

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW PUPPY OWNERS



**MCKENZIE VETERINARY SERVICES**

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# CONGRATULATIONS!



Owning a dog can be an extremely rewarding experience, but it is also a big responsibility. We hope this booklet will give you the information needed to make good decisions regarding your puppy. Please be sure to check out the Further Information section for more in-depth information.

## MAKING YOUR NEW PUPPY FEEL AT HOME



When welcoming a new puppy into your home, it's important to start off right by making sure you have everything you need for your puppy to settle in well.

'Puppy-proof' your home by clearing tempting objects away from reach, like shoes, electrical cords, and plants.

Show your puppy the special places where they can eat, sleep and eliminate.

If there are young children in your home, make sure they know how to be respectful and gentle with the puppy.

Reward your puppy when they come to you or responds to their name with praise/treats. Puppies as young as 8 weeks old can begin learning good potty manners and basic training words like 'sit,' 'down' and 'come.'

## DIET AND NUTRITION

Diet is critical during the growing months of a dog's life. There are many commercial foods specially formulated to meet your puppy's unique nutritional requirements. Your puppy should be fed a good quality puppy food until 12 - 18 months of age, depending on your dog's breed and size. Adult formulations are not recommended as they do not provide the nutrition a puppy needs.



We recommend that you buy a food that has the AAFCO (American Association of Feed Control Officials) certification. AAFCO is an organization that oversees the entire pet food industry and sets the minimum requirements for nutrition. Royal Canin and Hills Science Diet are excellent veterinarian recommended diets that meet these requirements.

Some owners prefer to feed a home-made or raw diet. If you would like to do this, beware that most recipes found online and commercially available raw diets are neither balanced (nutrients are found in the right ratios, especially calcium:phosphorus) or complete (all essential nutrients that animals require are present in the diet in the proper amounts). In addition, raw diets can transmit harmful bacteria to pets and people, especially very young children or people with poor immune systems. Balancelt.com and "Complete and Balanced" by Hilary Watson are two sources of reliable recipes that are formulated to meet all of your puppy's nutritional needs. Vitamin and mineral supplements are available to ensure these requirements are met. Feeding scraps from the table isn't recommended as it can teach your puppy to beg at the table. We will be happy to assist you in choosing the best diet for your puppy by discussing options with you. Call the clinic and ask for Alli, our nutrition advocate.

There are several "right" ways to feed puppies. Many trainers recommend that we don't feed puppies out of a bowl at all, instead carry their kibble with you at all times and hand-feed your puppy one kibble at a time to reinforce positive behaviours – see Dr Sophia Yin's article "Learn to Earn" below. This results in very rapid progress with training and connection with your puppy. Other people prefer "meal feeding." The puppy is fed a measured amount of food at specific times of the day. Food not eaten within 30 minutes should be taken away. "Free choice feeding," means that food is available at all times. This works well with some dogs, particularly small breed dogs.

The feeding guide on the label of your puppy's food will suggest how much to feed your puppy based on her weight and age. Adjustments may be needed, however, based on your puppy's body condition score. An ideal body condition score is: The ribs are easily felt but not seen and have a slight fat cover (~1/2"), and a waist is present (i.e. the abdomen tucks in behind the ribs) when viewed from the side and the top.

Puppies 8 to 12 weeks of age should be fed 3-4 times per day. At 3-4 months of age, feeding can be reduced to twice daily. This feeding frequency is also recommended long term throughout your dog's adult life.

If you are unsure how much or how often you should feed your puppy, please ask us. We will be happy to help.

## CHEWING AND TEETHING



Almost all a puppy's baby teeth are present by four weeks of age. They begin to fall out around four months and are replaced by the 42 adult (permanent) teeth by 7 months. Chewing is a puppy characteristic that you can expect until then.

It is essential to direct your puppy's chewing toward acceptable objects. Provide your puppy with safe objects such as firm rubber chew bones or other chew toys, so other objects are spared. Keep items off the floor and garbage covered. Avoid toys that look like objects you wouldn't want them to chew (like shoes). To keep your puppy interested, rotate toys every few weeks.

