Mild fever
 - Eye and nasal discharge, coughing
 - Severe cases: abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, swelling of the head/neck, and jaundice
- How it Spreads:
 - Through contact with infected urine, saliva, or eye/nose secretions.
- Treatment:
 - No cure exists. Supportive treatment includes hospitalization, IV fluids, and managing symptoms while the immune system fights the virus.

3. Parainfluenza

- What is it?
 - A respiratory virus and a major cause of canine cough (infectious tracheobronchitis).
- Signs to Watch For:
 - Sudden coughing
 - Sneezing
 - Eye and/or nose discharge
- How it Spreads:
 - Direct contact with infected dogs or through airborne droplets from coughing or sneezing.
- Treatment:
 - Supportive care to control secondary infections and ease respiratory symptoms.



4. Parvovirus

- What is it?
 - A severe, highly contagious virus that attacks rapidly dividing cells, especially in the intestines and immune system.
- Signs to Watch For:
 - Severe vomiting and diarrhea (often bloody and foul-smelling)
 - Loss of appetite
 - Lethargy and depression
 - Fever
- How it Spreads:
 - Primarily through feces. The virus is extremely hardy and can be transmitted via contaminated surfaces, shoes, or clothing.
- Treatment:
 - Immediate veterinary care is critical. Treatment includes aggressive IV fluid therapy, correction of electrolyte imbalances, antibiotics for secondary infections, and sometimes plasma transfusions.



What Does the Leptospirosis Vaccine Protect Against?

1. Leptospirosis

- What is it?
 - Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection caused by Leptospira bacteria. It primarily affects the liver and kidneys but can also impact other body systems. The bacteria thrive in water and moist environments and can infect both animals and humans.
- Signs to Watch For:
 - There are three main forms of the disease:
 - Hemorrhagic (Bleeding) Form:
 - High fever
 - Lethargy and loss of appetite
 - Bleeding spots in the mouth and eyes
 - Bloody diarrhea and vomiting
 - Often fatal if untreated
 - Icteric or Jaundice (Liver) Form:
 - Yellowing of the mouth, eyes, and skin (jaundice)
 - Same signs as hemorrhagic form, with additional liver involvement
 - Renal (Kidney) Form:
 - Severe lethargy and anorexia
 - Vomiting and diarrhea
 - Offensive breath odor, tongue ulcers
 - Excessive drinking and urination
 - Blood-tinged urine
 - Abdominal discomfort
 - Possible progression to chronic kidney disease
- How it Spreads:
 - Leptospira bacteria are primarily spread through the urine of infected animals (such as rodents). Dogs can contract the bacteria by drinking, swimming in, or contacting contaminated water or soil. It can also enter the body through damaged skin or mucous membranes.
- Treatment:
 - Early-stage leptospirosis can be treated with antibiotics, but intensive hospital care is often needed. Supportive treatments include IV fluids and medications to manage symptoms. A prolonged course of antibiotics is necessary to fully clear the infection and prevent chronic shedding.

What Does the Bordetella Vaccine Protect Against?

1. Bordetella bronchiseptica (Kennel Cough)

- What is it?
 - "Kennel cough" is a general term for a contagious respiratory infection in dogs, where coughing is a primary symptom.
 - Multiple viruses and bacteria can contribute, but Bordetella bronchiseptica is one of the most common bacterial causes. Other contributing viruses include adenovirus type-2, parainfluenza virus, and canine coronavirus.
- Signs to Watch For:
 - Clinical signs can range from mild to more persistent and may include:
 - Loud, honking cough (often described as a "goose honk")
 - Runny eyes and nose
 - Swollen tonsils
 - Wheezing
 - Reduced appetite
 - Depressed or tired behavior
 - Dogs often cough when their throat is touched or during/after exercise.
- How it Spreads:
 - Bordetella is highly contagious and spreads easily through:
 - Direct contact with other dogs (sniffing, playing)
 - Sharing water bowls, toys, or other surfaces
 - Airborne droplets from coughing and sneezing
 - Risk factors include stress, exposure to cold, dusty or smoky environments, and crowded settings like kennels, dog parks, or grooming salons.
- Treatment:
 - Most cases are mild and resolve in 1–3 weeks.
 - Treatment may include cough suppressants and anti-inflammatory medications for symptom relief, though they are not always necessary.
 - Severe or prolonged cases (especially those involving Bordetella bronchiseptica) may require antibiotics and longer recovery periods.

What Does the Lyme Vaccine Protect Against?

