



## NEW PUPPY INFORMATION

### *Congratulations on your new addition!*

Because we want your puppy to be a healthy, happy, wonderful new part of your family, we have prepared this packet of useful information. Please read it at your leisure, and bring whatever questions you may have to your next appointment.

### *Included in this packet:*

#### Puppy Care: General Information and Recommendations

- Vaccination protocols and the diseases against which we vaccinate
- Parasite prevention, diagnosis, and treatment
- Diet and feeding
- Identification, including tags and microchips
- Spay/neuter surgery
- Grooming

#### Puppy Sanity: how to raise a truly excellent puppy

Crate training and house training

Touch Your Puppy!

Puppy Socialization

Chewing, digging, barking, and other normal but undesirable puppy behaviors

Samples: heartworm medication, flea medication, toothbrush, microchip information.

**Once again, congratulations on your new puppy! If you have any questions, please feel free to ask us during your checkups or call Acorn Veterinary Clinic at 530-753-7580.**



## **PUPPY CARE**

### **General Information and Recommendations**

#### **VACCINATIONS**

A puppy receives protective antibodies from his mother through the placenta and via the colostrum he consumes his first days of birth. These maternal antibodies provide temporary immunity against bacteria and viruses. A puppy loses his maternal antibodies somewhere between 8 and 16 weeks of age.

In puppies, vaccinations do not give immediate immunity. First, whatever maternal antibodies remain will neutralize any vaccine given. Second, it takes time for the puppy to create antibodies in response to a vaccine. To make sure that a puppy becomes adequately immunized against the common preventable diseases, veterinarians recommend a “puppy series” of vaccinations. This series starts at 6-8 weeks of age, when maternal antibodies are likely active but might be waning, and ends at 14-16 weeks of age, when we know that maternal antibodies are gone.

We recommend that each puppy be given vaccinations against distemper, “hepatitis” (canine adenovirus), parainfluenza, and parvovirus. These four vaccines come in a combined vaccine we refer to as DHPP. This DHPP is given every three weeks between 6-8 weeks of age and 16 weeks of age. Then, at 16 weeks, the puppy also receives a rabies vaccination. This rabies vaccination is required by law, required to obtain a license, and a good safety measure to prevent a fatal disease that can be spread to humans.

**Boosters:** One year after the last “puppy shot,” a dog is due for his first booster. DHPP and rabies are given again at this time. Then, depending on the specific vaccines given, the dog will be due for boosters every year or every three years after that.

**Optional vaccines:** In addition to the “core” DHPP and rabies vaccines, you may choose to have your dog vaccinated against leptospirosis, *Corona* virus, *Bordetella*, and rattlesnake venom. The decision to use these vaccines should be based on an assessment of the benefits versus the risks, given your dog’s lifestyle.

## CANINE DISEASES AND CORE VACCINES

**Canine Distemper** is a highly-contagious viral disease that affects the digestive, respiratory, and/or nervous system. It causes fever, lethargy, coughing, nasal discharge, seizures, and, eventually, death. There is no effective treatment for distemper. This disease is seen in Yolo County, especially in puppies with uncertain vaccine histories.

**Hepatitis** is caused by the Canine Adenovirus-1. It is a highly-contagious viral illness that causes liver and kidney disease. Clinical signs include fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. Due to successful vaccination campaigns, this disease is rarely seen in the US.

**Parainfluenza** is a contagious respiratory virus that causes inflammation of the upper airways (tracheobronchitis) associated with a dry, hacking, “seal bark” cough. Along with Bordetella, this virus is a key contributor to “kennel cough,” a complex of bacteria and viruses responsible for canine infectious tracheobronchitis.

**Parvovirus** is extremely contagious and causes serious disease in the intestinal tract. Clinical signs include lethargy, vomiting, bloody diarrhea, and dehydration. Parvovirus is often fatal without supportive treatment. This disease is still commonly seen in this area. The virus is shed in the vomit and diarrhea of affected dogs and can remain viable in the environment for up to one year. It is for this reason that we recommend puppies are not taken to dog parks, and socialize only with vaccinated dogs until two weeks after their own vaccinations are complete. Rottweilers and Pit Bulls seem to have less resistance than other breeds, so an extra Parvovirus vaccination is recommended.

**Rabies** is a viral disease of the nervous system that is always fatal in mammals. Most dogs are exposed to rabies through bites by wild mammals, like raccoons, skunks, or bats. This disease is seen in Yolo County every year in wildlife and the law requires that every dog and cat be vaccinated against it, as dogs are potential sources of infection in humans.

## OPTIONAL VACCINES GIVEN DEPENDING ON LIFESTYLE

*Bordetella bronchiseptica*, a bacterium, is a key component of “kennel cough.” Many boarding kennels and “doggy day care” facilities require that dogs be vaccinated against it. We recommend it if you will be boarding your dog or visiting many dog parks. The vaccine must be given every six to twelve months, depending on the requirements of the boarding/care facility.

**Leptospirosis** is a bacterial disease found in many wild animals, including Yolo County. A dog can get the disease from contaminated water or contact with urine of infected animals. This bacterial infection can damage the liver or kidneys. Clinical signs include fever, lethargy, decreased appetite, jaundice, and bleeding. Two vaccinations are given three or four weeks apart and a booster given annually after that.