Do not let your puppy chew or bite your arms or hands ('mouthing') as this teaches the puppy that biting is acceptable. It may not hurt now, but it will when their adult teeth come through. If your puppy mouths, stop playing and say "ouch" in a startling manner. This teaches your puppy that he is being too rough.

It is important that your puppy is comfortable with being handled around the mouth so that future examinations of his teeth are possible. Lift your puppy's lips and examining his teeth frequently while using positive reinforcement. Brushing your dog's teeth is an excellent way to prevent tartar build up. You can start acclimatizing your puppy to brushing at a young age. Use special dog toothpaste and a small soft toothbrush.

Our technicians are happy to demonstrate brushing proper technique, or there are links to videos in the Further Information section.

## GROOMING AND NAIL CARE

Grooming needs are usually breed and lifestyle dependent. Some long-haired breeds require regular brushing or may need professional grooming to keep their coat healthy, but all dogs can benefit from regular brushing. Introducing your puppy to brushing by using a soft brush will make it easier for you or a groomer as your puppy gets older. Don't let your puppy bite the brush.



Puppies usually don't need to be bathed, but you may want to start getting them used to baths. Don't overdo this, as too much bathing can strip essential oils from their coat and cause skin issues. As every dog's needs are different, please discuss this with your veterinarian. We sell a variety of grooming supplies and can recommend the right ones for your puppy. Using human products are drying to a dog's skin.

Puppies' nails can be trimmed with nail trimmers made for dogs. Nails have a pink 'quick' which supplies blood to the nail and can be seen through clear nails. Avoid hitting the quick when clipping your puppy's nails. If your dog has black nails, you will not be able to see the quick, so please ask us or a groomer to show you where to cut. Cutting the quick causes the nail to bleed and can be painful, which may make your puppy adverse to nail trims in the future.

Many dogs require routine nail trimmings throughout their life. Handling your puppy's feet regularly will get them used to having them touched. Use positive reinforcement during and after nail trims, and stop if they become agitated.

## SOCIALIZATION



The socialization period, especially the first 16 weeks, is the critical time for shaping your dog's future temperament, character, and behaviour. During that time, a puppy is very impressionable to social influences. If you introduce your puppy to as many different social situations as possible (men, women, children, dogs, other cats, etc.) during this critical period, they will likely accept them throughout their life. Keep these experiences positive and in a controlled and calm environment to avoid having them develop any negative associations. Be sure to use the Socialization Checklist by Dr Yin in the Further Information section.

Puppy preschool or behaviour training classes are an excellent way to socialize your puppy and teach them good puppy manners in play with other puppies and the whole family. All members of the family should be involved in learning how to train your puppy. Please discuss this with us.

To desensitize your puppy to the sights, sounds and smells of the clinic, bring your puppy by for a treat and some attention. We are always happy to see our puppy patients! Nicolle, a Veterinary Technician, is our very own behaviour enthusiast. If you have any questions when it comes to behaviour or training, she will assist you. Call the Client Care Team and ask to set up an appointment.

## HOUSE TRAINING

Housetraining should begin as soon as your puppy enters their new home. Puppies need to go out a lot, and some puppies are not fully housetrained until 6 to 9 months of age, so don't despair. Your puppy wants to please you, but his memory is short, so your patience is essential.



Take your puppy outside first thing in the morning, after naps, and after eating. Keep your puppy on a leash and take them to a designated 'potty spot.' Let them sniff around and use a trigger command like 'go pee' while they goes and use it consistently. Reward your puppy after they have gone with praise and stroking (or use treats). If they don't go, bring them back inside and either put them in their crate or keep them near you and try again in 15 mins.

Never leave your puppy unsupervised indoors. Keep your puppy close by and supervised when inside and be aware of signs that they have to go, like looking distracted or circling and sniffing the floor. If you can't monitor them, keep them in their crate or in a confined space without any blankets or rugs, as puppies prefer to go on soft surfaces.

Don't scold, if they make a mistake so have you! If you catch them in the act, you can firmly tell them 'no' or 'bad' and then quickly take them outside. Never scold your puppy for a potty training 'accident' if you don't catch them in the act. Too much time has passed for them to understand what he has done wrong. Your job is to ensure that your puppy knows when they have succeeded.

