

# PUPPY/DOG CARE MANUAL



## ABOUT US:

Brook-Falls Veterinary Hospital and Exotic Care, Inc  
N48 W14850 Lisbon Rd  
Menomonee Falls, WI 53051  
Tel: (262) 781-5277  
Fax: (262) 781-5278  
Email: [dvm@brook-falls.com](mailto:dvm@brook-falls.com)  
Website: [www.brook-fallsveterinary.com](http://www.brook-fallsveterinary.com)

Dr Bloss & Dr Follett opened Brook-Falls Veterinary Hospital & Exotic Care Inc. in March, 2007. Since the opening the owners have taken pride in selecting excellent staff and equipping the hospital with the latest technology to enhance patient diagnostics, comfort and care. While we said good bye to Dr. Follett who retired in 2021 we welcomed in two new owners Dr. Wittenburg & Dr. Kase to the team to carry on the tradition.

# A LETTER TO OUR CLIENTS:

## **ANIMALS ENRICH OUR LIVES**

People who own pets live longer, happier, fuller lives. Our pets remind us of what it is to be wild, to be gentle, to be loyal, to trust, to flourish, to slow with age, to die. They connect us to something fundamental in our beings. We are the caretakers of that connection. For all that our pets teach us, for all the love and joy they bring to our lives, they deserve good care - and they rely on us to give it.

## **WHY LIFETIME VETERINARY CARE MATTERS**

The average lifespan of dogs and cats in the United States is 7.4 years, according to the ASPCA. The POTENTIAL lifespan of the average dog or cat in the United States is actually 12-15 years. Comprehensive medical care, good nutrition and proper training allow pets to live up to their potential as long-term family members. In other words, the care you give your pet throughout its life will determine how long he or she will remain a happy, healthy member of your family.

Our goal is to maximize the lifespan and the health of your dog or cat through preventative medical care and nutritional and behavioral counseling. We are advocates for your pet - our job is to advise you as to the best care options available for you and your pet.

Working together as a team we hope to help our patients and their families spend many happy years together.

Sincerely,

Dr Jennifer Bloss, Dr April Wittenburg and Dr Molly Kase

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# WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

Please do not hesitate to call us with your questions or concerns. We would rather you call early than have your pet suffer needlessly or worsen overnight. Often, we can advise you on what to do or what medications to give at home to keep your pet comfortable until our office is open. Please **do not give human medications to your pet** without checking with us first. Many human drugs are toxic to pets or are dosed very differently in animals. For instance, Tylenol and Advil are toxic to dogs and cats, and even a small number of aspirin or Tylenol can be fatal for your pet.


**If you have a pet-related medical emergency on a weekend, holiday, or weeknight after 5 p.m. We recommend that you use the services of one of our local emergency clinics:**

<p><b>Waukesha:</b> 360 Bluemound Rd. Waukesha, WI 53188 Phone: 262-542-3241</p>		<p><b>Grafton:</b> 1381 Port Washington Rd. Grafton, WI 53024 Phone: 262-546-0249</p>
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<p><b>Port Washington:</b> 207 W. Seven Hills Rd. Port Washington, WI 53074 Phone: 262-268-7800</p>		<p><b>Glendale:</b> 2100 W. Silver Spring Dr. Glendale, WI 53209 Phone: 414-540-6710</p>
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3670 S 108th St.  
Greenfield, WI 53228  
Phone: 414-543-7387



School of  
Veterinary Medicine  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2015 Linden Dr.  
Madison, WI 53706  
Phone: 608-263-4600



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## **YOUR PUPPY'S FIRST VISIT**

The way your puppy perceives his or her first visit to the veterinary hospital will greatly influence the way the puppy will respond here for the rest of its life. Puppies are sensitive to emotional cues from their owners. How you react to new situations tells the puppy how to react as well.

Therefore, you can interpret for the puppy the way it should respond in new or traumatic situations such as this first veterinary visit! To do this, behave in the way you want the puppy to behave when he or she is an adult dog.

For example, if you want a dog that tolerates veterinary visits, or even enjoys them, acts cheerful and upbeat before, during, and especially immediately after the treatment try these tips. If the pup yips or yowls during a procedure, talk to it in a jolly tone of voice until it wags its tail.

DO NOT coddle, coo, make sympathetic noises or soothingly pet the pup, or you will teach him to be worried and concerned, instead of cheerful and matter-of-fact.

This tactic also works in other new situations, such as trips to the park for socializing with children and adults, puppy kindergarten classes or when other dogs or strangers approach.

A dog that is relaxed and confident in any situation is an ideal pet, and an ideal veterinary patient as well. We hope this handout will start us off on the right foot!



# VACCINATIONS

In the past few years, the national debate surrounding vaccines in humans has reached a boiling point surrounding an outbreak of measles occurred at Disneyland and that has continued to spread throughout the US. Though studies, experts, and organizations like the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have shown there is no link between childhood vaccines and autism spectrum disorder (ASD)**, some parents still avoid vaccinations because they think they're protecting their children.

These same misconceptions are also impacting pets, as pet owners are increasingly questioning and out-right declining to vaccinate their pets, even against serious diseases like rabies. Facts are facts – the core vaccines are the really, really important ones because the diseases that are prevented by these very serious diseases. They can and will cause serious injury or death and in the case of rabies, are transmissible and deadly to humans.

**Vaccines help prevent many diseases/illnesses that affect pets.** Vaccinating your pet has long been known as the easiest way to help him/her to live a long, healthy life. Not only are there different vaccines for different diseases, but there are also different types and combinations of vaccines. Vaccination is a procedure that has risks and benefits that must be weighed for every pet relative to its age, lifestyle, and health. Your veterinarian can help devise a vaccination plan that will provide the safest and best protection for your individual pet.

## Understanding Vaccines

**Vaccines help prepare the body's immune system to fight the invasion of disease –causing organisms.** Vaccines contain antigens, which look like the disease-causing organism to the immune system but do not actually cause the disease. When the vaccine is introduced to the body the immune system is mildly stimulated. If a vaccinated individual is ever exposed the real disease-causing agent, its immune system is now prepared to recognize and either fight it off entirely or at least reduce the severity of the subsequent illness.

**Vaccines are vitally important to managing the health of your pet.** Again, not every pet needs to be vaccinated against every disease. You and your veterinarian together will work to set up a protocol that is right for your pet. Factors that need to be taken into considerations should include the pet's age, adult size, medical history, environment and travel and lifestyle desires of the owner. At minimum, most veterinarians will recommend the core vaccines to healthy pets.

## Vaccinations - Continued

We understand pet owners can and do have valid concerns about some issues regarding vaccines and vaccination, but we also know --- **“The price of vaccination, especially for the core vaccines, is the best value for your veterinary dollar. “**

## CORE AND NON-CORE VACCINATIONS

Vaccines for dogs/puppies are categorized as core and non-core. Vaccines designated as core means that veterinary infectious disease and public health experts recommend all cats receive these vaccines. Rabies vaccine is considered a core vaccine for both dogs and cats. The other core vaccines for dogs are DHPPV and Leptospirosis. Additionally, in our area we consider Lyme disease vaccination to also be a core vaccine.

### Core Designation:

One of the reasons DCR is considered a core vaccine for cats is there are no specific treatments for the distemper complex of viruses. These diseases must run their course and we (veterinarians) can only treat symptoms: fluids for dehydration, antibiotics for secondary bacterial infections, eye ointments for corneal ulcers. It's far better to prevent these diseases with vaccination than to have your dog/puppy suffer needlessly from one of these debilitating viral infections.

## FIRST AND FOREMOST: VACCINATIONS

Many common diseases, including Distemper, are deadly to your dog. During the initial day of nursing, puppies receive **antibodies**, proteins, against certain diseases from their mother's milk. These protecting antibodies are gradually lost between 6 and 16 weeks of age. This passive immunity protects the puppy during its first few weeks of life, while its immune system is maturing. At some point, this immunity fails, and the puppy must produce its own, longer-lasting “active” immunity. Vaccinations are used for this purpose. A series of vaccinations are given during this period to stimulate your puppy's immune system to produce its own antibodies. As long as the mother's antibodies are present, they will cause interference and prevent the immune system from responding completely to the vaccines. Vaccination of your new puppy should begin at about 6-8 weeks of age and continue every 3-4 weeks until your puppy reaches **16 weeks of age**.



## Vaccinations – “Core”- Continued

The CORE vaccines that all puppies need to receive are **DHPP, Lepto, Lyme** and **Rabies**.

The **DHPP** vaccine protects your puppy against a number of viral infections that cause serious threats to your puppy's health, including, Distemper, Hepatitis, Parainfluenza and Parvo virus. In general, your puppy will receive 3 of these vaccines his/her first year of life. Recent studies have shown that for maximum protection, particularly from the Parvo virus, the last puppy vaccination should not be before your puppy is 16 weeks of age. Your puppy will receive a booster vaccination in 1 year and then the vaccine is given every 3 years thereafter.

**Leptospirosis** is a bacterial infection that not only causes serious disease in your pet but can also infect humans as well. Your pet is at risk of one of these organisms when it comes in contact with the urine of wild animals. Every animal that goes outdoors is at risk!! There are many strains of Leptospira. We currently vaccinate against all 4 strains for which a vaccine is available. This is included in the second and third DHPP vaccine, your puppy receives his/her first year of life. It is the given annually thereafter.

**Lyme** vaccination is no longer considered an optional vaccine in our area. Over the past few years there have been dramatic increases in cases of Lyme disease seen in pets (and people) in the Midwest. Lyme disease is a serious bacterial infection that they can get from ticks. Your puppy must be 9 weeks of age or older and will receive 2 vaccines the first year, about 2-4 weeks apart. It is given annually thereafter.

The final core vaccine that your puppy needs to receive is **Rabies**. A rabies vaccine will be given to your puppy, generally at the time it receives its last set of vaccinations at 16 weeks of age. A booster vaccine is given in 1 year and then every 3 years thereafter.

OPTIONAL vaccinations that you may wish your puppy to receive are **Bordetella (Kennel Cough)** and **Flu**.

**Bordetella** vaccination protects your puppy against a respiratory disease commonly called Kennel Cough. This is an infection of the large airways in the lungs resulting in a dry gag-like cough. Your puppy is at risk of this disease when it is around other dogs in close confinement. If your puppy goes to a boarding facility, Doggie-Day-Care, training classes or grooming facilities your puppy should be protected with Bordetella vaccination. This can be given as a nasal spray every 6-12 months or as a series of 2 subcutaneous injections given 2-4 weeks apart, initially and then annually thereafter. If this vaccine is deemed necessary for your pet, the decision as to which vaccine will be used on your puppy will be discussed with you by a veterinarian or staff member administering it.

Lastly, **Canine Flu** vaccination is available to protect your puppy from the highly contagious Influenza virus. Virtually all dogs exposed to canine influenza virus become infected, with approximately 80% developing clinical signs of disease. The approximately 20% of infected dogs that do not exhibit clinical signs of disease can still shed the virus and spread the infection. Puppies 7 weeks and older can receive a series of 2 injections 2 to 4 weeks apart. It is recommended to be boosted annually thereafter.

## WHAT IS LYME DISEASE ANYWAY?

***Lyme disease in dogs is one of the most common tick-transmitted diseases in the world.***

**Lyme disease** is an infection caused by a type of bacteria called a spirochete, although originally discovered in the city of Lyme Connecticut, Lyme disease has now been reported in most states. The disease is more properly called Borreliosis, after the bacterial species that causes it - *Borrelia burgdorferi*.

Lyme disease is a serious and life-threatening infection. It can cause an array of symptoms, including kidney, heart, skin and neurological disease, abortion, and infertility. The most common signs in dogs are low grade fever (103-104° F), weight loss, and lameness or joint pain, which may shift from leg to leg. Symptoms may occur as soon as 4 days after exposure to an infected tick, or as long as 1 year later. The average incubation period is 1 month.

## HOW IS IT SPREAD?

The deer tick/black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) is the most common carrier of Lyme disease in Wisconsin, Minnesota and the eastern coastal states. Recently, other species of ticks such as the Lone Star tick, the wood tick and insects such as deer flies, horseflies and mosquitoes have been found to carry the disease. Currently these insects are not felt to be important carriers of the disease.

**Deer get a bad rap in any discussion about Lyme disease. Even though the tick that carries Lyme disease is often called the Deer Tick, the fact is deer don't ever get Lyme disease and don't directly pass it on to the tick.**

## Lyme Disease - Continued

So, if not deer, then who should get the bad rap for Lyme disease? Rodents are the culprits! Just as rodent fleas spread Black Death, or Bubonic Plague, rodents are the primary transmitters of Lyme disease. In this case, the white-footed mouse is the number one transmitter. So, pets can pick up Lyme disease whether or not they are in wooded or heavily deer-populated areas. The larval deer ticks prefer to feed on the small rodents that live in grassy or brushy areas, often around the fringes of woods or fields.

The deer tick lives a rather complex life cycle. It develops from an egg to a larva, larva to a nymph, and finally from nymph to an adult. The deer ticks are among the first ticks to become active in the spring, and they remain active in various stages until the first snow in the fall. All three life cycle stages of ticks can transmit Lyme disease, and all three are very small and difficult to find. They are active almost all year round.

### CAN LYME DISEASE BE TREATED?

**Yes. The bacterium that causes the disease is sensitive to several antibiotics.** If a diagnosis of Lyme disease is made, your dog will likely be treated as an outpatient unless their condition is unstable (e.g., severe kidney disease). Doxycycline is the most common antibiotic that is prescribed for Lyme disease, but other antibiotics are also available and effective.