**Rattlesnake** vaccine protects your dog against the venoms of several venomous snakes, including the Western Rattlesnake (Prairie, Great Basin, Northern, and Southern Pacific Rattlesnakes), Sidewinder, Timber Rattlesnake, Massasauga, and the Copperhead. Venomous snake bites are a veterinary emergency and results in serious injury and death to thousands of dogs each year. Two vaccinations are given four weeks apart and a booster given annually after that. Antivenin is still required after a bite; but a vaccinated dog appears to have a much greater chance of survival and a less serious illness.

**Canine Influenza** vaccine protects your dog against the most common causes of canine influenza. This vaccine provides 2 in 1 protection from the H3N8 and H3N2 strains. We recommend for dogs that visit dog parks, are boarded, or dog training classes. It requires two vaccines 3-4 weeks apart and yearly boosters.

## **PARASITES**

In Yolo County, we have several common parasites that affect dogs. These include internal parasites such as roundworms, whipworms, tapeworms, coccidia, giardia, and heartworm. We also see external parasites such as fleas, mites, and ticks. The good news is that we have medications that can help prevent infection and the ability to diagnose and treat current infections. Because many of these parasites can affect humans, it is important to discuss parasite control at every annual veterinary visit.

**Prevention:** Preventative treatments are available for heartworms, fleas, ticks, and some intestinal parasites. These treatments are appropriate for nearly every dog and should be used year-round. For dogs over 6 months, it is necessary to test for heartworms before starting the preventative. There are no such requirements for the other parasites.

**Diagnosis:** Some parasites, like fleas, ticks, and tapeworms are often diagnosed at home when owners see the pests themselves. Others, like roundworms, whipworms, coccidia, and giardia are diagnosed via stool sample at the vet clinic; these parasites sometimes cause diarrhea, so the owner may already know there's a problem. Diagnosing heartworm requires a blood test and, occasionally, a chest x-ray; often owners do not suspect infection until the dog becomes exercise intolerant or starts coughing.

**Treatment:** For fleas and ticks, many of the preventative medications are also treatments; there is also a pill that kills fleas very quickly in the case of severe infestation. There are several de-wormers that treat intestinal worms and coccidia. *Giardia* usually responds well to a common antibiotic.

**Following is a description of these parasites and ways to protect your dog and family from them.**

**Roundworms** are the most common worms in puppies and are transmitted via the placenta and mother's milk. The mother often harbors the larvae in a dormant state and has no clinical signs of infection. When she becomes pregnant, the larvae come out of their dormancy, develop, and can infect her fetuses or newborn puppies. As a result, approximately 85% of the puppies we test have roundworms. These puppies may have diarrhea, vomiting, weight loss, and a dry hair coat – or they may have no signs at all. Usually, we recommend prophylactic de-worming, as there may be no evidence in the puppy's fecal material. The most recent recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control include de-worming at 4, 6, 8, and 10 weeks of age. Roundworms can infect humans, particularly children, who typically spend more time in the area in which the dogs defecate and are more prone to putting their soiled hands in their mouths. We advise keeping fecal material cleaned up to reduce contamination in the yard.

**Coccidia** are protozoal parasites that infect the intestinal tract. Signs include diarrhea, lethargy, vomiting, and loss of appetite. The diarrhea is often light colored, with mucus and bloody streaks. This parasite is diagnosed through fecal examination and treated with medication for 7-14 days.

**Tapeworms** are quite prevalent and can potentially be transmitted to humans. The common tapeworm, *Dipylidium caninum*, infects dogs via the ingestion of infected fleas. Thus, flea control plays a key role in the prevention of tapeworm infections. Owners often see worm segments as little “rice” grains crawling out of the dog’s rectum or on his stool. Treatment is by oral medication – but the life cycle of this worm is very short, so re-infection can occur in as little as three weeks if adequate flea control is not adopted. Like dogs, people can become infected through accidental ingestion of fleas; crushing a flea with your fingernails and not washing your hands thoroughly can lead to flea parts in your mouth.

**Giardia** is a protozoal parasite that dogs get by drinking contaminated water. This parasite can cause intestinal gas, as well as a watery, light-colored diarrhea with a strong smell. Infection can also lead to lethargy and vomiting. We see this parasite frequently in Yolo County and believe many of the lakes and waterways are contaminated. This parasite can be contagious to humans, so we encourage frequent hand washing after handling your puppy or its feces. This parasite is often difficult to diagnose and repeated fecal examinations may be performed. Due to the nature of the organism, a very fresh stool sample or a rectal swab is required. Treatment with oral medication usually clears the infection; but it sometimes needs to be repeated.

**Whipworms** are increasingly prevalent in areas frequented by dogs and are difficult to eradicate in the environment. They are frequently the cause of considerable weight loss, lethargy, and blood-tinged diarrhea. Diagnosis is made by repeated fecal examinations. Treatment consists of an oral medication given three times over a three-month period.