## HOUSEHOLD DANGERS



There are many things in your home that can be dangerous to your puppy, including foods and plants... but even a sock can be hazardous if your puppy swallows it! It is best to keep all loose objects up out of reach, garbage cans covered and doors to empty rooms closed. Not all pet toys are safe for puppies, and some toys like ropes and chews should only be played with under supervision. Household plants can be deadly - visit the ASPCA website at: <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/>

## VACCINATIONS

Vaccinations are usually given at 8, 12, and 16 weeks of age, but this schedule may vary depending on your pet's individual needs.



The core vaccination schedule will protect your puppy from several common diseases:

Distemper/Adenovirus/Parvovirus/Parainfluenza (DAPP), Leptospirosis and Rabies The first four are included in one injection that is given at 8 and 12 and 16 weeks of age. The Leptospirosis vaccine requires 2 vaccinations, 4 weeks apart, given at 12 and 16 weeks. The rabies vaccine is given as a single dose at 16 weeks of age.

Why does my puppy need more than one vaccination?

When a puppy nurses, it receives a temporary form of immunity (maternal antibodies), which lasts for the first few weeks of the puppy's life. This immunity interferes with vaccinations by neutralizing the vaccine.

Since we do not know when an individual puppy will lose the short-term immunity gained from its mother, a series of vaccinations is given. We give the first vaccine at 8 weeks when most puppies' maternal antibody protection starts to wane. Booster vaccines at 12 and 16 weeks ensure adequate antibody production to protect against disease. We continue until 16 weeks because some puppies maternal antibodies can interfere with a proper immune response until this age.

## WORMS



Intestinal parasites are common in puppies. Symptoms include poor overall health, chronic soft or bloody stools, change of appetite, a pot-bellied appearance, poor coat, and weight loss. Common parasites include roundworm, hookworm, whipworm, tapeworm and heartworm (heartworm is not generally found on Vancouver Island.)

Many puppies are born with roundworms or can become infected soon after birth through their mother's milk. Children playing in dirt or sand contaminated with dog feces can also become infected by roundworms by putting their dirty fingers in their mouths. They can also be infected by being licked in the face. This is rare, but there have been cases on the Island.

Approximately 5 - 13% of humans have antibodies to roundworms, which suggests that millions of people have had exposure to them.

Except for tapeworms, very few internal parasites are visible in the stool. A fecal test can reveal the eggs of internal parasites, but these tests can be falsely negative. For this reason, we recommend treating all puppies for worms.

We recommend the use of a deworming product, such as Interceptor Plus, which is given orally and is safe and effective against several of the common worms of dogs. Deworming treatment should be given every two weeks in the first month, and then monthly until 6 months old. It is crucial that the treatment is repeated as the deworming medication only kills adult roundworms. Within 2 - 4 weeks, the larval stages, which migrate through tissues in the body, become adults and need to be treated. Periodic deworming throughout the dog's life may be recommended for dogs with certain lifestyles

## FLEAS AND TICKS

Fleas are the most common of all dog parasites. They feed on your dog's blood, causing irritation and itchiness. They can also transmit tapeworm, cause flea allergy dermatitis (FAD), and can bite other hosts (including humans). Adult fleas make up only about 2% of the flea population as an adult flea lays up to 50 eggs per day. Therefore, just killing adult fleas does not get rid of the eggs and larvae in the environment.



Ticks are also a significant problem here on the West Coast. They also feed on your dog's blood, and can transmit diseases such as Lyme, Anaplasma, and Babesia. They are active when temperatures are 4°C and above. In 2019, there were only two weeks in February where it was below 4°C.

The best treatment for fleas or ticks is preventing the problem before it starts. We recommend oral products like Nexgard or Bravecto which prevent both fleas and ticks. These are given either monthly, or every 3 months (Bravecto). We will provide you with an age and weight-specific product that is safe for your pet.

In the Victoria Area, fleas can be a problem year round. The mild winters here never eliminate the outdoor flea and tick population.

## SPAYING AND NEUTERING



Part of responsible pet ownership is ensuring that your dog does not contribute to pet overpopulation. The best way to do this is to have your female dog spayed and your male dog neutered. The operation is done in a single day (dropped off in the morning and picked up later that day) and with adequate pain control, a full recovery is made within 10-14 days.