The recommended treatment length is usually four weeks, but longer courses may be necessary in some cases. Your veterinarian may also prescribe an anti-inflammatory type-pain medication if your dog is especially uncomfortable. The length of time needed to treat the disease varies, but three weeks is usually the minimum amount. Prolonged treatment may be necessary, and relapses and reinfection are common. The earlier the diagnosis of the disease is made, the more successful treatment is likely to be. Even with prompt treatment, however, there can be permanent damage, especially if the infection involved the brain, kidneys or heart.

**Unfortunately, antibiotic treatment does not always completely eliminate infection with *Borrelia burgdorferi* bacteria. Symptoms may resolve but then return at a later date, and the development of kidney disease in the future is always a worry. Proper use of antibiotics reduces the likelihood of chronic consequences.**

**Preventing the disease altogether is a much better alternative than waiting for your pet to pick up the disease.**

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MY PET?

**We recommend annual vaccination for Lyme disease for ALL dogs here in the Midwest.** Year after year the number of Lyme disease cases continues to rise at a growing rate. **View forecasts for Lyme disease in your local area at <https://petdiseasealerts.org>.**

Ticks also carry other serious diseases besides Lyme disease, such as *Ehrlichia* and Anaplasmosis that can make your pet ill. As such, we advise all pet owners to use **year-round tick control products** on their pet to further reduce tick carried diseases. These products include topicals that are applied monthly, oral medications that can be given monthly to every 3 months or long-acting collars. Not only do ticks carry disease, but their bites can also become irritated or infected. Prompt removal of any ticks you do find on your dog is a must!

## LYME DISEASE AFFECTS PEOPLE TOO!

Conduct thorough tick checks on yourself, your children and your pets after spending time outdoors. This includes time in your own backyard or garden, as well as when camping or hiking in wooded areas. Avoid grassy and marshy woodland areas and don't walk barefoot in grassy areas. Wear light colored clothing as this makes ticks easier to find. Tuck pants into boots or socks and wear long sleeved shirts, buttoned at the cuffs.

Ticks do not fly or jump onto their hosts. They wait atop grasses and other vegetation until an animal brushes up against them. Then they cling to skin, fur or clothing and will crawl for a time on their host before they embed and feed.

**Ticks must be embedded and engorged (not flat) before they can transmit the Lyme disease bacteria. Therefore, it is important to look for and remove any ticks as soon as possible in order to prevent infection.**

**Protect yourself and your pets with insect/tick repellants.** We have several excellent products available to help you to safely protect your dog from Lyme disease, such as Vectra 3D, Bravecto and Scalibor collars. We encourage you to talk to your veterinarian about the best flea and tick option for your pet!

## CAN I GET LYME DISEASE FROM MY PET?

It is not known at this time whether Lyme disease can be spread directly from animals to humans. ***Borrelia burgdorferi*** organisms have been found in the urine of infected animals, however, and it is speculated that urine and feces from birds and rodents may be contributing to the spread of the disease. Infected ticks can certainly carry the disease from animals to people in close proximity. At this time, we do not believe that animal-human transmission is a significant factor in the disease, but caution is advised if you are exposed to an animal which has the disease. Use insect repellents conscientiously and wash your hands or wear gloves when handling animal wastes or deer carcasses.

See Section on Heartworm disease for information regarding Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases, as well as detection/testing.

## VACCINATING FOR KENNEL COUGH



Kennel Cough is the common name for a group of diseases similar to the human cold or flu; another name is Canine Respiratory Disease Complex. Symptoms include fever, swollen tonsils or lymph nodes and a deep, "honking," keep-you-and-the-dog-up-all-night gag-type cough that can take weeks to go away. Although rarely fatal, it can lead to pneumonia in puppies, geriatric pets or those already ill with another disease.

There are several different bacteria and viruses that can cause Kennel Cough. All are very contagious, especially when multiple dogs are in the same room together. When a sick dog coughs or sneezes, it sprays the infectious virus or bacteria particles into the air, where they float around and are inhaled by another dog across the room or in the cage next door. It can also be spread by touching noses, sharing food or water bowls, or sniffing around where a sick dog has been.

The most common cause of Kennel Cough is a bacterium named **Bordetella bronchiseptica**. The vaccine for Bordetella is a nasalgen, or nose drops, and it gives quick and effective immunity for 6-12 months. Parainfluenza is a viral cause of Kennel Cough. There are two strains of parainfluenza vaccine contained in the DHLPP vaccine that most dogs receive annually. Some Bordetella vaccines contain extra parainfluenza vaccine as well; this is the type we administer.

There are also some less common viral causes of Kennel Cough for which we have no vaccine, so even a vaccinated dog can occasionally contract the disease.

All boarding kennels require that dogs be vaccinated against Kennel Cough. Some require Bordetella vaccination be given within the previous 6 months to keep immunity high. Many veterinary clinics require vaccination before elective surgeries to prevent the spread of disease in the hospital. The last thing your pet needs after major surgery is a fever and a cough!

Most groomers do not require Bordetella vaccination, but they should. Multiple dogs in and out of one room are the ideal breeding ground for infection. Your pet should also be vaccinated if your dog goes to obedience or training classes. Even sitting in the waiting room of the veterinary can put pets at risk for contracting this annoying disease. Only pets confined to their own house or yard have no risk of catching Kennel Cough.

**As with most diseases, prevention is easy and cost effective. Be sure your pet is vaccinated!**



## **CANINE FLU – WHAT IS THAT?**

It is a highly contagious viral infection that is easily spread from infected dogs to other dogs by direct contact, nasal secretions (through barking, coughing or sneezing), contaminated objects (kennel surfaces, food and water bowls, collars and leashes), and by people moving between infected and uninfected dogs.

Dogs of any breed, age, sex or health status are at risk of infection when exposed to the virus.

Currently, two strains of the Influenza virus have been identified in the U.S. The H3N8 strain of canine influenza was first identified in 2004 in Florida. Since then, it has been found in several other states. In 2015, the H3N2 virus strain was identified as the cause of an outbreak of canine influenza in Chicago. The virus was known to exist in Asia, but the 2015 outbreak was the first report of the H3N2 virus outside of Asia.

Canine influenza can occur year-round. So far, there is no evidence that canine influenza infects people but it can infect cats. Cats infected with H3N2 canine influenza show symptoms of upper respiratory illness, including a runny nose, congestion, malaise, lip smacking and excessive salivation.

## **Canine Influenza Symptoms and Diagnosis**

The symptoms of an infection resemble those of Kennel cough. Infected dogs develop a persistent cough and often a thick nasal discharge and a fever (often 104-105°F). Other signs can include lethargy, eye discharge and reduced appetite. Canine influenza infections can cause mild to severe illness in dogs. Some infected dogs may not show any signs of illness, but can still be contagious and able to infect other dogs

Most dogs recover within 2-3 weeks. However, some dogs may develop secondary bacterial infections which may lead to more severe illness such as pneumonia. Anyone with concerns about their pet's health, or whose pet is showing signs of canine influenza, should contact their veterinarian.

## Transmission and Prevention of Canine Influenza

Dogs infected with flu are most contagious during the two- to four- day virus **incubation period**, when they shed the virus in their nasal secretions but do not show signs of illness. This is what makes this virus so contagious. **Virtually all dogs exposed to the flu virus will become infected!** The good news is the majority (80%) of infected dogs will develop signs of the flu-like illness but the mortality (death) rate from the infection is low (less than 10%).

Laboratory tests are available to diagnose both H3N8 and H3N2 CIV but because most dogs shed the virus BEFORE exhibiting clinical signs, if your dog tests negative this does not mean it wasn't the flu!!

### Prevention of Canine Influenza

**To reduce the spread of the canine flu virus**, it is important to **isolate** dogs that are sick or showing signs of a respiratory illness and isolate dogs known to have been exposed to an infected dog. Isolate dogs infected with **H3N2** canine influenza **for at least 21 days** and dogs infected with H3N8 infections for at least 7 days.

Practice **good hygiene and sanitation**, including hand washing and thorough cleaning of shared items and kennels, to reduce the spread of the virus. Influenza viruses do not usually survive in the environment beyond 48 hours and are inactivated or killed by commonly used disinfectants.

**Vaccines** are available for both the H3N8 and H3N2 strains of canine influenza virus. The Flu vaccination is a **lifestyle vaccination** recommended for dogs at risk for exposure due to their increased contact with other dogs – such as boarding, Doggie Day Care, grooming, attending social events with dogs' present, and visiting dog parks.

## ADVERSE REACTIONS TO VACCINATIONS

Any type of medical treatment has associated risks, but the risk should be weighed against the benefits of protecting your pet, your family and your community from potentially fatal diseases. The majority of pets respond well to vaccines.

The most common adverse responses to vaccination are mild and short-term. Serious reactions are rare. An uncommon but serious adverse reaction that can occur in cats is tumor growth (sarcomas), which can develop weeks, months, or even years after a vaccination. Improvements in vaccination technology and technique have greatly reduced the occurrence of sarcomas.

Adverse effects from vaccinations can vary with the type of vaccine used and the age and breed of animal vaccinated. Anaphylaxis and the development of a fibrosarcoma are the most serious reactions to vaccines. Some of the more common (but still rare) risks are discussed below.

### Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a rare, life-threatening, immediate allergic reaction to something ingested or injected. If untreated, it results in shock, *respiratory* and cardiac failure, and death. An anaphylactic reaction can occur as a result of vaccination. The reaction usually occurs within minutes to hours (less than 24) of the vaccination. Dr. Ronald Schultz of the University of Wisconsin College of Veterinary Medicine estimates that about one case of anaphylaxis occurs for every 15,000 doses of vaccine administered.

The most common symptoms of anaphylaxis are the sudden onset of diarrhea, vomiting, shock, seizures, *coma*, and death. The animals' gums will be very pale, and the limbs will feel cold. The heart rate is generally very fast, but the pulse is weak. There can be facial swelling and hives.

Anaphylaxis is an extreme emergency. If you think your dog is having an anaphylactic reaction, seek emergency veterinary assistance immediately. Epinephrine should be given as soon as possible - we are talking within a few minutes. IV fluids, oxygen, and other medications are given as needed.

Anaphylactic reactions are more commonly associated with the use of *killed vaccines* such as rabies, canine coronavirus, and leptospirosis. Killed vaccines have more *virus* or bacterial particles per dose and have added chemicals (adjuvants) to improve the dog's immune response. These characteristics also increase the risk of an allergic reaction to the vaccine.

## Anaphylaxis - Continued

If your dog has ever had a reaction to a vaccine, subsequent vaccinations should be given by your veterinarian. In some cases, certain vaccines may be excluded from your dog's vaccination regimen, a different type of vaccine will be used, or certain drugs, including antihistamines, may be given prior to vaccination. The veterinarian may place a catheter in the dog's vein so that if a reaction does occur, medications and fluids can be given immediately. Depending on the situation, your dog may need to remain in the veterinarian's office for a period of 30 minutes to several hours. Once home, the dog should be kept under observation for several additional hours. Even with these precautions, life-threatening reactions could still occur.

### **Worsening of Allergies**

Some studies have shown that dogs with atopy who are vaccinated at the height of the allergic season, may have an increased risk of developing more severe allergy signs. It is suggested that dogs with seasonal allergies be vaccinated during the 'non-allergy' season.

### **Neurologic and Eye Disease**

Neurologic symptoms are the most common vaccine reaction seen in dogs. Canine distemper vaccination is the most common cause of neurologic disease, and can cause an *inflammation* of the brain. Measles vaccine in puppies has been reported to rarely cause damage to the nervous system. Cerebellar disease has been reported in puppies and kittens less than 5 weeks of age who were vaccinated with a *modified live vaccine*.

Canine adenovirus-1 is known to cause an allergic uveitis (inflammation of the eye), often called 'blue eye.' Most vaccines now contain canine adenovirus-2 instead of adenovirus-1, almost eliminating the chance of blue eye occurring today.

### **Discomfort and Swelling at the Injection Site**

Pain, swelling, redness, and irritation can occur at the injection site. These effects generally occur within 30 minutes to 1 week of the vaccination. If the signs persist, or are severe, contact your veterinarian. Occasionally, abscesses can form at the injection site. These abscesses are generally not caused by infection, but by the body's over-reaction to the vaccine.

## **Mild fever, decreased appetite and activity**

Mild fever, decreased appetite, and depression may be observed for 1-2 days following vaccination, most commonly when modified live vaccines are used. Generally, no treatment is warranted.

Severe illness can occur if vaccines designed for intranasal use are accidentally injected. Severe reactions can also occur if any of a vaccine made for injection accidentally enters an animal's eyes, nose, or mouth.

## **Respiratory signs after intranasal vaccines**

Dogs vaccinated with the intranasal Bordetella and/or parainfluenza vaccine may develop a mild cough and sneezing, which generally does not require treatment. They may spread the vaccine-form of the virus to other animals through their coughing.

## **Lameness**

Rarely, lameness can result from several different vaccinations.

### **Immune-mediated polyarthritis in Akitas:**

Certain lines of Akitas may have immunodeficiencies which make them prone to adverse reactions following vaccination. They may develop an immune-mediated arthritis in one or more joints, which is often progressive and relapses commonly occur. Dogs with this immune disorder generally have short life spans due to other complications.