**Heartworms** are carried by mosquitoes and are becoming an increasing problem in this area. When an infected mosquito takes a blood meal, it may deposit larvae in the bloodstream of the dog. These larvae develop gradually and, six months later, are adults that live in and around the heart and can cause significant disease in the dog. The resulting disease may lead to heart failure and is both costly and hazardous to treat. It is easy to prevent disease with a once-monthly oral medication; given our temperate, mosquito-friendly climate, the preventative should be given year round. Generally, we start puppies on preventatives at 6 to 9 weeks of age. If prevention is started later than 6 months of age, a blood test must rule out existing disease before starting the medication.

**Fleas** are perhaps the most common and easily-identifiable of all canine parasites. They feed on blood and are happy to live in soil and carpet when not actively feeding. Flea bites can lead to allergic skin diseases and severe infestation can cause anemia, especially in the young. Common signs of infestation are frequent scratching and the observation of fleas or “flea dirt” on the dog or its bedding. This flea dirt is small black debris that turns a reddish brown when it is wet; it is the excrement of the fleas. As noted above, fleas also carry tapeworm larvae that can then infect you or your dog. So, preventing flea infestation is very important for your puppy and you. Prevention is as simple as a topical or oral medication once every month. In dogs that are extremely sensitive to the bites of fleas, we might recommend using medications more frequently. You should be aware that the most common brands of topical treatment (Frontline, Advantage, etc.) have been proved safe and effective if used as directed; some pet-store brands, however, have been shown to be absorbed systemically and can prove fatal if too much is applied. Should your home or yard be over-run by fleas, there are options for treating those, as well.

**Ticks** are commonly found in this area. Like fleas, they feed on blood and can transmit diseases during those feedings. They become engorged and soft ticks can look like gray raisins after they feed. Diseases spread by ticks include Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, *Ehrlichia*, and Lyme disease, which is becoming more prevalent in this area. Ticks are best removed by grasping the head with tweezers or a tick puller, as close to your pet's body as possible. With gentle, steady pressure, pull upward to remove the tick. If the mouth parts remain imbedded, the area may swell and fester. Please contact us if that occurs. Several of the topical flea products also control ticks, although some of these are hazardous to cats and should be avoided if the dog associates with cats.

## **DIET AND FEEDING**

Puppies should be fed a commercial puppy diet until they are grown to adult size. These puppy foods are formulated with the protein and minerals necessary to support growth. Fortunately, there are many quality diets on the market in many formulations for puppies of various sizes. Large breed puppies should eat a "large-breed puppy" diet that promotes slower growth. Small breed puppies will appreciate the small kibble size of "small breed puppy" diets. While the highest quality diets are available at pet stores, quality brands are increasingly found in grocery stores. All foods should have statements that AAFCO guidelines are met so that you'll know the food will optimize your puppy's health.

**General Feeding Instructions:** Because of their quick metabolisms and large nutritional demand, we recommend that puppies be fed 3 times a day, especially in the first six months. After that, feedings can be reduced to 2 times daily. In most cases, we do not recommend that dogs be fed only once daily because it is more difficult to maintain blood sugar levels and metabolism may suffer. We recommend that food is made available for 15-20 minutes at each scheduled feeding. The amount of food you serve will depend on the brand you have selected. Please be aware that the feeding instructions on the can or bag are often too generous; if your puppy begins to gain weight too quickly, we can help you adjust the amount you are feeding. Puppies go through growth spurts and will be hungrier on some days than on others; do not be alarmed if your puppy does not eat all of his food every meal, as long as he is active. Many veterinarians recommend soaking the kibble in water for 15 minutes prior to feeding; this makes it easier for a puppy to eat.

### **Feeding Precautions:**

- Do not exercise large breed dogs immediately after eating, as they are most predisposed to bloat or stomach torsion at that time.
- Large breed dogs should be kept lean, in order to avoid many of the bone and joint problems associated with their rapid growth.
- Do not feed table scraps. In addition to this leading to a lifetime of begging and finicky eating, it can cause health problems particular to the human foods that are fed.

Your puppy will be ready for a quality adult diet at about one year of age (unless converted earlier by his veterinarian). To change to a new diet, we recommend the following: for the first three or four days, feed 75% of the old diet mixed with 25% of the new; for the next three or four days, feed equal amounts of the two diets; for the next few days, feed 75% new diet and 25% old. After this, feed only the new diet. This gradual conversion will help to prevent digestive upset and allow the puppy to adapt to the new diet.

## **IDENTIFICATION**

We strongly advise that each puppy be microchipped and wear a collar with ID tags at all times. Nothing is more heartbreaking than a lost or injured pet with no identification. We have an order form for pet tags in our waiting room or tags can be made at Petco.

During spaying or neutering, we will happily microchip the puppy. The Home Again microchip we use is roughly the size of a grain of rice (2x11 mm) and is placed under the skin between the pet's shoulder blades. It is programmed with a unique, unalterable code that can be read by a hand-held scanner, like those in use in most veterinary offices, animal control agencies, and animal shelters across the country.

If your pet is ever taken to one of these facilities, the Home Again identification number will be obtained and your contact information retrieved; you will be contacted immediately so that you can be re-united with your pet. So, microchips have the benefit of permanent identification, as long as you update your contact information with the company that made your microchip.

## **SPAYING AND NEUTERING**

We feel that the best time to spay or neuter your pet is between four and six months of age. The arguments in favor of spaying and neutering include avoiding unwanted pregnancies; controlling pet overpopulation; reducing the risk of testicular, mammary, ovarian, and uterine cancers; and reducing the tendency toward certain undesirable behaviors, like mounting, roaming, urine marking, and aggression. To derive the best protection against mammary cancers, female dogs should be spayed before their first heat.