### Female dogs

Unless she is spayed, your female dog will have a heat approximately every 6 months, with the first one occurring at around 6-9 months of age. During these heats, male dogs will become attracted, and despite your best efforts, your dog may become pregnant. Spaying a dog before her first heat will prevent unwanted pregnancies and virtually eliminates the risk of mammary cancer and uterine infections later on in life. On the other hand, other conditions are less common in dogs who are spayed after they have had 1 - 2 heat cycles, so the decision of when to spay is best made on an individual basis.

### Male dogs

Neutering offers several advantages. Unneutered male dogs tend to have a more aggressive and dominant temperament. They also tend to be territorial and mark their territory by urinating in inappropriate locations. As intact male dogs get older, their prostate enlarges causing difficulties urinating/defecating. They are also prone to prostate and rectal cancer. Neutering significantly decreases these risks. If there are no behavioural problems and roaming is prevented, neutering can be delayed safely until at least 18 months of age or older

## TATTOOS AND MICROCHIP

Each year hundreds of thousands of lost pets are taken to animal shelters across the country. Many of these animals wear no form of traceable identification and are never reunited with their owners.

Tattoos and microchips are excellent permanent and traceable forms of identification for your pet. It is highly recommended that one or both of these be done at the same time as spaying or neutering.



A microchip is a tiny electronic implant inserted under the loose skin on a pet's neck using a special needle. It can be implanted without the need for anesthesia. Each microchip has an associated identification number which is stored in a computer database with your name, address and phone number. Animal shelters and veterinary hospitals throughout North America are equipped with scanning devices that read the microchip. If your pet is found, they will be able to notify you quickly with your stored information.

Tattoos are etched into one of your pet's ears usually at the time of spaying or neutering when your pet is under general anesthesia. The tattoo number is associated with the vet hospital that gave the tattoo, allowing your pet to be traced to the clinic where your details are kept. Tattoos are a visible and permanent method of identification.

## PET INSURANCE



Pet health insurance can help by sharing the cost of veterinary care in unexpected situations. It also gives you peace of mind that you don't have to worry if you will be able to provide your pet with the medical attention they require.

Most policies cover veterinary fees for diagnosis and treatment of any accident, injury or illness. However, there are many different plans available so it is important to research the right plan for you and your pet.

Most pet insurance companies offer 1 month of free insurance for puppies – ask your veterinarian or the Client Care Team to sign the form to take advantage of this free offer.

If insurance is not an option for you, consider putting some money aside monthly for those unexpected visits to the vet.

## LOOKING FORWARD



As your puppy grows into an adult dog, they will need regular veterinary care to stay healthy, including yearly exams and vaccinations. Once your dog has reached 7 years, you may want to consider yearly blood panels to look at liver and kidney function and to catch disorders early. Also, your dog will need regular dental cleanings, which will help her avoid pain and extractions as she gets older.

We are proud to be a partner in your dog's health and will help to guide you through this process. Please let us know if you have any questions.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

On the web - [www.mckvets.com](http://www.mckvets.com)

By phone - 250-727-2125

By email - [contact.us@mckvets.com](mailto:contact.us@mckvets.com)

Book online - <https://mckvets.com/make-an-appointment/>



**DAPP (Distemper, Adrenovirus, Parvovirus, Paninfluenza)**

**Importance - Essential**

Transmission - Dog to dog contact, areas in contact with infected dog. Parvo persists in the ground for years.  
 Clinical Disease - Usually fatal, neurological, respiratory, liver and intestinal diseases as well as Kennel Cough

**Leptospirosis**

**Importance - Advised**

Transmission - Any area with racoons, rats, marine mammals, deer, etc. Contact with contaminated urine.  
 Clinical Disease - Often fatal kidney/liver failure or flu-like illness that results in contagious carrier state. Transmissible to humans

**Rabies**

**Importance - Advised**

Transmission - Bats (~0.5% of all bats in BC are positive, 54 positive bats ion southern island in 2016)  
 Clinical Disease - Always fatal neurological disease. Transmissible to humans