**Hypertrophic osteodystrophy:** Certain lines of Weimaraners, and some other large-breed dogs, may develop hypertrophic osteodystrophy following canine distemper vaccinations given between 2 and 5 months of age. They may also develop respiratory signs, enlarged *lymph nodes*, and diarrhea. The hypertrophic osteodystrophy is treated with *glucocorticoids* and the signs of the disease usually resolve.

## **Shedding of vaccine agent**

Vaccine virus may be found in the nasal secretions of dogs vaccinated intranasally. In addition, vaccine parvovirus is shed in the feces of vaccinated dogs, canine adenovirus-1 can be shed in the urine, and canine adenovirus-2 can be found in nasal secretions. These viruses are the vaccine forms of the virus; they do NOT revert back to the disease-causing strains.

## Birth defects or infections

The vaccination of pregnant animals with a modified live vaccine can result in birth defects or abortions. It is recommended that modified live vaccines NEVER be given to pregnant animals. In addition, vaccinating puppies and kittens less than 4-5 weeks of age, can actually result in them becoming infected and developing disease from modified live vaccines.

## Summary

Again, as with any medical procedure, there are always risks of adverse reactions or side effects. These risks must be compared to the benefits of the procedure. Many of the diseases against which we vaccinate can be serious and even lethal. In almost all cases, the risks associated with vaccination are very small compared to the risk of developing disease. As new vaccines and methods of administration become available, the adverse risks of vaccination should be reduced even further.

**Don't let the fear of what "could be" and in most cases is a minor issue put your pet at risk of what we know can and will be serious and possibly even deadly, if your pet goes unprotected.**

# PARASITES

## INTESTINAL PARASITES

95% of puppies are born with intestinal worms! These parasites can cause vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, stunted growth and even death. Some kinds are also transmissible to humans. This is especially important with regard to children who may be out barefoot in the yard, or toddlers who may put soiled fingers in their mouths. **Over 10,000 cases of animal roundworms cause illness in children every year in the United States.**

Internal parasites are diagnosed by having a fresh stool sample examined under a microscope by one of our Certified Veterinary Technicians here at the veterinary hospital. This should be done as part of a health exam when you obtain a new puppy or dog, and on a yearly basis as part of your dog's annual health exam and vaccinations.

Stool samples should be collected when they are fresh and stored in the refrigerator until they can be brought to the hospital. DO NOT freeze them. A teaspoon or two of stool is all that is necessary.

So that you may better understand the problems internal parasites can cause and what signs to look for, we have included a short description of the most common types of intestinal parasites.



## **ROUNDWORMS . . .**

are the most common type of intestinal worm. They are long (approx. 2-4 inches in length) and skinny, about the size of angel-hair pasta. They live in the small intestine, and may cause vomiting, diarrhea or weight loss. Larval worms also damage the liver and lungs while migrating through these organs on their way to the small intestine. Roundworms are transmitted via stools of other infected dogs or cats, or through the uterus of the mother dog to her unborn pups. Entire worms can sometimes be seen in the stools or vomitus of infested animals.

## **HOOKWORMS . . .**

are small, about one half inch long, worms that attach to the lining of the small intestine, causing blood loss and diarrhea. Puppies can become infected through the mother's uterus before birth, or via her milk after birth. Older animals acquire hookworms through skin contact with the stools of other dogs. These worms can infect animals and people through the skin surface, such as the soles of the feet.

## **WHIPWORMS . . .**

live in the large intestine. They are not as common as the other intestinal parasites but the disease they cause can be very serious. Bloody diarrhea and weight loss are the symptoms seen. Additionally, the presence of whipworms can give bloodwork results that mimic a serious illness called hypoadrenocorticism/Addison's disease. As more dogs are coming up from the South this is becoming a bigger problem for pets in our area.

These worms are transmitted by ingestion of the stools of infested animals.

They are much more difficult to eliminate than other worms, requiring deworming initially, in three weeks, and again in three months. Additionally, it is recommended that they be placed on Interceptor Plus as their monthly heartworm prevention. Interceptor Plus helps prevent whipworms.

## **TAPEWORMS . . .**

live in the small intestine, where the head attaches to the intestinal wall and produces a chain of segments. Mature segments containing eggs are passed with the stool or may be seen around the rectum. They resemble small grains of rice. They may be acquired by the ingestion of raw meat, rodents or birds or, most commonly, through the ingestion of fleas. Monthly Interceptor Plus given for Heartworm prevention, now protects pets from these worms as well. Additionally, flea control is essential to control tapeworm infestation.

## **COCCIDIA . . .**

are microscopic, one celled protozoal parasites, more like bacteria rather than "worms". Puppies can pick these up from their mother and they can also be acquired by eating rabbit or other wildlife droppings. They are treated with a short course of antibiotics.

## **GIARDIA . . .**

are also protozoans. They are very difficult to pick up on a regular stool check. Antibiotics or special de-wormers kill them but they are difficult to eradicate completely and often flare up with stress or other intestinal problems. They are contagious to humans and cause vomiting and diarrhea in both people and pets.

If a stool sample is positive for parasites, your veterinarian will prescribe an effective de-wormer and set up an appropriate deworming schedule for you to follow to ensure eradication of all parasites. We usually recommend deworming twice, two weeks apart, however this will vary with the type of parasite found. Please weigh your animal before picking up any de-wormer to ensure that the proper dose is given. A stool sample should be checked again 4 to 8 weeks later, and again possibly 3 months later to ensure that your pet is not being re-infested by his or her environment.

Even if fecal testing does not detect intestinal parasites, because intestinal parasites are common in young kitten and puppies and there is the potential for human consequences, the Center for Disease Control recommends deworming of all puppies and kittens at least two times.

## **CANINE HEARTWORM DISEASE . . .**

is a serious, deadly disease present wherever mosquitoes are found. Each year thousands of dogs become permanently debilitated or die from lung, heart or kidney problems caused by heartworms. Your dog can have heartworms for many months before symptoms are obvious. By then the disease may be difficult or impossible to treat successfully. Therefore, annual blood testing and monthly prevention are recommended for all dogs.

## **SYMPTOMS . . .**

An infected dog may become less active and tires easily. Coughing, weight loss, chronic fatigue and fainting may appear in advanced disease stages. Adult heartworms are found in the heart, lungs and major blood vessels. Heartworms can grow from 5 to 14 inches long. In severe cases, a hundred or more worms have been found in a single heart. Additionally, problems in the liver and a rapidly progressive fatal form of kidney disease may result.

## **TESTING . . .**

**All puppies older than 9 months and all adult dogs should have blood testing with an AccuPlex 4 Test annually.**

The **AccuPlex 4** test detects **heartworm antigen and the infectious agents responsible for Lyme disease, Anaplasmosis, and Ehrlichiosis in dogs.** The AccuPlex4 test uses eight separate markers that detect antigen or antibody responses to these agents. It can tell if antibodies are related to vaccination for Lyme disease or if there has been exposure to the bacteria that causes Lyme disease and whether it was recent or not.

**LYME DISEASE** --- Animals show signs of fever, lack of energy and appetite, lameness, swollen lymph glands and occasionally, fatal kidney disease. Many dogs are sub clinically infected and show no signs of disease. (See Lyme disease section for more information.)

**EHRlichia CANIS INFECTION AND ANAPLASMOSIS INFECTION** --- Animals show signs of lethargy, depression, lack of appetite, fever, spontaneous bleeding (bloody nose), respiratory distress, eye inflammation and gait abnormalities.

**If your dog is positive for Lyme disease**, your doctor will occasionally recommend a confirmatory titer but more often will recommend some urine testing and possibly additional bloodwork may be performed to assess your dog's risk of disease. Your pet will also be treated with a course of antibiotics as well to try and clear any lingering infection.

**If your dog is positive for Ehrlichia or Anaplasmosis**, your doctor will recommend some additional blood work to check to see if your pet is showing any blood cell or chemical abnormalities --- and then appropriate therapy can be instituted as needed.

Regardless, if your pet should test positive to any of the tick-carried infections, it means your pet has had a tick on it and your need to begin tick prevention or change what you are using to a more effective product.

## PREVENTION . . .

Heartworm infection is almost 100% preventable in dogs (and cats). There are several FDA-approved heartworm preventives available in a variety of formulations. Your veterinarian can recommend the best method of prevention based upon your pet's risk factors and lifestyle. Of course, you have to remember to give your pet the preventive in order for it to work!

The preventives do not kill adult heartworms, and will not eliminate heartworm infection or prevent signs of heartworm disease if adults are present in the pet's body.

Puppies < 9 months of age do not need to be blood tested for heartworms. They should begin taking heartworm prevention as soon as they are eight weeks of age. For adult dogs, a blood test for existing heartworm infection is needed before beginning a prevention program to assess the pet's current heartworm status.

Annual testing is required for puppies over 9 months of age and all dogs, even when on year-round prevention medications. No medication is 100% and clinical signs are only seen very late in the course of the disease. Make sure your pet is tested and protected. Don't gamble with your pet's life!

## PRODUCTS:

**SENTINEL SPECTRUM:** Is an **oral tablet** that prevents **heartworm disease** and treats and controls adult **hookworms, roundworms, whipworms** and **tapeworm** infections in dogs and puppies 6 weeks or older and 2 pounds or greater. It is given orally, **monthly**.

**REVOLUTION:** Is a once **monthly topical** that can prevent heartworms and prevent and control **fleas** in dogs.

**PROHEART 12:** Is a **once-a-year product for the prevention of heartworm disease** in dogs. This sustained-release injection ensures a full 12 months of protection following a single dose. It can be used in healthy pets that are at least 1 year of age. It will also control adult hookworms and round worms but only in the first month.

For those pets that are 6 months of age but less than 12 months, there is still **ProHeart6** that can be given that will protect dogs from heartworm disease for 6 months. Once the pet reaches 1 year of age, it can be transitioned to the 12-month product.

## TREATMENT . . .

is costly and can be life threatening in and of itself. Successful treatment depends on early detection and close veterinary supervision. If permanent damage has occurred, prognosis is very poor. The cumulative average cost of life-long preventative medications for a dog is less than the cost of a diagnostic work up and treatment required when a dog tests positive for this deadly disease.

### **Why risk problems for your pet or for your family?**

Not only are heartworm medications reasonably priced but many of them now prevent roundworms, whipworms and hookworms as well. **That is another reason why we recommend that you keep your dog on heartworm preventative year-round**, in order to keep your dog and family free from risk of one of these parasitic infections.

We recommend having a stool sample checked for intestinal parasites at the time the heartworm test is done. If the stool sample is positive for intestinal parasites, your pet will need deworming to kill adult intestinal worms. The heartworm preventatives given after that will prevent your dog from becoming re-infested with the intestinal parasites. Eggs of intestinal parasites survive on grass for long periods of time, so without the heartworm medication, it is very common for dogs to pick up intestinal parasites repeatedly from their yard.

### **Untreated animals spread disease. Please don't let yours be one!**

Unfortunately, heartworm disease is here to stay and unfortunately on the rise, as there will always be dog owners who do not choose to put their pets on a heartworm prevention program and there are wild dogs in our area, such as coyotes. These unprotected animals serve as reservoirs, spreading the disease to unprotected dogs. Please don't let your dog become a victim of this deadly disease.

**FACT...** All dogs, regardless of age, sex, size or breed, are at risk wherever mosquitoes are present. It takes only ONE infected mosquito to infect your dog.

**FACT...** Heartworm disease can kill your dog.

**FACT...** Effective, easy-to-use preventive medication can save your dog's life!

## **PREVENTING FLEAS AND TICKS**

### **FLEAS**

Fleas are among the most common health problems of dogs and cats. In the long run, it is much easier and more cost-effective to prevent fleas on your pets than to have to treat a major infestation of fleas in your house. Regular use of flea products will take care of the occasional flea your pets may encounter in the yard and should prevent you from having to spend large sums of money on foggers and exterminators. Treating a bad flea infestation in your house usually costs upwards of \$350.

Fleas will bite your pets, causing an itchy allergic reaction, which can become quite severe. They carry viral and bacterial diseases. In small animals, especially kittens, the anemia they cause from feeding on the animal's blood can be fatal. They also carry tapeworms. Tapeworm segments appear on the stool or around the rectal area and look like small grains of rice. If your dog has fleas, chances are good he has tapeworms - and vice versa. Therefore, if your dog has fleas, we will deworm your dog for tapeworms along with beginning flea control measures.

Wildlife, as well as other cats and dogs, bring fleas into your yard. Pets and people can then bring the fleas into the house. Birds nesting in the attic or mice seeking shelter can also bring fleas into your home. Fleas also travel (on their own), as much as a mile an hour. They will hop inside through an open door or window and are often small enough to come through a window screen. Once inside your home there is no place a flea cannot get to. Adult fleas spend most of their time on your pet, but the remainder of the time they are roaming your house and laying eggs – thousands of them!



## Fleas - Continued

If you've never been lucky enough to see a flea, they are about 1/8 inch long, reddish brown and shaped like a sesame seed with legs. They are usually found on your pet's head, belly or lower back. If you ripple the hair backwards and look at the skin they can be seen scurrying through the base of the hair coat. It is often difficult to find fleas on pets until they are infested heavily. This is especially true with dogs who are meticulous groomers. It is more common to see the droppings they leave behind after feeding. They look like grains of pepper. If you place some of these on white paper toweling, wet it and mush it around it will turn the toweling red. This is because flea droppings contain digested blood. Plain dirt stays black or gray when wet.