## **GROOMING**

We recommend that you start with basic grooming between six and nine weeks of age. You can use praise and treats to get your dog used to (and even enjoy) being brushed or combed, having his feet and ears handled, and having his teeth brushed. Tooth brushing is an important task that, if done regularly at home, can save time and money at the vet, especially if you have a small breed dog that is prone to dental problems. Once your puppy is used to having his feet handled, you'll want to trim his toenails regularly. Check his ears for odor and evidence of waxy build up or debris. If he is scooting, this often means his anal glands are full and need to be expressed; we are happy to have our technicians express them for you. Bathing your dog every few weeks is fine; but make sure you use a mild shampoo that will not dry out his skin and hair coat.



## **Puppy Sanity**

*Helping you get off to a great start with your new puppy*

Puppies can be delightful, precious, and adorable. They can also be frustrating, perplexing, and nerve wracking. Through my years as a dog owner and puppy kindergarten instructor, I have spent much of my time learning what works in raising a truly excellent puppy.

Puppies need consistency. You need to portray yourself as reliable and trustworthy. A puppy that knows you will always protect him does not have to learn to use teeth to protect himself.

*An example of this would be the puppy in a home with a child. Puppy is trying to sleep or chew on a toy. Child picks up puppy and starts bouncing him up and down like a stuffed toy. Puppy gets tired of the game and growls. He is punished for using a pretty viable form of communication. In reality, the breakdown came before the growl. Children must be taught how to interact with a puppy and be carefully supervised. If a child wants to squeeze and bounce something, have them use a doll or stuffed animal.*

Children that are not old enough to respect a puppy's right to stand on four paws or to be left alone to sleep should not be left alone with a puppy.

### **Dog Thought**

Puppies and dogs operate in pretty simple terms. Right/not right, safe/not safe. They will make lots of mistakes as they figure out the rules of living in a human household. Setting puppies up for success is not difficult. Having a sense of humor and not taking setbacks personally really help.

*Frustration leads to aggression. If you find yourself yelling at your puppy or physically hurting him, please call your veterinarian or any good puppy kindergarten instructor right away. There are workable solutions to all puppy problems.*

### **The three R's**

Learning the three R's can help you remember to set your puppy up for success. They are **restricting, redirecting, and reinforcement**. Restricting your puppy's available living space can help immensely with potty training and learning appropriate chewing behavior. One rule



may be to keep the puppy visible at all times. If you are in a small, puppy proof room, your puppy may be loose to play with you and explore the room. If you are moving around the house or in a room that is open to other areas of the house, keep your puppy tethered to you with a six foot lead. You will be more aware of your puppy and whether he needs to potty. If you cannot watch your puppy, crate him with a chew toy, or Kong.

Puppies will often pick up something that is not your idea of a good chew toy. Redirecting the puppy to a better choice will keep you from indirectly causing the development of resource guarding.

*Resource guarding is when a dog will protect a valued object by growling, snapping, or biting. This trait is a part of the hardwiring of every dog, but may never be seen in many soft or submissive dogs.*

Redirect a puppy by showing a strong interest in a suitable toy. Toss in the air or near the puppy. When the puppy becomes interested in the more suitable toy, play with him for a few minutes as a reward and to ensure that the next time you redirect, the puppy will have a pleasant memory associated with leaving the other object. When the puppy is not looking, remove the undesired “chew toy.”

So what if the puppy has something that he does not want to leave? Trading up is an alternative and is commonly used with all ages of dogs. To a dog, possession is 100% of the law. But dogs are not stupid, if they are chewing on a used tissue and you offer a liver biscotti, you will be able to make a trade. If you do this often enough, your puppy may start finding your keys for you in anticipation of a treat!

*Remember you, as an adult, may always have the authority to remove an object from your dog. A child may not. Set your dog up for success by teaching him that the approach of a human means something good is coming their way.*

### **Control the Goods**

Do you want a dog that sits or lies down when it wants something? Do you want a dog that looks at you to get permission before going out the door, getting up from a stay, or eating its dinner? These behaviors are simple to achieve; you control the goods.

*Puppy value systems are fairly simple. They want to be with someone that makes them feel safe, they want to eat when they are hungry, play, chew on things, and feel safe, especially at night.*

I recommend hand feeding for all puppies. Don't just hand over the food, though. Train your puppy every time you feed it. I regularly teach puppies to sit, down, stay, come, target, spin, weave through my legs, tug and find things. You can come up with your own list or sign up for a good puppy kindergarten class where you can learn lots of ways for your puppy to earn walks, meals, toys, playtime, and interaction time with you with healthy positive behaviors.