**Bordetella**

**Importance - Advised for puppies and social dogs, as well as dogs to be boarded/put in day care.**

Transmission - Dog to dog contact, and any area where infected dogs have been. Cough particles travel up to 8 feet.  
 Clinical Disease - Kennel Cough Syndrome, some forms transmissible to humans

	DAPP	Lepto	Rabies	Bord
8 Weeks				
12 Weeks				
16 Weeks				
1 Year				
As Adults	Every 3 Years	Every Year	Every 3 Years	Every Year

# PUPPY-PROOF HOME CHECKLIST

## INDOOR DANGERS

- Make sure all **electrical cords and wires** are out of reach, or apply a pet-repellent spray. Puppies love to chew when they are teething.
- Keep an eye out for hot objects and surfaces.
- Puppies love to explore new things. Securely store all **household cleaning products and medications**, as well as **lotions and creams**. Any of these could have ingredients that are potentially toxic to your curious puppy.
- Check all **houseplants** on the ASPCA Poison control website. Some common greenery can have deadly effects. <https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants>
- Keep all **soft plastic bags and packaging** out of reach, as these can cause suffocation.
- If you love to cozy up to a nice fire, be sure to use a **fireplace screen** to protect your puppy from burning embers.
- Be sure to check **collars and harnesses** regularly as they grow to ensure a proper fit, and to avoid serious injury.
- Keep **holly, mistletoe**, and especially **Christmas tree tinsel** out of reach during the holidays.
- **Chocolate and Xylitol** are extremely toxic to dogs. Be sure not to leave any sweets out for snoopy puppies to ingest.

## OUTDOOR DANGERS

- Check the garage for **antifreeze**. Keep it well out of reach, or dispose of it and switch to a pet friendly propylene glycol-based brand.
- Make sure to keep pets away from your lawn if you treat it with **chemicals**. Always read and follow the directions and keep the unused chemicals securely fastened and out of reach.
- Keep covers on **hot tubs and pools** when not in use. They could fall in and be unable to get back out.
- Check **outdoor plants** against the list on the ASPCA Poison control website as well.
- Make sure all **paint, gasoline, motor oil** and the like are securely closed and placed well out of reach.

# FURTHER INFORMATION

- Socialization Checklist for Puppies by Dr Sophia Yin
  - [https://drsophiayin.com/app/uploads/2015/12/Socialization\\_Checklist.pdf](https://drsophiayin.com/app/uploads/2015/12/Socialization_Checklist.pdf)
- Crate Training Dogs
  - <https://web4g.lifelearn.com/mckenzievet/files/2020/11/Crate-training-dogs-Copy.pdf>
- Teaching Your Dog to Walk Politely On Leash Part 1
  - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/lilita/6881499446/sizes/l/>
- Teaching Your Dog to Walk Politely On Leash Part 2
  - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/lilita/7793628388/sizes/l/>
- Positive Reinforcement & Leadership vs. Dominance
  - <https://apdt.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/dominance-and-dog-training.pdf>
- Learn to Earn
  - <https://drsophiayin.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/LearntoEarn11.2009.pdf>
- Using Food Puzzles
  - <https://web4g.lifelearn.com/mckenzievet/files/2020/11/UsingFoodPuzzles.pdf>
- Positive Reinforcement Explained in Detail
  - [https://web4g.lifelearn.com/mckenzievet/files/2020/11/Don\\_t-shoot-the-dog-Copy.pdf](https://web4g.lifelearn.com/mckenzievet/files/2020/11/Don_t-shoot-the-dog-Copy.pdf)
- How to Handle Puppy Nipping with Compassion
  - <https://dogsbf.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/nipping-poster-jpeg.jpg>
- How to Brush Your Dog's Teeth Video (1)
  - <https://pets.webmd.com/dogs/video/how-to-brush-dog-teeth>
- How to Brush Your Dog's Teeth Video (2)
  - <http://www.vetvid.com/2020/11/how-to-brush-your-dogs-teeth/>
- Indoor Pet Initiative: Keeping Dogs Happy
  - <https://indoorpet.osu.edu/dogs>
- Treatment of Fear in Dogs
  - <https://mckvets.com/files/2020/11/Behaviour-Modification-Handout-Fearful-Dog.pdf>