## Flea Prevention

Fleas can usually be prevented by treating all pets that go outdoors so they don't bring reproducing fleas into the house. If you had fleas in previous years it is wise to spray some insecticide in the house as well, especially on the ground floor near doors and windows. This will kill the occasional flea that hops in on its own.

Many flea products sold in grocery and discount stores are wasting your time and money. Some are even harmful to pets. Most compounds strong enough to be effective are sold only through licensed veterinarians and exterminators, who are properly trained in their use, and are regulated by the state and the EPA. Insecticides should be used only according to label directions. Care is needed to ensure that toxicity does not develop due to the concurrent use of other drugs, pesticides or chemicals, or because the compound used was not safe for a particular age or type of animal. Some flea products used for dogs are deadly to cats.

### **READ LABELS CAREFULLY!!!**

For years most pet owners had only **topicals and flea collars** as long-lasting effective methods of flea control. These products (Vectra 3D, Frontline Plus or Revolution) are still available and effective. These products are applied to a small area of skin and spread over the whole pet within 24 hours of application. These contain modern polymers enabling them to be effective for as long as 30 days. Vectra 3D and Frontline are even effective if the dog becomes wet or is bathed. Because these products require the oils in the animal's fur to spread, it is best to apply it several days prior to bathing your dog for maximum effect.

## Flea Prevention - Continued

New in the past several years, has been the addition of **orally administered flea/tick prevention medications**. These medications have proven to be extremely effective at parasite control. Some can be given as infrequently as every 12 weeks (Bravecto), while others are given on a monthly basis (Credelio).

Many insecticidal flea collars available in stores and through online pharmacies are not very effective and often result in a painful irritation to the skin on the pet's neck. However, there are several newer flea/tick collars that are quite effective for as long as 6-8 months. Flea shampoos and soaps are great for cleaning your dog with fleas, but they have no residual effect. They only kill fleas present on the pet at the time the bath is given. As soon as the animal dries off, fleas will hop right back on. For long-term control you need a product that safely stays in or on the body for days or weeks at a time.

You should discuss your options with your veterinarian and choose the best for you and your dog.

### PRODUCTS:

**VECTRA 3D:** Is a **Topical** applied to the skin of dogs. It effectively kills fleas, flea eggs, larvae AND kills all stages of 4 different ticks including the deer tick. Also helps control chewing lice and Sarcoptic mange. It is very water-resistant. Used once monthly.

**BRAVECTO:** Is an **Oral (chewable) tablet** that kills fleas and all ticks in all stages for 12 weeks. It is also effective against a number of external parasites – Demodex and Sarcoptic mange as well as lice. It starts killing fleas and ticks within hours. It needs to be given in some areas of the country every 8 weeks to kill/control the Lone Star Tick. It needs to be given with food and can only be given in dogs OVER 6 months of age.

**SCALIBOR Collar:** This collar provides up to 6 months of protection against ticks and fleas. Collar incorporates a patented insecticide-release technology. Friction releases the insecticide steadily onto the dog's skin over 6 months. Maximum effectiveness is achieved within 2-3 weeks of collar placement. The collar needs to be worn continuously. It is water-resistant and can be worn while swimming or bathing without impairing effectiveness. The collar must be worn loosely so that two fingers may be placed between collar and dog's neck. It should not be used on puppies under 12 weeks of age. We highly recommend these collars for additional protection on outdoor or hunting dogs with high tick exposure.

## Tick Prevention

**Tick prevention** should be taken seriously, and not just because these arachnids make many people squeamish — ticks actually carry quite a few deadly diseases. Some of these diseases are lifelong, with no cure, so being diligent in checking for and removing ticks is important. As always, talk with your veterinarian before using any medication geared toward preventing ticks.

Ticks are by nature more difficult to kill than fleas and in the past, this posed problems for good tick control. It is fortunate that now we have a number of safe and very effective flea prevention medications that also have excellent coverage for tick control/prevention.

**Products** -- Review the products listed under Flea control.

If you are considering beginning a flea or tick control program for your pets, please consult with us. There are so many products on the market nowadays that it's tough to decide which ones are right for you. We are more than happy to help!

## 6 PLACES TO LOOK FOR TICKS ON YOUR DOG

If you're going to do some searching for ticks on your dog yourself, here are some places you may forget to look.

### 1. Inside of Ears

Ticks sit themselves on tall grasses and shrubs, waiting for your dog to walk by, so they can attach themselves to him. Dogs are often curious creatures, sticking their heads into everything, so it's not uncommon for ticks to find their way into a dog's ears. Since most ticks start out very small, it can be difficult to spot them when they first climb onto your dog. With so many crevices and hiding places, the ears make a perfect home for a hungry tick. When checking your dog, make sure to look deep into the ear, because the ticks can get attached and go unnoticed for a long time. If your dog is shaking and scratching at his ear, it's a sure sign that something is off, and you'll want to take a look.

### 2. Between Toes

Since ticks like to hide in places where they won't be found, crawling in-between your dog's toes and attaching there is a common occurrence. Checking his feet regularly will help you find these uninvited guests hitching a free ride on your pup. You can find them in-between the toes or even on the bottom of the foot near the pads. Again, if you notice your dog licking or chewing his feet, there might be something bothering him, and that something could be a tick.

### 3. Under the Tail

Ticks like dark, moist areas, so the underside of the tail makes a great home. Since most owners aren't regularly checking the underside of the dog's tail, especially near the base, a tick can go unnoticed for quite some time. If your dog has thick fur, you'll want to make sure to comb through it and search thoroughly. A fine comb will likely catch a tick that's attached itself under the tail.

#### 4. In the Genital Region

Most dog owners aren't keen on checking their dog's genital regions. However, this area is another dark, moist region on the body that ticks really like hanging around in. Ticks can become attached and stay hidden by the dog's coat and tail for a long time.

#### 5. Around Eyelids

A lot of ticks go unnoticed near the eyelids because they're mistaken for skin tags or eye discharge. Unfortunately, by the time many owners realize there is a tick on their dog's eyelid, the tick has been attached for quite a while. This isn't ideal, because the longer a tick stays attached, the more likely transmission of disease is to occur.

#### 6. Under the Collar

Many dogs rarely have their collars taken off, and with good reason — it's important to keep proper identification on your dog at all times. But when it comes to bathing and checking for ticks and fleas, removing the collar is important. Ticks can become attached underneath your dog's collar without anyone noticing, usually until the tick is large enough to be seen — which means it's been there for a while. Sometimes, removing and checking the collar itself will prevent a tick from attaching if it's just crawling around underneath. Whatever the case, removing the collar to do a thorough check for ticks is important.

If you do find a tick on your dog, make sure to check out **how to safely remove** it along with if and when to call your vet.

## HOW TO REMOVE A TICK FROM YOUR DOG

Removing a tick from your dog, or worse — ticks — may not be pleasant, but it's important to do it promptly and correctly. Once you know how to remove a tick, it will be a fairly easy process.

Because they can carry infectious organisms, every year ticks infect thousands of animals and people with illnesses like **Lyme disease**, **babesiosis**, and **ehrlichiosis** among others. Pathogen transmission can occur as quickly as three to six hours after a bite occurs, so the sooner you remove the tick the less chance there is that your dog will get sick.

A tick has a one-piece body. The harpoon-like barbs of its mouth attach to a host for feeding. Crablike legs and a sticky secretion help hold the tick to the host. Ticks range in size from almost impossible to see with the naked eye, to ones the size of a human fingertip. The

United States has about 200 tick species. They can survive – and thrive —in woods, beach grass, lawns, forests, and even urban areas. Ticks also aren't picky eaters: they feed on mammals, birds, and even other insects.

### **Tick Removal**

Using a pair of tweezers is the most common and effective way to remove a tick. But not just any tweezers will work. Most household tweezers have large, blunt tips. You should **use fine-point tweezers**, to avoid tearing the tick and spreading possible infections into the bite area.

Spread your dog's fur, then grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Very gently, pull straight upward, in a slow, steady motion. This will prevent the tick's mouth from breaking off and remaining embedded in the skin. People often believe it's the head of the tick that embeds in the skin. But ticks don't have heads, in the conventional sense, so what gets inserted into your dog is known as "mouth parts."

## Tick Removal - Continued

Another option that is even easier to master is the use of a **tick removal hook**. It's especially useful if you live in a tick-dense area where your dog is frequently playing host to the vexing little critters. There are several types of hooks, like the Tick Twister or the Tick Stick. You simply put the prongs on either side of the tick and twist upward.

Never remove a tick with your fingers—it's not only ineffective, but the squeezing may also further inject infectious material.

After you've removed the tick, make sure to wash your hands thoroughly, clean the bite site with rubbing alcohol, and rinse the tweezers or tool with disinfectant.



# ELECTIVE SURGERIES

## NEUTERING / SPAYING

The average lifespan of a neutered pet in the US, is 40% longer than an unneutered, one according to the ASPCA. Almost all un-spayed female dogs will eventually develop either mammary tumors (breast cancer) or a severe uterine infection called pyometra by the time they are 8-10 years old. Female dogs also go through a heat cycle about two times each year. During this time, they will have a bloody tinged vaginal discharge that can be quite messy.

Male dogs commonly develop prostate disease, perianal tumors and testicular tumors in their old age. Even more sadly, the most common reason for euthanasia of pets in the U.S. is behavior problems. These are usually aggression, running away or urinating in the house by unneutered male dogs. Intact males also have more tendencies to roam, which leads to automobile related injuries, dog fights and exposure to contagious diseases.

Keep in mind also that millions of puppies are put to death in the United States each year because there are not enough homes for them all. Spaying and neutering is the responsible thing to do.

If cost is a concern for having surgery, just \$15-20 per week saved from the time you get your puppy until he/ she is 6-12 months old will be more than enough to cover the surgery.

We recommend spaying (surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus) of female dogs and castration (surgical removal of the testicles) of males, for all dogs that will not be used for purebred breeding. This should be done when your pet reaches 6-12 months of age. You will need to discuss the timing of the surgery with your veterinarian as to what is most appropriate. Your animal will be a healthier, happier pet, and you will have done your part to reduce the pet overpopulation problem.

While your pet is anesthetized for surgery, we can also remove any retained baby teeth, apply a dental sealant called SANOS and/or implant a microchip ID.

## MICROCHIPPING

The latest in pet identification and retrieval is microchipping. This tiny device is implanted with a needle, so the process is much like getting an injection. Veterinary hospitals, humane societies and animal shelters across the country have microchip scanners used to detect the presence of a microchip and your dog's unique identification. A national registry assists in the return of microchipped pets throughout the United States and Canada.

**We strongly recommend that all pets be microchipped.**

## BEFORE YOUR DOG'S UPCOMING SURGERY



Many people have questions about various aspects of their pet's surgery, and we hope this handout will help. It also explains the decisions you will need to make before your pet's upcoming surgery.

### Feeding Prior to Surgery?

It is important that surgery be done on an empty stomach, to reduce the risk of vomiting during and after the anesthesia. You will need to withhold food for at least 8 hours before surgery. Water can be left out until the morning of surgery.

### Is the Anesthetic Safe?

Today's modern anesthetics and anesthetic monitors have made surgery much safer than in the past. We do a thorough physical exam on your pet before administering anesthetics to ensure that a fever or other illness won't be a problem. We also adjust the amount and type of anesthetic used depending on the health of your pet. **See Anesthesia and Your Pet** section; it explains this in greater detail.

### Pre-anesthetic blood testing . . .

is important in reducing the risk of anesthesia. Every pet needs blood testing before surgery to ensure that their liver and kidneys are functioning normally and can handle the elimination of the anesthetic agents given. We check a blood sugar to ensure normal metabolism by the brain, and that the pet is hydrated and has enough red blood cells to carry oxygen to their tissues. The blood is also checked for evidence of infection or inflammation. Even apparently healthy animals can have serious organ system problems that cannot be detected without blood testing. If there is a problem it is much better to find it before it causes anesthetic or surgical complications! In animals that have minor dysfunctions anesthesia may be able to be performed by altering amounts and the type of drugs used. If serious problems are detected, surgery will be postponed until the problem is identified and corrected. We include pre-anesthetic blood testing with every spay and neuter surgery. The cost is included in the price of the surgery.

### Will My Dog Have Stitches?

Not usually. For most surgeries we use absorbable sutures underneath the skin. These will dissolve on-their-own and do not need to be removed later. You will, however, need to keep an eye on the incision for swelling, redness and discharge.

Most dogs do not lick excessively or chew at their incisions, but this is an occasional problem that you will need to watch for. If you notice your pet licking at his or her incision call the hospital immediately for instructions. You may need to bring your pet into the hospital to be fitted for a collar to prevent infection. You will also need to limit your pet's activity level for a time, and no baths are allowed for 14 days after surgery.

### **Will My Dog Be in Pain?**

Anything that causes pain in people can be expected to cause pain in animals. Dogs may not show the same symptoms of pain as people do - they don't usually whine or cry - but you can be sure they feel it. We take pain control for our patients very seriously! **No pet should be in pain!** It is a well-known medical fact that when pain is controlled pets recover faster. Prior to surgery, your pet will receive pain medications, as well as after surgery, as needed. Additionally, pain medications will be dispensed for your pet and should be continued for two to five days after the surgery.

### **What Other Decisions Do I Need to Make?**

While your pet is under anesthesia this is the ideal time to perform other minor procedures, which are more easily accomplished when your pet is sleeping. Routinely, your dog's nails will be trimmed at no charge. You may request that one or more of the following additional procedures be performed.