### **What is with that jumping up stuff?**

Face greeting, that's what it's all about. Puppies greet older dogs by kissing their faces. It's a display of submissive behavior and is meant as a great compliment. When applied to people, it doesn't work well. The average puppy is miles from the nearest human face so there is a lot of very ineffective jumping going on trying to reach an unreachable goal. The reason that the jumping behavior lingers so long is that it is rewarded in other ways. To many puppies, simply touching them to push them off your leg is very rewarding. They will bounce right back for more. They may also run into many people that reward their jumping up behavior by bending to pet them or to allow the puppy to lick their face. With many mixed signals to the puppy, it can be hard to know what is right and remember, puppies think right/not right. I let my dogs jump on me. I don't let them jump on others. I taught them a cue for jumping up and I only use it for myself. For other people, I restrict my puppy so that he cannot jump up usually just by standing on the leash. I have people ignore my puppy until he offers a different behavior such as sitting or lying down. The biggest hurdle for this exercise is controlling other people's behavior.

### **How long does it take to housebreak a puppy?**

Well, usually longer than people are willing to give it. Different breeds are easier than others. Different dogs are easier. If the breeder was diligent and the dam had good potty habits, the puppy has a good foundation already. Restriction is the key. You must be able to see what your puppy is doing. You must take him out immediately after eating, drinking, playing, sleeping, and about every hour during the day.

Toy breeds tend to need to go out more often than sight hounds. Labs tend to need potty more often than some of the herding breeds. Learn your puppy's routine and then put it into your subconscious. Mistakes in the house are human error, not puppy error. A dog that potties in the house is not yet house trained. Continue house training. Use a good cleaning product for accidents and use the crate when you cannot be watching your puppy.

If your puppy must be left alone for many hours during the day, find someone who can come to your house to potty and play with your puppy. Unless you work tremendously long hours, this does not have to continue forever, but it will reassure your puppy and help with housebreaking.

Accompanying your puppy out to potty for many weeks will insure success. You will start recognizing the signals that your puppy has to go and whether your puppy has to go more than once to empty its bladder (many puppies do this). You will know for sure that your puppy did go or whether he spent fifteen minutes chewing on a leaf. You are in a position to reward the behavior and behavior that is rewarded is far more likely to be repeated.

### **Crates and sleeping arrangements**

Crates should be in your bedroom when you sleep. Puppies are companion animals and do not understand the reasoning behind sleeping alone in the dark. This leads to an awful lot of howling, crying, scratching and whimpering. When you bring your puppy home that first day,

give him a calm, reassuring, but busy day. Keep your puppy moving until you are ready for bed yourself. This will help to ensure that the puppy goes right to sleep in its new home. If the puppy is sleeping in your room, you should be able to hear it stirring at night. Get up and potty it right then. Do not wait until the puppy starts howling. If you open the crate while the puppy is howling, he will learn that howling opens the crate – not the lesson you want to teach. I always prepare a kong the night before and leave it near the crate. When the puppy wakes up to potty anywhere between 4 to 6 in the morning, I potty him and give him his kong stuffed with peanut butter and a small amount of puppy chow. I want him to be quietly working on something in the crate. Usually, puppies lick the kong for awhile and then go back to sleep. You are preparing your puppy for sleep-in days!

### **Handling issues**

There are puppies in the world that just love being handled. For you people in the world that own these puppies, go for it! Handle those ears, tails, toes, pull fur, cuddle, hug, enjoy. For the rest of us – we need to do a little more work in this area. Classical conditioning is what it is all about. If you have a puppy who reacts aggressively when you handle its feet, start at the shoulder.

*Growling is communication. Your puppy is telling you that he is scared or angry or that he is thoroughly enjoying the game that he is playing with you. Please don't punish a dog for growling. A growling adult dog is like an early warning system. If you know that your dog is stressed, you can do something about it – like remove it from the stressful situation, before someone gets hurt.*

Stroke the shoulder while the puppy is eating out of your other hand. Gradually move your hand down the leg to the foot. Only feed while you are touching some part of the dog. What you are looking for is an emotional flip – from being anxious about touch to actively seeking it out because we have paired being touched with a *good thing*. Try it, it works. Keep it up until your dog is completely relaxed about being handled and then keep it up so that it doesn't become extinct.

*Extinction: a behavior that is not reinforced. So if you want your darling puppy to still come when you call, sit and down when you say, look at you for permission, reinforce, reinforce, reinforce!*

### **Biting!**

Let them! Sounds silly, but they need the feedback. Hold your hand or arm perfectly still, trying to jerk your arm away increases the chance of tearing skin. Wait for a bite that is harder than the other and yell, "Ouch!" Redirect the game to a toy. Give your puppy opportunities (like he needs them!) to bite only the adults in the house and only skin. He needs to get the feedback to learn bite inhibition. Your puppy will also learn bite inhibition when playing with puppies and responsible adult dogs. Over a period of weeks, the amount of pressure that you tolerate from

his teeth will lessen until finally the brush of his teeth causes you to react. So let him bite you now and get the feedback that he needs. You may be very glad that you did.

*Bite inhibition is evident in an adult dog that may bite in pain, fear, confusion, or in a fight, but causes very little or no damage. A dog that leaves large wounds or many punctures probably did not learn bite inhibition as a puppy.*

### **Building a strong recall and attention in the same exercise**

Say the puppy's name, when he turns his head toward you, "click" or tell him, "Good," and give him some puppy chow from your hand. Do it over and over again. Within ten times of calling your puppy, he will not take his eyes off you. Stop calling his name and "click" or tell him, "Good," for looking at you. Continue to train these two very basic behaviors at every mealtime. Make sure that you click when his eyes are on your face. Never ever call your dog to punish it. What constitutes punishment to a dog? Being locked up, being locked out, being tied up, being leashed after running free, getting a bath, getting medication, nail trimming, being crated, separation from family members or playmates, you get the idea. Reward your dog for coming to you, it is a big deal for a dog to make that choice.