1. Lyme Disease (Borrelia burgdorferi)

- What is it?
 - Lyme disease is caused by the Borrelia burgdorferi bacterium, transmitted through the bite of infected ticks (commonly the black-legged or deer tick).
 - Once in the body, the bacteria can travel to the joints, kidneys, and other organs, leading to long-term complications if left untreated.
- Signs to Watch For:
 - Symptoms may take 2–5 months to appear and can include:
 - Generalized pain or stiffness (dogs may walk "like they're on eggshells")
 - Lameness that may shift between legs
 - Fever and lethargy
 - Loss of appetite
 - Vomiting, weight loss, and signs of kidney dysfunction (in rare but severe cases)
 - If untreated, symptoms may improve and then return weeks or months later.



- How it Spreads:
 - Lyme disease is not spread directly between dogs or from dogs to humans.
 - It is spread through tick bites.
 - Both pets and people are at risk if bitten by an infected tick — especially in wooded, grassy, or brushy areas.
- Treatment:
 - Lyme disease is treatable with antibiotics, most commonly doxycycline.
 - Treatment typically lasts four weeks, but reinfection is possible if another tick bite occurs.
 - Early detection improves recovery and reduces the risk of long-term damage.

What Does the Rabies Vaccine Protect Against?

1. Rabies

- What is it?
 - Rabies is one of the most serious viral diseases known, and it is found worldwide, including in North America. It is spread by the bite of an infected animal, and once symptoms appear, there is no cure. Because rabies is zoonotic (can be transmitted to people), it is a public health concern and is regulated by law in many areas.
- Signs to Watch For:
 - After an incubation period (typically 21–80 days in dogs), the virus progresses through three stages:
 - Initial Phase (2–3 days):
 - Sudden change in temperament (quiet dogs become agitated, outgoing dogs become fearful)
 - Personality changes (e.g., shy pets become aggressive, friendly pets become fearful)
 - Laryngeal spasms and voice changes
 - Excitative or "Furious" Stage (Next 1–7 Days):
 - Loss of fear, aggression, hallucinations
 - Attempts to bite or attack objects, people, or other animals
 - Not all animals show this phase
 - Paralytic or "Dumb" Stage (Final 2–4 Days):
 - Progressive paralysis, especially of the face and throat muscles
 - Drooling and "foaming at the mouth" due to inability to swallow
 - Final death from respiratory paralysis
- How it Spreads:
 - Rabies spreads through the saliva of infected animals, usually via bites.
 - In North America, common carriers include skunks, raccoons, foxes, bats, and coyotes
 - In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, stray dogs are the main reservoir
 - The virus travels through the nervous system to the brain, then to the salivary glands, where it can be spread to others.
 - The virus does not survive long outside the body.
 - Incubation Period:
 - Varies from 10 days to over a year
 - Typically 2 weeks to 4 months in dogs
 - Faster symptom development occurs if the bite is closer to the brain or spinal cord
- Treatment:
 - There is no treatment for rabies once symptoms appear.
 - If rabies is suspected, immediate quarantine and reporting is legally required
 - A 10-day observation period is standard following a bite
 - If the dog remains healthy after 10 days, it was not shedding the virus at the time of the bite
 - Public health authorities are notified, and strict legal protocols must be followed



Know Your Puppy's Parasite Risks

Common Parasites in Puppies

Roundworms

Roundworms are one of the most common intestinal parasites in puppies. These worms live freely in the intestines and can be transmitted through the mother's milk or by ingesting eggs from contaminated feces. A puppy with a heavy roundworm load may show signs like **poor growth, digestive upset, and a characteristic "pot-bellied" appearance**. Prompt treatment is important to avoid complications.

Hookworms

Hookworms are small but serious parasites that attach to the lining of the small intestine and feed on blood. Puppies can become infected by ingesting larvae or through skin contact, especially on their feet. Hookworm infections can lead to **anemia, diarrhea, and weakness**. In some cases, the irritation caused by larvae entering through the skin can lead to secondary skin infections.

Whipworms

Whipworms reside in the large intestine and cause irritation and inflammation. Although less common in young puppies, they can cause **chronic watery or bloody diarrhea** and weight loss if left untreated.

Tapeworms

Tapeworms require an **intermediate host**—like a flea or small mammal—to complete their life cycle. Puppies become infected by ingesting an infected flea during grooming or from hunting behavior later in life. Tapeworms may cause **digestive upset** and growth issues in puppies, though many adult dogs show no symptoms. You may notice **small, rice-like segments** in your puppy's stool or around the anus.

- *Dipylidium caninum* is the most common type and is transmitted through fleas.
- *Taenia species* are acquired from eating infected rodents or rabbits.
- *Echinococcus* is a zoonotic tapeworm that can infect humans and is more common in rural or farming areas.

Heartworms

Heartworms are transmitted through mosquito bites and are **potentially life-threatening**. The larvae travel through the bloodstream and eventually settle in the heart and lungs, where they grow into large worms (up to 14 inches long). Symptoms of heartworm disease include **fatigue, coughing, and poor physical condition**. Preventative medication is the safest and most effective way to protect your puppy.



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