- \* Cleaning ears / plucking hair from ear canals
- \* Removal of retained baby teeth and/or Application of dental Sealant - **SANOS**
- \* Implantation of AVID microchip for identification
- \* X-rays of hips on large breed puppies

Charges for these services can be discussed when you schedule your pet's surgery, or at the time of drop-off.

The morning of surgery, you will need to have your pet here between 7:30 am – 7:50 am. It will take about 5-10 minutes of time to fill out paperwork and then you will meet briefly with the doctor. We will need a phone number that you can be reached at during that day. When you pick up your pet after surgery you can also plan to spend about 10 minutes with the Certified Veterinary Technician to go over your dog's home care needs.

We will call you the night before your scheduled surgery appointment to confirm the time you will be dropping your pet off and to answer any questions you might have. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to call us with any questions about your pet's health or surgery!

## ANESTHESIA AND YOUR PET

Many pet owners worry unnecessarily about anesthesia in their pets. Although anesthesia can never be completely free of risk, today's modern anesthetics make that risk very small.

The same anesthetics that allow complicated surgeries such as heart and kidney transplants to be done on humans are used in pets as well. Even very frail animals can usually be anesthetized safely. In general, the risks from NOT performing a needed procedure, such as dental cleaning or tumor removal, are much higher than the risk from the anesthesia.

We use pre-operative blood tests and occasionally other tests such as radiographs (X-rays) to help us determine whether a procedure will be safe for your pet before it is performed. We require pre-operative blood work including a complete blood count, blood chemistries, and total T4 thyroid level for all pets over the age of seven years before anesthesia is administered. Chest X-rays are taken if there is any suspicion of heart or lung disease, or if certain types of cancer have been diagnosed to check for the spread of the disease.

Anesthesia is **always and only** administered by certified and licensed veterinary technicians or doctors to ensure safety and proper dosing. An IV catheter will be placed prior to surgery. Your pet will receive drugs and fluids through this route. Throughout anesthesia your pet will be monitored closely by a Certified Veterinary Technician (CVT). Blood oxygen and CO2 levels, heart and respiratory rate, body temperature, blood pressure, and heart rhythm (ECG) are monitored every five minutes throughout the surgery.

With proper care and monitoring, your pet should go home after anesthesia just as perky and healthy as when it arrived at the hospital, whether it is 16 months or 16 years of age.

If you have further concerns, about anesthesia in your pet, we would be happy to discuss the risks and benefits of any procedure with you and explain the exact protocol that will be used. Please let us know!

# DENTISTRY FOR YOUR PET



All of us know about the benefits of routine dental care for ourselves. Daily brushing and flossing, and regular visits to the dentist, keep our teeth and gums healthy and comfortable. Unfortunately, routine dental care is still an often-neglected item of dog and cat general health care. Your pets, as well as yourselves, deserve regular dental care.

After your pet reaches a few years of age, plaque begins to build up at the junction of the gums and teeth. With time this plaque hardens into tartar. If this tartar is not removed, it increases causing inflammation to the adjacent gum or gingivitis that can result in loss of gum tissue. This allows bacteria to come into contact with the underlying tissues and eventual destruction of bone. We call this process periodontal disease. If this situation is not soon remedied, severe gum infections, abscessed teeth and cheek ulcers and eventually loss of the tooth will occur. You may become aware of this problem by noting that your dog has a bad odor to his or her breath, is not eating food as well as previously, or is experiencing weight loss.

Chronic infections of the teeth and gums can also result in problems elsewhere in the body. Bacteria enter the bloodstream from infected gum tissue and can cause infection in organs such as the liver, the kidneys, the heart and the joints. Good dental care lengthens pets' lives an average of 10 - 20% through the prevention of these secondary problems.

Miniature and toy breeds of dogs exhibit dental problems more frequently and much earlier in life than do the larger breeds. As a result of mouth pain dogs may stop eating and show weight loss and nutritional disturbances.

You can help prevent dental problems in your pets by feeding a dry dog food. Daily or even weekly brushing of your dog's teeth with a toothpaste made for pets will also help prevent tartar buildup. Dog treats, rawhide chew toys and some especially designed rubber toys are all on the market to assist in this as well. A new dental vaccine is now available for dogs.

Just as with people your dog will still require regular dental exams and cleanings (prophylaxis). Under general anesthesia the teeth are examined and probed for gum loss and pockets. Dental radiographs of individual teeth or the entire mouth may be required to further assess the degree of periodontal disease. The teeth are cleaned of tartar by use of an ultrasonic dental scaler (uses water and rapid sound waves) much like the one your own dentist uses, and then the teeth are polished. Polishing, smooths the surface of the teeth to help discourage future tartar formation. Your pet will also receive an antibacterial rinse.

## SANOS APPLICATION – What is it?

At the time of your pet's dental prophylaxis, we recommend that **SANOS** be applied to the cleaned teeth. SANOS is a bio-active polymer, for dogs and cats that acts as a **dental sealant** to keep the gingiva and subgingival gum line clean. SANOS is NOT applied to the cosmetic crown of the tooth. Because SANOS can be applied in those difficult/hard to reach areas in the back of the mouth, it is an **invaluable aid to preventing plaque and subsequent periodontal disease that can lead to tooth loss**. For the best results, SANOS should be applied every 6 months at the time of dental prophylaxis.

For puppies and kittens, we recommend that you begin SANOS applications at the time your pet is spayed or neutered. If "fixed" already beginning at 6 months of age.

SANOS has been awarded a **Seal of Acceptance** by the Veterinary Oral Health Council (**VOHC**).

### Who/What is the VOHC?

The VOHC is a group of nine boarded veterinary dentists and dental scientists who have experience with scientific protocols and study design. **They review dental and oral health care products for efficacy.**

### What does the VOHC do?

It awards a seal of acceptance that certifies the effectiveness of a product at retarding plaque and tartar and/or that it will be a useful oral hygiene aid to help keep the pet's mouth and teeth healthy.

**Regular use of products carrying the VOHC seal WILL reduce the severity of periodontal disease in pets.**

Other more advanced procedures such as root canal work, restorations and even braces are also available should your dog ever need them by Board Certified Veterinary Dentists. We encourage you to be concerned about your pet's oral health, and to keep in mind the availability of effective treatments for dental problems in your dog. Make dentistry apart of your pet's total health care plan, for a longer and happier life.

## WHY BONES ARE NOT SAFE FOR DOGS

*When I was growing up, we always gave our dogs bones. I thought it was OK. I recently read that bones are not safe. What's the real story about bones and dogs?*

It is a myth that dogs need to chew bones. While dogs **want** to chew, and most would **love** to chew on bones, bones are dangerous and they can cause serious injuries.

Here are the top reasons that bones are bad for dogs (with thanks to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration [www.fda.gov/consumer](http://www.fda.gov/consumer)):



### **Broken teeth**

Bones are very hard and can be brittle, making it easy for a dog to break one of its large chewing teeth. A broken tooth is painful, and whether the tooth is extracted or saved with a root canal, this is an expensive outcome.

### **Injuries to the mouth and tongue**

The broken edges of bones can be razor sharp. Likewise, dogs can break off sharp shards that can pierce the tongue, the cheek, or the soft palate on the roof off the mouth.

### **Bones can get looped around the lower jaw**

Round bones can get stuck around the lower jaw behind the lower canine teeth. This is certainly a very scary experience for the dog, and most dogs need to be sedated or anesthetized in order to cut it off.

### **Dogs can choke**

Pieces of bone can lodge in the esophagus on the way down to the stomach. Sharp shards can penetrate the soft tissues at the back of the throat or pierce the esophagus. It is also possible for a piece of bone to get into the trachea (windpipe), interfering with your dog's ability to breathe. Choking is an emergency!

### **Bones can get stuck in the stomach**

If the bone fragment is large enough, it may not be able to pass out of the stomach, requiring either abdominal surgery or endoscopy to remove it. If the piece of bone is sharp, it can penetrate the stomach wall causing the stomach contents to leak into the abdomen. The result is peritonitis - - an infection in the abdomen that can be fatal even if treated.

### **Bones can cause a blockage in either the small intestine or the colon**

Bone fragments can become lodged in the small intestines, causing a blockage, and requiring surgery to remove them. They can penetrate the intestinal wall and cause peritonitis. Bone fragments may travel far enough down the GI tract to get to the large bowel/colon. Once there, they can collect and cause severe constipation. This is extremely painful for the dog as the bone fragments scrape the lining of the colon and rectum. Enemas and manipulation are generally required to evacuate the large bowel. The trauma to the colon may cause significant bleeding from the rectum.



## Contamination with pathogens on raw bones

There are several significant pathogens with which raw meat and bones can be contaminated - - E. coli, Salmonella species, and Listeria. These are pathogens that may or may not make a dog sick, but that certainly pose a significant health risk to the humans in the household. Children, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals are the most vulnerable, and these organisms can be life-threatening.

### Is There Anything Safe That I Can Give my Dog to Chew?

There are many great chewing products available for dogs. If you want to offer rawhide, choose one made from U.S. cattle hides, give the thickest hides you can find, and choose ones that are too large for your dog to swallow. No knots on the ends, please. The knots can be pulled off and swallowed, resulting in a trip to the veterinarian for surgery.

There are also dental health chews that may be offered. Be sure to look for the Veterinary Oral Health Council seal of approval. This seal assures you that the product has been evaluated for its ability to contribute to a dog's oral health.

Dogs were built to chew -- that's a fact. Our job as pet parents is to provide them with chewing options that do not put them in jeopardy. Happy chewing!

## ---BRUSHING YOUR DOG'S TEETH

The most effective way to reduce plaque and tartar is to brush the teeth. A number of toothbrushes are specially designed for a pet's mouth. Never use human toothpaste on pets; human toothpastes have foaming action and contain ingredients that should not be swallowed as they could cause illness in pets. You should use a product that is pet safe and VOHC accepted (see Discussion to Follow); they are available in flavors your pet will find appealing. Because pets have a "scissors" bite and by the action of their tongues, the inner surface of the teeth remain relatively free of tartar accumulation. As such, in brushing your pet's teeth; all the efforts should be made to clean the outer surfaces.

We would recommend you check out our YouTube video on pet dental care;  
<https://youtu.be/FXgkiUTnrG0>.

**Brushing is a big commitment; to be effective it takes patience but the work will be well worth the reward!**

### **For Dogs:**

1. Choose a calm, quiet part of your home and a time of day when you, and your dog are relaxed.
2. Start slowly by allowing your dog to taste a small dab of the toothpaste from your finger, praising them after they have licked it. Allow them to sniff the brush, rewarding with a treat or praise after doing so. Next, gently lift the upper lips and take a look at the teeth; follow this with another treat or praise. Do this daily, over the course of about a week to create a positive association with the tools and with you putting your hands in and around the pet's mouth.
3. Once your dog is comfortable, apply a small amount of toothpaste onto the brush and allow them to sniff and lick it. Touch the toothbrush to the teeth in the front, sides, and back of the mouth. Go slowly and reward often. Repeat this until they are comfortable, and then you can begin to actually brush the teeth.
4. Apply toothpaste to the brush. Keeping the mouth closed as much as possible; start brushing the outer surfaces of the teeth on one side of the mouth, working your way toward the front, across the front teeth and then backdown along the outer surfaces of the teeth on the other side of the mouth. Reward with affection and praise. If the dog holds its mouth open, you will need to repeat the process on each set of teeth. Reward after the process is complete.
5. If your pet reacts negatively during any step, stop what you are doing immediately. The next day, go back to a previous step and do that again for a few days until they are comfortable and accepting again.

## Brushing Your Dog's Teeth - Continued

If you have a **puppy**, we **recommend you wait to start brushing your pet's teeth till approximately 6 months of age**; when all of their adult teeth are present. But you can begin acclimating yourself and them to the tooth brushing process by setting aside time in your schedule to gently begin to handle them around their mouths and by letting them get used to a toothbrush and the taste of the toothpaste. If you do this tooth brushing on a daily basis won't be nearly the challenge.

With **adult pets**, be aware that if your pet **already has dental disease**; it is best to schedule your pet to have a dental prophylaxis to treat this painful condition as well as remove existing tartar from the teeth. Starting to brush their teeth, when their mouths are painful already is bound to result in failure; you will get frustrated and stop but more importantly your pet is likely to be resentful and suspicious of any future attempts at toothbrushing. Remember too, that **tooth brushing will not remove tartar** – only plaque. Once a dental prophylaxis has been performed, you will have a much more willing pet with a pain-free healthy mouth to begin the brushing process.

**With gentleness, patience, and perseverance it is possible to brush your pet's teeth and provide the oral care needed to prevent dental disease!**

# PET INSURANCE

## What is Pet Insurance?

Pet insurance, also known as pet health insurance, is the pet equivalent to human medical insurance. **It is NOT however, a Wellness program.** In general, it helps cover the cost of veterinary care should something unexpected or bad occur and your pet becomes ill or injured. Some pet insurance companies do offer plans including wellness services, however this is an additional fee, and they usually are not cost effective.

## What Does Pet Insurance Cover?

Up front, you should know that having pet insurance for your pet does not provide an inexhaustible source of payment or cover every possible veterinary expenditure. The aim of pet health insurance is to provide for the unexpected expenses resulting from an illness or trauma and those associated with debilitating conditions related to advanced age.

Virtually all pet insurance companies offer coverage for pets related to accidents and illness; as stated previously a few offer coverages for wellness services, if desired. Accident coverage can include services relate to torn ligaments, broken bones, bite wounds and other serious health needs. Illness coverage can cover things like cancer, arthritis, UTI's, allergies and more.