### **Hardwiring**

Do you have a purebred dog or a cross with identifiable breeds in it? If you do, it is well worth investigating what your dog was bred to do. Hardwiring doesn't lie. Someone took the time to select for certain characteristics and traits over and over again for many generations. Your dog's blueprint will guide its adult life. If you got a Border Collie, you can expect her to want a job to do for about six to eight hours a day. She will compulsively herd cats, dogs, children, cars, and fast moving objects. If not assigned a job, she will find her own. It may consist of digging, chewing, barking, or running up and down the fence line protecting you from passersby. Your Border Collie can't help it, it's in the wiring. By researching a breed beforehand, you may save yourself and your dog lots of heartache. If you did choose the wrong breed for your lifestyle and you are not prepared to change you lifestyle, return the puppy while it is young enough to be readily adoptable.

Puppies are wonderful and time-consuming companions. Proving yourself as a reliable, consistent, and trustworthy leader will help you end up with the companion dog that you have been dreaming of. Good luck to you and your new addition.

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## CRATE TRAINING AND HOUSE TRAINING

Owning a dog is one of life's great pleasures. But, it is a long-term commitment, one that can last up to 15 years. It is a lot more pleasant to share this time with a dog that is house trained. No one enjoys an untrained dog that leaves puddles and piles all over the rug. Every dog should be house trained by: setting up a routine when you feed, walk, and water the dog; neutralizing any odors; confinement; and reinforcement.

The need to urinate and defecate is as natural a function for dogs as it is for humans. It takes a long time to toilet train a child, yet we often expect our puppies to learn overnight. At 8 weeks of age, a pup has little bladder control – but it will develop over the next two months or so.

There are several methods you may choose for housetraining your puppy. You may choose to use a crate, a small bathroom or laundry room, or paper-training (not really recommended, as you are training your puppy to urinate and defecate in the house). In order to have the greatest potential for success, you should choose a method and stick to it; inconsistent training is confusing and generally unsuccessful.

**Crate Training.** In addition to being a good way to confine your dog at night or when you're not home, crate training is also the easiest and is most successful tool for house training for the majority of people who use it. The most difficult part is getting the owner to acknowledge its usefulness. We hear comments like, "I can't put my little baby in that jail cell!" Rubbish! It is not a jail cell; it is a tool to help you teach your puppy. If used properly, it can simplify the house training process and become a pleasant, secure place the puppy enjoys going when he needs a rest or wants to be left alone. It should *never* be used as a punishment.

Crates come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and materials. Most owners prefer plastic crates, as they are approved for airline travel. In house training, we are working with the puppy's instinct not to soil his den; so the crate should not be too large. It should be just large enough for the puppy to stand, turn around, and lie down. If you know that your puppy will get much larger as an adult, you may want to borrow a smaller crate for this stage and purchase a larger one as he grows. Alternatively, you can purchase the larger crate now and divide it in two with a partition so that he's not tempted to soil the far corner. Just make sure that you partition material is safe and indestructible. Because dogs are inherently social, the perfect place for a crate is a room where the family spends a lot of time, like a family room or kitchen.

Introducing the new crate is easy; it just takes a little time. Try to bring your puppy home on a weekend morning, or some other day when you'll have lots of time to spend getting him adjusted. Provide a pad or towels so that the crate is comfortable. The first session in the crate should follow a period of play or other exercise and after the puppy has gone potty. Encourage the puppy to spend time in the crate by placing some great toys and treats in it (but never leave your puppy in a crate with toys that can easily be torn apart, as the pieces can become choking hazards). Always remove your dog's collar before putting him in the crate to prevent it from getting caught and choking the dog.

Once he freely enters the crate, you can start closing the door for brief periods. Expect some whining at first; but don't let him out while he is whining, as he'll never learn to stay quietly alone. Leave the room – but never for an extended period of time. You may let the puppy out when he is not longer whining. If the puppy does not stop whining on his own, you may use a noise distraction (shaking a can of pennies, spraying from a distance with a water sprayer) to stop the whining so that you can open the crate without rewarding the whining.

Repeat these sessions for longer periods, including overnight. Do not leave the puppy for longer than he can hold his bladder, or he will be forced to pee in the crate. If you must leave for longer, provide an acceptable potty spot in the crate.

Ideally, you'll teach your puppy to sleep overnight in the crate. First, it will prevent accidents or destructiveness when you're not supervising him. Also, sleeping with you or other family members may lead your dog to be more anxious when family members leave. We are trying to train the dog to be a loving – but independent – member of the family.