## Pet – Insurance - Continued

Pet insurance companies usually cover x-rays, blood tests, ultrasounds, CT scans, MRIs, rehabilitation, specialized exams, surgery, hospitalization, emergency care, specialty care, hydrotherapy, chronic conditions, cancer, diagnostic treatment, alternative/holistic therapy and even euthanasia. Be sure to ask the carrier what is covered and what needs additional riders.

**None of the pet insurance providers will cover pre-existing conditions, however,** different companies may have different criteria and waiting periods for what they consider a pre-existing condition. If you're unsure, ask. It's better to know upfront.

Many pet insurance companies also set limitations to their illness coverage based on the age of the pet.

**Therefore, it's important to get insurance while your pet is young to reduce pre-existing condition exemptions and your monthly cost, as well as maximize your illness coverage.**

### **Why Would I Do I Need Pet Insurance?**

People buy insurance of any kind to help them pay for large, unexpected or unplanned expenses for which they would have trouble paying for out-of-pocket

### **You'll Never Have to Decide Between Your Wallet & Your Pet!**

Choosing whether or to pursue expensive diagnostic testing /treatments or have emergency surgery performed on your pet is one of the hardest decisions you'll ever have to make as a pet owner. With pet insurance, you can remove the financial aspect out of your consideration and base your medical decisions purely on what's best for your pet.

### **Accidents Happen**

It doesn't matter how well you take care of your pet; accidents happen. Whether it's a toenail on your cat that got caught in the couch cushion or a torn cruciate ligament when your dog jumped off the bed, your pet could have an accident that leads to unexpected (and often untimely!) veterinary bills. A pet's accident or illness can result in costly bills, but having a good pet insurance plan ensures that you're able to recoup a vast percentage of those costs.

### **How does it work?**

Like our own health insurance plans, it offers different levels of coverage for different premiums. Generally speaking, it is more cost effective to start insuring your pet when it is young and healthy than when older and more prone to illness. Premiums can be paid monthly, quarterly or annually; many companies offer discounts for direct deposits or multiple pets. Many policies have the premium rate linked to the age when first insured. Premiums and the deductible tend to increase as the pet gets older.

## How Does Pet Insurance Work - Continued

Unlike human health insurance, most pet health insurance plans reimburse you for the cost of veterinary care. After paying the initial price of your pet's vet visit, you'll request a duplicate itemized receipt which you then send to your pet's insurance company along with a completed claim form. You'll typically receive a reimbursement check within a week to a month.

Some companies guarantee a specific payout turnaround time as an added benefit. Your reimbursement amount generally, depends on your insurance policy details and exclusions, the type and cost of each procedure, your policy's allowance per procedure and your plan's deductible. Make sure to check if your plan has limits per procedure or illness, vs paying a percentage of all costs incurred. The latter tends to be the better option.

A few insurance companies are starting to offer direct payment to certain partnering veterinary hospitals, as such claims can be approved and paid "on-the-spot", thus eliminating owners having to pay out of pocket, submit paper claims as there is no waiting for approval and then reimbursement.

## What are the Cons of Pet Insurance?

As stated above, pet insurance is designed to protect you and your pet against an unexpected expensive event such as an accident or illness. But like anything, it has its downside/cons. Here are the big minuses of pet insurance:

- **Choosing a company and policy can be confusing.** When choosing a policy, make sure the features that are most important to you are part of the plan. For example, some policies exclude coverage for hereditary conditions such as hip dysplasia which can affect your breed of dog, but may not show up until later in life.
  - Before you purchase your dog's insurance plan, be sure to familiarize yourself with what each plan offers. Compare the coverage provided under each plan with individual health concerns for your pet and its breed.
  - Currently, there a number of companies offering pet insurance for dogs and cats but not for exotics. Narrow down your choices to just a few providers that meet your needs.
  - Contact those companies and obtain quotes based on information you provide about your pet's breed, age, health and needs.
  
- **Your policy may never pay for itself.** Remember, it's a safety net, not an investment. You can't expect to get your money back, and you could spend more in premiums over your pet's life than you ever would if you just went to the veterinarian. That said, you don't know what's going to happen in your pet's lifetime and it's often best to be prepared. You can't put a price tag on peace of mind so that alone may be worth the premium for you.
  - Weigh the cost of monthly premiums against the types of coverage offered: accident, illness and wellness, as well as any add-ons.

### Cons of Pet Insurance - Continued

- Review plan deductibles and payout percentages that may impact your real out-of-pocket costs.
- The sooner you sign your pet up for health insurance, the lower the premiums.
- You should expect annual increases on your premiums from any pet insurance company. These rates and increases will vary based on your location, changes in veterinary costs, etc.

## What Pet Insurance Is Right for You?

The best pet insurance offers coverage that's broad enough for whatever care your pet needs and with enough options to get the perfect coverage for you and your pet.

Lastly, the most common question pet owners ask about pet insurance is ---- **"Is pet insurance worth it?"**

**You never know when the unexpected will strike!** It is estimated that a full 1/3 of all household pets in the US, **WILL** visit a veterinarian due to illness or injury each year and nearly 100% will need such veterinary care over their lifetime, at least once.

Today, there are a whole host of diagnostic and medical options along with surgical procedures, not to mention veterinary specialists available/being offered to pet owners regularly as they seek to provide **the best care** to their beloved animal companions. Many of these were unheard of in the field of veterinary medicine only a few years ago. Unfortunately, few pet owners are truly aware of the costs associated with these options. All too frequently we, veterinarians, see pet owners struggle and have to choose the level of care they can provide their animal companions solely based on the costs involved and not what is considered "best". **When an owner has pet health insurance, these types of concerns become a thing of the past.**

***Pet insurance is important for any pet owner to consider when deciding on their pet's health and well-being and the level of care they wish to provide should something unexpected happen. Having adequate health and medical insurance for your pet also means that you have less stress when you have to visit the veterinarian to address and treat a health problem with your pet.***

**It just makes sense!**



## **Tips for choosing a Pet Insurance Company:**

### **1. Compare Pet Insurance Providers**

Before you decide to enroll your pet in a pet insurance policy, compare pet insurance providers. A side-by-side comparison will show the difference in plans, premiums, deductibles, co-pays, sample reimbursements and plan details, including exclusions and additional features.

There are web-based Pet Health Insurance comparison tools on-line such as <https://www.consumersadvocate.org/Pet-Insurance/Reviews>.

### **2. Investigate the Insurer's Track Record**

Look at the pet insurance provider's track record for dependability. The key to choosing a pet health insurance provider you can count on is to go with the company that has proven stability, experience and recommendations.

How long has the provider been in business? Are they a trusted financial service? How many in-force policies do they have? Do they have veterinarians on staff that know pets' needs and help develop policies?

### **3. Research What's Covered — and What Might Affect Coverage**

Some pet health insurance plans may have exclusions for conditions that are pre-existing, hereditary, congenital, or related to breeding, and may apply restrictions on your coverage when you file a claim.

Before you enroll, make sure you know and understand what factors may affect coverage, such as your pet's breed and any pre-existing conditions. Find out how often, and why, your premium will increase. Ask if the amount of claims you submit will affect your premium. If you are unsure about the policy language, call the pet insurance provider and ask them to explain in a way that is easily understandable by you.

### **4. Choose Coverage that Suits You and Your Pets Needs**

Do you want coverage for known routine wellness (vaccinations, flea and heartworm prevention, wellness exams and tests), unknown medical care (chronic conditions, surgeries and hospitalization, prescriptions, exams, lab tests, illnesses, injuries) or complete care with coverage that includes hereditary conditions and wellness?

Discuss your pet's health with your veterinarian, get an idea what common health conditions your pet could face that may be breed related, or if there's a history of health issues in your pet's family tree.



## **5. Pick the Type of Insurance Reimbursement That Works for You**

There are two ways pet insurance providers calculate reimbursement: they use either a percentage of each invoice or an annual benefit schedule of allowances.

An invoice is the itemized bill your veterinarian hands you after treating your pet. If you choose to enroll your pet in a percentage of invoice plan, you'll be reimbursed a percentage of what you paid your vet. A benefit schedule of allowances lists everything that is covered under your plan with a set amount for reimbursement. The reimbursement amounts renew annually.

Additionally, your reimbursement amount can be affected by whether you've chosen a per-incident deductible or an annual deductible.

## **6. Review Cost and Value**

There's no point in buying a pet insurance policy just because it's cheap if it doesn't cover what your pet needs. Your monthly premium and reimbursement amount will vary based on the type of coverage and deductible you choose.

Deductibles are worth taking into consideration: A per-incident deductible is applied to every incident and can reduce your monthly premium. A low annual deductible will result in a higher premium while a higher deductible will result in a lower premium. However, don't base your purchase on cost alone. While a lower premium may sound great; you don't want to limit the amount of benefits you'll receive when you really need them.

## ON-LINE PRESCRIPTIONS:

Our veterinarians work diligently with you to keep your pets safe and healthy. We provide a fully stocked pharmacy for your convenience and offer our hospital's on-line store for the ability to have your medications shipped to you. We regularly will fax prescriptions to local human pharmacies and to The Pet Apothecary (Glendale, WI) for needed compounded medications; and will continue to do so.

In the past, for your convenience, we have always also faxed prescription requests to various on-line pharmacies. However, of late, we have become very concerned about the ethics and inconsistency of some on-line pharmacies. We have experienced the wrong medications being mailed to clients, medications with incorrect directions as well as fraudulent/counterfeit manufactured medications being substituted for prescribed drugs. Medications have also been delivered to client's homes either very hot or frozen without protective packaging, which may decrease their efficacy. Additionally, it is often very difficult for you the owner as well as for our veterinarians to reach on-line pharmacists, by phone to discuss prescriptions or issues.

For further information on on-line pharmacies, we recommend you visit:

<https://www.fda.gov/.../besaferx-know-your-online-pharmacy>. FDA BeSafeRx is a national campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of buying prescription medicines from fake online pharmacies; this campaign provides the resources to help consumers know the risks of on-line pharmacies.

In light of this, if you still opt to purchase a medication or prescription food from an alternate on-line pharmacy, please call the hospital or let your veterinarian know; we will sign a written prescription for you, free of charge. We will either mail this written script to your home, or you can pick it up at our hospital. You are then free to choose the pharmacy of your choice and mail in your prescription.

# CARE TO SHARE PROGRAM



At Brook-Falls Veterinary Hospital & Exotic Animal Care, we strive to exceed your expectations with each and every interaction we have with you and your pet. If we've succeeded in doing so, we hope you'll consider letting your family and friends know about our practice. Our best clients come from your referrals, because your friends love their pets as much as you do!

For those of you who are kind enough to spread the word about our practice, we want to show our appreciation by offering our special "Care to Share" program.

## HOW IT WORKS:

Any time a friend or family member that you referred to us brings in their pet for an examination and becomes a new client, you will both receive a \$25 credit toward your next visit! It's that simple.

The staff at Brook-Falls wants to extend our sincerest gratitude for your loyalty and continued support. As always, we look forward to seeing you and your pet at your next appointment, and to meeting your friend's pets soon as well!

## Care To Share



**Refer a friend or family member today!**

Share the love and both of you receive a \$25 credit towards any visit...

PLUS a big dose of love from all of us too!

Download the **Care to Share Card**, from our website, pop your signature on the back...then hand your card out to any pet parent you fell would be a fit. If they love their furry little fellas like crazy...they'll fit in 'purrfectly' around here! When your friend or family member becomes a new client, each of you will receive a \$25.00 CARE TO SHARE Credit towards anything at all – food, treats, meds...even your next visit! Know lots of pet parents? Your special pet account sure could stack up!

**Have fun & start SHARING THE LOVE today! Anyone you 're-fur' receives a \$25 credit (and will love you for it)...and as a THANK YOU from us, you'll receive a \$25 credit too!**

# PET WELLNESS PLANS

Designed to help you keep your pet healthy and happy while saving money, Pet Wellness Plans provide excellent care with substantial discounts. Your pet will get the full benefit of health checks, disease prevention, and parasite testing and affordable payments help to spread out costs.

## **How it Works:**

- \$65 Enrollment fee per pet, waived if plan paid in full at time of enrollment and waived the following year if renewed within 1 month of anniversary date.
- Pet Wellness Plans are NOT automatically renewed. We will call you 30 days prior to the expiration date and discuss plan services not used and reenrollment.
- At the time of enrollment, the enrollment fee and the first month's fee is due. The remainder 11 monthly payments will be done automatically via credit or debit card.
- Pet Wellness Plans paid in full can also be done with cash or check.

## **Dog Plans**

### **Puppy Plan**

#### **Unlimited Exams: No Charge**

- 2 fecal parasite tests
- 2 de-wormings
- All Vaccines-Rabies, Distemper Complex, Leptospirosis, Lyme disease, K9 Influenza "flu"
- 10% off spay or neuter
- 5% off lodging/training classes/doggy daycare
- Free temperament testing for doggy day care
- Free homemade snack everyday while lodging.

### Dog Wellness Plans - Continued

**NO CHARGE – Unlimited EXAMINATIONS**  
**NO CHARGE – Unlimited nail trims**  
**NO CHARGE – Unlimited anal gland expressions**  
**NO CHARGE – Unlimited ear cleanings**

#### **Canine Bronze**

##### **Unlimited Exams: No Charge**

- Fecal parasite test
- All Vaccines-Rabies, Distemper Complex, Leptospirosis, Lyme disease and K9 Influenza “Flu”
- Heartworm Test/Lyme Screening
- CBC (Complete blood count) Full biochemistry profile
- Complete Urinalysis
- 10% off spay or neuter surgery
- 5% off lodging/training classes/doggy day care
- Free temperament testing for doggy day care
- Free homemade snack everyday while lodging.

**NO CHARGE – Unlimited EXAMINATIONS**  
**NO CHARGE – Unlimited nail trims**  
**NO CHARGE – Unlimited anal gland expressions**  
**NO CHARGE – Unlimited ear cleanings**

#### **Canine Silver**

##### **Unlimited Exams: No Charge**

- Everything in the Canine Bronze
- Dentistry and anesthesia (non- routine dental services such as extractions are NOT included)

**NO CHARGE – Unlimited EXAMINATIONS**  
**NO CHARGE – Unlimited nail trims**  
**NO CHARGE – Unlimited anal gland expressions**  
**NO CHARGE – Unlimited ear cleanings**

# NUTRITION

## HOW TO CHOOSE A PET FOOD

One of the most common questions we as animal care providers are asked is - "What should I feed my pet?" Choosing an appropriate pet food has become a challenge for most pet owners of late. If you've been to a pet store recently to look for a pet food or watched the numerous TV ads about pet foods, you are likely overwhelmed by the tremendous number of pet food brands and options available today. Since one of the most important contributions, you can make to your pet's health and well-being is his or her daily diet, it's a question that deserves a good answer.

### The Fact vs Fiction about Pet Foods

Unfortunately, there is little government oversight on the quality of pet foods, and labeling requirements for pet foods are very lax and incomplete. The words holistic, grain free, wholesome have no nutritional value. **The only label that does actually mean something is the term organic; there are specific rules that must be followed to be labelled organic.**

Choose a food that is for the **life stage** of your pet. **DO NOT feed any food labeled for "all stages of a pet's life"**- this is essentially a growth formula (kitten) food and it is NOT appropriate for an adult or senior cat.

**We recommend you feed your pet a food from the following list pet food manufacturers:**

1. Hills / Science Diet
2. Iams / Eukanuba
3. Royal Canin
4. Purina

**All of these companies meet the following criteria:**

1. They have board certified veterinary nutritionists on staff.
2. They conduct on-going nutrition research.
3. They perform feeding trials on ALL of their foods – ensuring palatability, digestibility, that they are nutritionally balanced and they perform regular quality control testing on their products. **This is the most important!**

### Aren't by-products poor quality ingredients?

**Many people have been led to mistakenly believe, by-products and secondary products** (i.e., parts of the animal or plant that humans typically do not consume) **are not healthy for our pets. Nothing could be farther from the truth!!** In fact, by-products provide high quality protein, fat, vitamins and minerals and play vital roles in renewing organs and muscles, supporting the immune system and supplying energy. Examples of these by-products or secondary products include internal organs, chicken stock, beet pulp, and gelatin. Some people do actually eat some of these secondary products. Have you ever heard of tripe or haggis? So, **having the term by-products in the ingredient list does not indicate anything about a pet food's quality, cost, or nutritional value.**



## Real “Meat” is better than “meal”, right?

So, what about 'real meat' as the first ingredient instead of a “meal”? Once again, having a 'meat' listed as the first ingredient does not indicate anything about the quality of that ingredient in the pet food. Meal just indicates that the ingredient is rendered, or that the water and fat content has been removed and the resultant product has been ground into a granular form; a “meal.” Meat is actually 70-80% water as compared to a meal which is only 10% water. Since ingredients are listed in descending order of weight on pet food labels, when meat is listed as number one ingredient followed by a meal, most of the protein and nutrients is actually coming from the MEAL and NOT the meat! **Thus, when pet food companies advertise the benefit of having a meat as the number one ingredient, they are not being truthful!!** Additionally, foods containing more meat are much more expensive for consumers.

## Aren't grains just fillers? Aren't grain-free diets better for pets?

Finally, what about grain-free diets? Many pet food companies also mention corn and other grains as being 'fillers' and not having nutritional value. **In fact, these grain ingredients are good sources of carbohydrates and have high nutritional value.** Corn and corn-meal are much maligned, but actually an excellent high-quality protein source, are a good source of energy (corn oil) as well as provide essential vitamins and minerals.

In regards to **grains causing potential allergies in pets, these are quite uncommon.** Animal proteins more commonly the cause food allergies in pets (for example, corn is responsible for less than 5% of food allergy cases in pets). Grain-free diets contain alternative carbohydrate sources such as potatoes, tapioca or legumes (peas, lentils). In fact, many grain-free diets have up to 80% of their diet being potato based making these diets of lower nutritional value than non-grain free diets and can even cause deficiency in certain vitamins/minerals.

**Do NOT feed your pet a grain-free diet unless it is recommended or provided by your veterinarian.** These foods are under investigation and have been closely linked to a fatal heart disease called Dilative Cardiomyopathy in dogs. It is suspected that these diets are somehow deficient in taurine or prevent taurine absorption/utilization; taurine is an essential amino acid found primarily in grains.

Because grain-free diets are higher in meat, they are higher in protein and often fat as well, thus they can lead to obesity, if portion control is not adhered to with pets.

## So how can you determine if a pet food is high quality?

All pet owners should read pet food labels with an eye to the above discussion but you should also look for a statement from the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) on the package. When present this will say that the food is complete and well-balanced, either through a feeding trial or because the recipe meets a pet's nutritional requirements. If the food has this distinction, there's no need to give your pet extra vitamins or supplements -- the food has all it needs.



## Summary of Nutrition

Again, select foods based on the life stage of your particular pet and one manufactured by a reputable company.

You should always discuss diet choice with your veterinarian for their recommendation for your individual pet.

You should also, always feel free to call the manufacturer and discuss products with them directly. Some questions to ask them:

1. Does your company employ full-time qualified nutritional scientists and/or board-certified veterinary nutritionists?
2. Does your company perform nutrition research using your products? Do they perform feeding trials beyond palatability studies on their foods?
3. How does your company practice quality and food safety on raw materials and finished products?

## What about Raw diets?

Here is a blog from the Brook-Falls website --- Is feeding a raw diet worth the risk?

A recent article published in the British Veterinary Journal, Vet Record, based on a study done by Utrecht University scientists would say — NO !!

The study showed “no evidence for any benefit for raw meat-based diets (RMBDs) compared to mainstream dry or canned foods and may even be less nutritious” for pets and such diets, “places pet owners at risk of serious disease.” They additionally, asserted. “In nutritional terms, these diets are often deficient in several nutrients and may, therefore, lead to a serious health problem, especially in young animals that are growing.”

RMBDs include raw dried dog and cat treats such as pig ears, home-prepared meats based from food sold for human consumption and commercial raw meats marketed for pets. The study analyzed over 30 RMBDs and found significant pathogenic bacteria in the products: *E.coli* 0157 was isolated from almost 25 % of the products, *Salmonella species* were found in 20% and *Listeria species* present in 43 % of the products. Additionally, the products tested positive for several parasites: 11% of the products tested positive for one of two species of *Sarcocystis* and 6% revealed *Toxoplasma gondii*. Researchers also found evidence that the meat harbored antibiotic-resistant species of bacteria.

## The Science is Clear!

The scientist stated that “it is clear that commercial RMBDs may be contaminated with a variety of zoonotic bacterial and parasitic pathogens that may be a possible source of bacterial infections in pet animals and if transmitted pose a risk for human beings.”

Pets fed RMBDs can pass pathogens to humans through direct contact, such as licking or brushing up against them, as well as, through direct contact with the food, through contact with household surfaces or by ingesting cross-contaminated human food.

They issued several dire warnings for pets and pet owners feeding RMBDs. “The presence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in RMBDs could, therefore, pose a serious risk to both animal health and public health — not only because infections with these bacteria are difficult to treat, but also because of the potential of it contributing to a more widespread occurrence of such bacteria.”

This study very conclusively, confirms that there is no benefit for animals to eat a raw diet and there is significant evidence that it can, not only harm the pet but can pose risks to human health, especially the young, old or otherwise immunocompromised individuals.

### So, for everyone’s sake – Just Say No to Raw Diets!

If you still have questions or need more information regarding this important issue, you are encouraged to go the AVMA website --- [www.avma.org/KB/Resources/FAQs/Pages/Raw-Pet-Foods-and-the-AVMA-Policy-FAQ.aspx](http://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/FAQs/Pages/Raw-Pet-Foods-and-the-AVMA-Policy-FAQ.aspx).

## FEEDING OPTIONS

**Dogs foods are available in three types** -- *dry*, *canned*, and *semi-moist* formulations.

Any of these formulations is acceptable, as long as the label states that the food is intended for growth (or is a kitten food), and is “complete and balanced”. This means that the food is nutritionally complete to meet the needs of growth and development. Each of the types of food has advantages and disadvantages.

**Dry food** is the most inexpensive and food can be left in the dog's bowl at all times. Free feeding – food available at all times can be acceptable in young small breed puppies. Unfortunately, many adult dogs tend to overeat in face of inactivity, when food is left out available at all times. It is advised to meal feed, even dry food, to dogs too reduce the risk of obesity.

**Semi-moist foods** may be acceptable, depending on their quality. The texture may be more appealing to some dogs, and they often have a stronger odor and flavor. However, semi-moist foods are usually high in sugar, and if they are fed exclusively, can cause the dog to develop a very finicky appetite. They are also inappropriate for dogs with diabetes or at risk of diabetes. We do not generally recommend this type of food.

**Canned foods** are a good choice to feed your puppy but are considerably more expensive than either of the other forms of food. Canned foods contain a high percentage of water, and their texture, odor and taste are very appealing to most pets. However, canned food will dry out or spoil if left out for prolonged periods of time; it is more suitable for meal feeding rather than free choice feeding.

**Table foods are not recommended.** Because they are generally very tasty, dogs will often begin to “hold out” for these and not eat their well-balanced dog food. If you choose to give your puppy/dog table food, be sure that at least 90% of our pet’s diet is a good quality commercial puppy/kitten food. We enjoy a variety of things to eat in our diet. However, most dogs actually prefer not to change from one food to another unless they are trained to do so by the way you feed them. Do not feel guilty if your dog is happy to just eat one food day after day, week after week.

## How Much, How Often?

There three main strategies for feeding our canine friends as well. Each has advantages and disadvantages.

## The Different Ways of Feeding Dogs

### Meal Feeding Dogs

Meal feeding means you're providing food to your dog only at specific mealtimes during the day. Both canned and dry foods can be fed in this manner. Since most people work outside the home dogs will eat their main meals at dawn and dusk. It often makes sense to be offering them food at those times.

**Advantages:** Food intake can be closely monitored, which means it will be easy to tell if your dog has had a change in appetite. In addition, it will help in house breaking --- within 30 to 60 min of eating dogs will need to defecate. If you feed your pet at scheduled times you will be able to better predict times when you need to let your pet out; thus, improving your housebreaking activities. If you have the joy of having a multiple dog household all dogs will have access to food without one being dominant over the others — one dog could be eating all the food and gaining too much weight, and the other dog(s) could be missing out on the nutrients they need to stay healthy.

**Disadvantages:** Dogs might beg for food between meals. Your dog cannot control how much it eats at a certain time. However, if you are following your veterinarian's advice with proper amounts and regular feeding, you can rest easy that it is indeed getting the right amount of food and nutrients.

**The bottom line:** While puppies should be fed up to three times a day, once a puppy reaches 3 months of age twice a day is just fine but you will gradually need to increase amount being fed till adulthood at 1 year of age. Once dogs reach adulthood, maintain this once a day feeding of your pet as long as they are healthy and have no disease problems suggesting a reason to feed differently. Again, always check with your veterinarian before deciding on a feeding regimen.

If you have multiple pets, ideally each pet should have its own food and water

### Free Feeding Dogs

If you are not considering other options, you might be wondering if free feeding is an acceptable method. When you free feed your dog, their food is available at all times. Keep in mind that only dry foods can be fed in this way because wet food should not be left out throughout the day. If you are

noticing that your dog is leaving dry food in its bowl for more than a day, you should still throw it out to maintain its freshness.

**Advantages:** Your pet can eat multiple (hopefully) small meals per day on its own schedule.

**Disadvantages:** Free feeding dogs can lead to overeating and obesity. It can also be difficult to tell if your dog's appetite has changed, for the better or worse. It's also difficult to tell, if you have multiple pets, how much each one is eating. Additionally, as discussed above it will make house breaking much more difficult.

**The bottom line:** While free feeding can lead to extra weight if not correctly managed, there are ways to allow free feeding that keeps your pet's weight and food take into account. Make sure to properly measure the amount of food necessary for them for the day. When the food is gone, don't fill it back up until the next day. This will teach your dog to feed throughout the day, rather than gobble it all down at once.

Another option for free feeding dogs; it's a good idea to use a food puzzle with pre-measured food so you control how much and how often your pet eats. Many animal behavior experts are using food puzzles not just for rewards, but as a way to feed pets. The thinking is two-fold: the first is that food puzzles provide activity and mental stimulation for pets; the second is that as pets need to *work* for their food.

## Combination Feeding Dogs

Mixed feeding can be defined as serving canned food as a twice-daily meal and dry food is freely available.

**Advantages:** Combination feeding allows your dog to eat multiple, small meals per day on its own schedule. You can monitor appetite at least partially when you feed its wet food. It also gives dogs the nutritional benefits of both wet and dry food.