**House Training.** Take your puppy to the place in the yard where you'd like him to eliminate. Let him explore. If he urinates or defecates, praise him and offer a small treat. Return to the house. Let the training begin:

1. Set an alarm for 1 hour. Take your puppy back to the potty area in the yard. Stay there for five minutes or so. If he urinates or defecates, praise him and give him a treat. If not, take him inside but return to the potty spot every 10 minutes until he urinates and defecates. You will quickly learn his rhythms.
2. Take him out as soon as he wakes, after eating or drinking, after prolonged play, or after chewing on a toy.
3. Watch his body language carefully for any signs that he may need to “go.” Many puppies have a “pee-pee dance” of some sort that suggests when they need to go outside.
4. When you cannot supervise your puppy, he should be in his crate (or a bathroom, laundry room, etc.). Make sure he has things to keep him busy, like a stuffed Kong or his favorite indestructible toys. If he chews other things, you can use Bitter Apple – but be aware that it can stain wood, so test it on a small area before applying it to an entire vanity or table leg!

You have probably gathered by now that the successful house training requires you to anticipate your puppy's behavior so that you can produce the response you want – and reinforce it. Bingo!! That's training.

To help your puppy make it through the night without accidents, you'll want to remove his water two hours before his last potty trip of the night. Take him out right before putting him in the crate. Set your alarm for 4 hours after you crate him to take him outside.

**Nobody is perfect.** Inevitably, one or two accident will occur. It is extremely important that you never punish your puppy for a house-training accident. Instead, roll up a newspaper and swat yourself for not being vigilant enough to get the puppy outside in time or have him confined. To prevent the “sneak down the hall and pee when no one is watching” syndrome, you can put the puppy on a leash so that you can watch for pre-potty behavior and get him outside in time.

When accidents happen, you should clean the area completely, including deodorizing. To clean, you can use a solution of 50% vinegar in 50% water, saturating the area and soaking up all you can with a thick towel. To deodorize, invest in a quality product like Nature's Miracle, Kennel Odor Eliminator (KOE), Puppy Odor Neutralizer (PON), Anti-Icky-Poo – and follow the manufacturer's directions. If you do not remove the odor, you've created a potty spot in your house and the puppy will not realize that it's not OK to use it over and over. Dabbing the puddle with a paper towel will not do! It is interesting that a dog can smell one drop of urine in a 10-gallon bucket of water (or as my grandmother used to say, “a drop of brandy in a lake.”) Also, pine-scented products will just smell like pine-scented urine to a puppy.

**Two things always to avoid:** 1) Hitting your dog and 2) rubbing his nose in the offending accident. If you see the puppy eliminating, a firm “no!” is all you typically need to interrupt him and get him outside. If you do not see the accident happen, you have missed any opportunity for learning in this instance; simply clean it up and figure out how you failed to prevent it. Hitting the dog will not teach him anything – except perhaps not to trust hands (or newspaper,...) in the future.

**Good tips to remember:**

- Stick to your routine
- Keep the puppy's diet consistent
- Supervise your puppy at all times when he is not in his crate.
- Take him to the potty spot first thing in the morning; after meals, naps, and play; and last thing before bed.
- Lavish praise and small treats on him for eliminating in the right place and do not punish him for accidents.
- Stick to a strict schedule – the more vigilant you are now, the shorter the training period will be and the more success you will have.

**Good luck!** If you have any questions or would like more information regarding training, please give us a call!!

## TOUCH YOUR PUPPY!!

It is important that you prepare your puppy for his/her future visits to the veterinarian. Dogs that can be handled easily experience require less restraint and, therefore, experience less stress. And, in emergency situations, dogs that are comfortable being handled are much easier to treat quickly and efficiently.

You can help your puppy become a good patient by having all family members routinely handle all areas on his body. The following areas are of primary focus:

- **Eyes.** Practice opening his eyelids and looking at his eyes. Monitor for any type of discharge.
- **Ears.** Look into his ears and regularly clean the canals, using a moistened gauze pad on the tip of your finger. We DO NOT recommend ever using a cotton swab (Q-Tip or other) in your puppy's ear canal, as it is easy to damage the canal should the puppy shake his head or jump while the swab is inside. Monitor for odor or debris.
- **Mouth.** Open his mouth regularly and glide your finger across his teeth. This procedure can prove lifesaving if he is ever gagging on a stick, rawhide, or other foreign object. Once your puppy is accustomed to your finger, you can use a toothbrush daily to clean the teeth.
- **Paws.** Handle his toes, pads, and nails frequently. Begin trimming his nails while he is still young, as many adult dogs object strenuously to having their nails trimmed.

In addition to helping your puppy get ready for a lifetime of veterinary care, the time you invest in these exercises is also creating a wonderful bond between you and your precious new family member. It's a win-win!

## SOCIALIZING YOUR PUPPY

Preparing your puppy to take an active role in your life includes helping him to develop appropriate social behaviors and comfort in various settings. From about 3 to 14 weeks of age is a time of rapid social development for a puppy. At about 14 weeks, most of your puppy's patterns of response to stimuli will have been formed and puppies that are unsocialized at this age begin to display fear and anxiety about new situations, and can become aggressive. This is not to say that puppies older than 14 weeks cannot adapt to new social settings; but it learning is slower and avoidance is increased. So, it pays to take full advantage of the openness he displays in this critical period.

**The Puppy World Tour.** What can you and your family do to maximize your puppy's socialization? Sit down together, make a list of all the things you'd like your puppy to be comfortable with during his life.

At a minimum, you'll want him fine with other dogs, as this is how he will continue to learn the social signaling and key "dog" behaviors he began learning with his mother and siblings. You'll also want him to be comfortable with people of all ages, skin colors, and statures, as well as people on bicycles, on skateboards, in uniforms, and in wheelchairs. You should consider interactions with cats, and any other species you and your extended family and friends have as pets. If you travel, you may want to include



cars, boats, and RVs. If you will be taking him with you on errands, he'll need exposure to elevators and escalators, as well as many different types of flooring.

Now, put some small treats in a zipper bag and head out the door. Every time you encounter a new person, ask your puppy to sit and have the person give him a treat. Every time he finds himself in a new setting, give him lots of praise and treats for being calm and responding appropriately. Make this as much fun as you can; after all, you're building a lifetime of positive outlook in just a few weeks.

**The “Other Dogs” Challenge.** One tricky area will be socialization with other dogs. Until around 18 weeks of age (two weeks after his final puppy vaccines), your puppy should not be around unvaccinated dogs. Thus, dog parks are not an option for his social training. But he can have play dates with dogs you know to be healthy and fully vaccinated. In addition to helping your puppy feel comfortable with those of his species, frequent play dates with “safe” other dogs, especially adults, will also help him learn some great manners – like being careful with his teeth or not jumping on others.

Puppy classes are another alternative. Our community has a few quality puppy socialization classes for healthy puppies that have had at least some of their vaccinations. There is a small risk of your puppy coming into contact with a disease for which he lacks immunity – but the risk is probably about equal to walking down the street. And, the risk should be weighed against the challenge of owning a dog that is not adequately socialized. You'll want to see the facility and interview the instructor ahead of time.

**Activities at Home.** This is also a good time for your puppy to learn (gently) that human family members control the resources and that he needs to respect their authority. Have everyone (you're your young children) take turns feeding him. Have him sit or respond to another command before you place the food. Make sure he remains comfortable with you putting your hand in his dish while he is eating. Do not encourage barking, biting, or other unwanted behaviors by giving attention in response to them.

**Continued Socialization.** After you've successfully navigated your puppy through the fun-but-tiring socialization period, be sure to keep up the relationships that he developed. You can continue to develop your leadership through positive obedience training classes and, finally, visit the dog park

## **CHEWING, DIGGING, BARKING, and Other Normal (but Undesirable) Dog Behaviors**

Many “normal” dog behaviors are unacceptable to human family members. So, our goal is to find constructive ways to eliminate these behaviors. The good news is that puppies are fairly open to redirection, so training them away from inappropriate behaviors takes consistency but is not difficult.

**Chewing.** Unfortunately, much of what our puppies choose to chew is not to our liking. A puppy can’t discriminate between his \$8 chew toy and your \$200 loafers. In his mind, anything at or near ground level is fair game. It’s your job as his owner to help him fine-tune his choices.

Imagine you’re a puppy looking for something to chew... you see shoes, socks, table legs, stereo wires, a stuffed animal, a sofa cushion, and a bare foot. That’s a bunch of very attractive things to choose from! But, imagine that your thoughtful owner has also placed a Kong toy stuffed with spray cheese and kibble or a durable Nyla-Bone on the floor in front of you. You’re likely to forget about the shoes and the other things – at least for now.

These are the tried and true antidotes to the boredom and teething that lead many puppies to chew:

- Kong or Tuffy. Choose the appropriate size for your puppy’s mouth. Mix half the puppy’s breakfast or dinner kibble with some spray cheese, peanut butter, or canned food and stuff the toy. A real win-win: the puppy’s rewarded for chewing the correct thing and you keep your shoes.
- Nyla-Bone. For some puppies, these are not immediate hits. You can dress yours up by drilling a couple of holes in it and filling them with cheese or peanut butter. Presto!
- Ice Cubes. Put small pieces of cooked boneless chicken or hot dog into a small Tupperware container. Nearly cover with water and freeze. Remove the ice from the container and give it to your puppy – outdoors, of course. He’ll spend a blissful time chewing the treats from the ice.

For those items that the puppy just won’t leave alone, explore Bitter Apple or other deterrent. The humans might also want to train themselves to put their things away.

**Digging.** Your first step is to figure out why the puppy is digging: there may be buried bones or toys, rodents, cool soil on a hot day, a way out of a confined space, or a chance to play. Supervise your pet outdoors and interrupt the activity when it occurs. You can set up “booby traps” to deter the behavior when you can’t be present; for instance, putting an inflated balloon under soil in the hole or filling the hole with water can make your puppy think twice about digging there (but maybe not about digging in general...). You might consider a motion-activated avoidance device that sprays water or makes noise. If the puppy is digging because it’s bored, step up the activity choices or limit the time spent outdoors.

**Barking.** We hear them every day: the barking dogs. To avoid your puppy becoming one of them, teach him the “quiet” command. Because you’ll want to reward him when he *stops* barking, you’ll need to train when you know he’s going to *start* barking. As soon as you hear a woof, say “quiet,” call him to you, and reward him for being quiet. Anytime you see him sitting quietly, you can also praise him for being quiet. Once he has mastered the command, you can interrupt his barking behavior when it starts.

All of these behaviors are annoying but they can be extinguished with forethought and consistency. Like other areas of training, overt punishment is rarely effective; rather, redirection and avoidance usually do the trick.