**Disadvantages:** Combination feeding, like free feeding, can often lead to overeating and obesity, so it is important to measure the food out and not refill the pet's bowl until the next day. If you have multiple pets it can be difficult to monitor each one's total food intake, so any form of free feeding may not be the best option.

**The bottom line:** Both wet and dry foods have advantages and disadvantages, when it comes to your dog. For instance, dogs diagnosed with certain medical conditions — such as urinary and kidney issues — might benefit from the higher moisture content in wet food. Dry food, meanwhile, may be better for a pet's teeth and is often less expensive and is easier to store.

If you do try combination feeding, consider using a food puzzle so your dog feels challenged by playing with its snacks.

## Different Ways of Feeding - Continued

### Final thoughts:

**If you have a multi-pet home**, keep in mind that the volume of food offered should not exceed the total calorie requirements for all the pets each day. Otherwise, your dog or dogs could become overweight, leading to a higher risk of developing other health problems.

**All puppies should receive a growth-formula/puppy food till approximately 1 year of age.** Following this they should be transitioned to an adult formula food. Transitions should take 5-7 days at least, to slowly acclimate them to the new diet to avoid unnecessary GI upset.

**No matter what method you choose, measure food out each day** to best track how much your pet is eating. A dog's needs will vary depending on its size, energy level, and health issues. Consult your veterinarian about the number of calories your pet should be consuming each day.

**No matter what method you choose for your canine friend, make sure to choose a high-quality food** to provide it with the nutrients it needs to live a happy and healthy life. If you feel like your pet is struggling with weight management, or just eating in general, we highly recommend setting up an appointment with your veterinarian to come up with the healthiest game plan.

**One of the most common questions we are asked is "What should I feed my pet?"** Since the most important contribution you can make to your pet's health and well-being is his or her daily diet, it's a question that deserves a good answer.

## **Think quality! Don't switch foods!**

Diet is extremely important for growth. There are two important criteria that should be met in selecting food for your puppy. We recommend a **NAME-BRAND FOOD** made by a national dog food company (not a generic brand), and a form of food **MADE FOR PUPPIES**. We recommend that you only buy food that has been certified by an independent organization as complete and balanced. In the United States, you should look for food that has been certified by AAFCO, an independent organization that oversees the entire pet food industry. It does not endorse any particular food, but it will certify that the food has met the minimum requirements for nutrition. In Canada, look for foods approved by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA).

Dog foods are available in dry, canned, and semi-moist formulations. Any of these formulations is acceptable, as long as the label states that the food is intended for growth (or is a puppy food) and is "complete and balanced". This means that the food is nutritionally complete to meet the needs of growth and development. Foods stating, they are they may be fed for all stages of life are **not appropriate** for growth. For dogs that will be 50lb or more at their adult weight, you will need to choose a 'large breed' puppy or growth formula food. These diets are formulated to optimize nutrition for large breed dogs but minimize the deleterious effects rapid growth on musculoskeletal growth. Growth formula or puppy food should be fed until your puppy is about twelve months of age; (eighteen months of age if large breed). Each of the types of food has advantages and disadvantages.

## Different Ways of Feeding - Continued

Dry food is definitely the most inexpensive and a convenient option. The good brands of dry food are just as nutritious as the other forms. It can be left in the dog's bowl at all times. However, it is recommended to meal feed your puppy. Offer two to three meals per day. Place a measured amount of dry food in a bowl at the same time each day. Allow the puppy access to the food for up to 20 minutes, and then pick up the bowl. Puppies instinctively desire to eliminate after eating. Meal feeding is very helpful for housebreaking.

Semi-moist foods may be acceptable, depending on their quality. The texture may be more appealing to some dogs, and they often have a stronger odor and flavor. However, semi-moist foods are usually high in sugar, and if they are fed exclusively, can cause the dog to develop a very finicky appetite.

Canned foods are a good choice to feed your puppy but are considerably more expensive than either of the other forms of food. Canned foods contain a high percentage of water, and their texture, odor and taste are very appealing to most puppies. However, canned food will dry out or spoil if left out for prolonged periods of time; it is more suitable for meal feeding rather than free choice feeding.

Table foods are not recommended. Because they are generally very tasty, dogs will often begin to hold out for these and not eat their well-balanced dog food. If you choose to give your puppy table food, be sure that at least 90% of its diet is good quality commercial puppy food.

We enjoy a variety of things to eat in our diet. However, most dogs actually prefer not to change from one food to another unless they are trained to do so by the way you feed them. Do not feel guilty if your dog is happy to just eat one food day after day, week after week.

**We do not recommend raw food diets.** These diets are often very high in protein and fat while deficient in calcium, other trace minerals and vitamins. Additionally, they pose risks to the animals and humans with regard to bacterial diseases such as Salmonella and E coli 0151 as well as parasitic diseases like toxoplasmosis, trichinosis, and tapeworms. **The benefits do not outweigh the risks!**

New in the past 5 years has been the introduction of grain-free diets to the pet food industry. Currently the FDA is looking into a connection between **grain-free diets and a deadly heart disease (DCM) in dogs fed these diets.** At present we are not recommending the feeding of grain free diets that are exclusively derived from potatoes or multiple legumes such as peas, lentils or other "pulses" (seeds of legumes) early in the ingredient list, indicating that they are the main ingredients. High levels of legumes or potatoes appear to be more common in diets labeled as "grain free" but it is not known yet how these ingredients are linked to the cases of DCM.

**Home cooked diets** are generally not popular with owners as they require a lot of work. They also require a lot of nutritional knowledge to formulate an appropriate diet meeting all of the pet's nutritional requirements. They are mainly used as trial diets for food intolerance or allergy diagnosis.



## PEOPLE FOODS TO AVOID FEEDING YOUR PET



Here is a handy list of the top toxic people foods to avoid feeding your pet. As always, if you suspect your pet has eaten any of the following foods, please note the amount ingested and contact your veterinarian or the [ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center](https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control) at (888) 426-4435.

### **Alcohol**

Alcoholic beverages and food products containing alcohol can cause vomiting, diarrhea, decreased coordination, central nervous system depression, difficulty breathing, tremors, abnormal blood acidity, coma and even death. Under no circumstances should your pet be given any alcohol. If you suspect that your pet has ingested alcohol, contact your veterinarian or the [ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center](https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control) immediately.

### **Avocado**

Avocado is primarily a problem for birds, rabbits, donkeys, horses, and ruminants including sheep and goats. The biggest concern is for cardiovascular damage and death in birds and rabbits. The pits can be a choking hazard and/or lead to intestinal obstruction in dogs.

### **Chocolate, Coffee and Caffeine**

These products all contain substances called methylxanthines, which are found in cacao seeds, the fruit of the plant used to make coffee, and in the nuts of an extract used in some sodas. When ingested by pets, methylxanthines can cause vomiting and diarrhea, panting, excessive thirst and urination, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, tremors, seizures and even death. Note that darker chocolate is more dangerous than milk chocolate. White chocolate has the lowest level of methylxanthines, while baking chocolate contains the highest.

### **Citrus**

The stems, leaves, peels, fruit and seeds of citrus plants contain varying amounts of citric acid, essential oils that can cause irritation and possibly even central nervous system depression if ingested in significant amounts. Small doses, such as eating the fruit, are not likely to present problems beyond minor stomach upset.



## Foods to Avoid - Continued

### **Coconut and Coconut Oil**

When ingested in small amounts, coconut and coconut-based products are not likely to cause serious harm to your pet. The flesh and milk of fresh coconuts do contain oils that may cause stomach upset, loose stools or diarrhea. Because of this, we encourage you to use caution when offering your pets these foods. Coconut water is high in potassium and should not be given to your pet.

### **Grapes and Raisins**

Although the toxic substance within grapes and raisins is unknown, these fruits can cause kidney failure. Until more information is known about the toxic substance, it is best to avoid feeding grapes and raisins to dogs.

### **Macadamia Nuts**

Macadamia nuts can cause weakness, depression, vomiting, tremors and hyperthermia in dogs. Signs usually appear within 12 hours of ingestion and can last approximately 24 to 48 hours.

### **Milk and Dairy**

Because pets do not possess significant amounts of lactase (the enzyme that breaks down lactose in milk), milk and other dairy-based products cause them diarrhea or other digestive upset.

### **Nuts**

Nuts including almonds, pecans, and walnuts, contain high amounts of oils and fats. The fats can cause vomiting and diarrhea, and potentially pancreatitis in pets.

### **Onions, Garlic, Chives**

These vegetables and herbs can cause gastrointestinal irritation and could lead to red blood cell damage and anemia. Although cats are more susceptible, dogs are also at risk if a large enough amount is consumed.

## Foods to Avoid - Continued

### **Raw/Undercooked Meat, Eggs and Bones**

Raw meat and raw eggs can contain bacteria such as Salmonella and E. coli that can be harmful to pets and humans. Raw eggs contain an enzyme called avidin that decreases the absorption of biotin (a B vitamin), which can lead to skin and coat problems. Feeding your pet raw bones may seem like a natural and healthy option that might occur if your pet lived in the wild. However, this can be very dangerous for a domestic pet, who might choke on bones, or sustain a grave injury should the bone splinter and become lodged in or puncture your pet's digestive tract.

### **Salt and Salty Snack Foods**

Large amounts of salt can produce excessive thirst and urination, or even sodium ion poisoning in pets. Signs that your pet may have eaten too many salty foods include vomiting, diarrhea, depression, tremors, elevated body temperature, seizures and even death. As such, we encourage you to avoid feeding salt-heavy snacks like potato chips, pretzels, and salted popcorn to your pets.

### **Xylitol**

Xylitol is used as a sweetener in many products, including gum, candy, baked goods and toothpaste. It can cause insulin release in most species, which can lead to liver failure. The increase in insulin leads to hypoglycemia (lowered sugar levels). Initial signs of toxicosis include vomiting, lethargy and loss of coordination. Signs can progress to seizures. Elevated liver enzymes and liver failure can be seen within a few days.

### **Yeast Dough**

Yeast dough can rise and cause gas to accumulate in your pet's digestive system. This can be painful and can cause the stomach to bloat, and potentially twist, becoming a life-threatening emergency. The yeast produce ethanol as a by-product and a dog ingesting raw bread dough can become drunk (See alcohol).

## **WHAT ABOUT TREATS?**

Most dog owners feed treats to their dogs, as well as their regular food. Treats are rarely "complete and balanced", and are often loaded with salt, fat, artificial colorings and preservatives, all of which comprise "junk food" for animals. Some biscuits every day will not harm your pet unless it has a diet related disease, but it's best to give these items in moderation. Stick with a crunchy biscuit type of treat for your dog. Some of them are better than others. **Read labels before you buy.** Some biscuits help slow the buildup of dental tartar, but they cannot remove tartar once it is present. Your pet will still need dental care even if you feed him this type of snack. Check rawhide treat labels, and stay away from brands not made

in the USA. Foreign manufacturers are allowed to use formalin as a preservative in these chews, which is harmful to pets.

## **Supplements & Calories & Frequency**

Do not give any vitamin or mineral supplements to your dog without your veterinarian's advice. These types of supplements can easily cause harmful nutrient excesses.

Puppies need lots of calories to grow on, and plenty of fresh water. Until they are about 3 months old, feed three meals a day, giving as much as the animal will consume in a ten-to-fifteen-minute feeding. It is much easier to housebreak a puppy if you feed him or her at set times every day. Puppies will then have regular, predictable potty times as well.

Once your young dog is 3 months old, you can cut back to two meals per day. Continue to feed a diet made for puppies until your dog is 1 year old.

The most important daily contribution you will make to your pet's health is his or her diet. So, choose wisely, and feel free to consult with us about any nutritional questions you may have.

## HOW TO AVOID AND TREAT BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

Dogs and people have lived together for thousands of years, but that doesn't mean we always understand each other. Living with pets can sometimes be as frustrating and confusing as living with people! The following program will help you make the most of your relationship with your dog.

Dogs are pack animals - they are social and like to interact with people and other dogs. You can use this sociality to your benefit; your dog will do what you want if it earns him praise or petting AND he considers you a leader in his pack. This is a key point. All dog packs have a leader dog that makes decisions for the rest of the group. Other dogs are subordinate to the leader. Your dog should never think he is the leader in your house. You are the one who should decide when to eat, when to go out, when to go to the veterinarian for a check-up or when to get a nail trim. As with children, dogs that have rules to follow and respect for their parents are well behaved. Many behavior problems arise as a direct result of lack of leadership on the part of their owners.

Dogs behave as though they prefer knowing that you are in charge, and often seem much happier when they understand that you have taken charge. Following the advice below may be harder on you than on your dog! It's lonely at the top, so give your dog a break and take over. He'll love you just as much.

Also keep in mind that dogs are very sensitive to body language and visual cues. Behaviors that you don't think much about may have meaning to your dog, in a way that may not be what you intended to say! For instance, two people talking face-to-face is confrontational in a dog's body language. Standing side by side is not. You can learn to take advantage of nonverbal cues.

The following suggestions are an effective and humane way to let your dog know that he or she is safe, well-loved and NOT the leader of the pack. Keep in mind that love is not related to social status, and that most dogs live in relaxed harmony when the social hierarchy is clear, no matter where they stand in it.

These are not practices that you must follow every minute of the day. Who wants a dog if you can't ever pet it just for fun? But it's not good to cater to your dog. Your dog's behavior should drive your decisions on how to treat him or her. If your dog has always been a perfect gentleman, you may not need to change a thing you're doing. But if your dog gives you problems, follow all these "social distance" suggestions.

If Spot just bit you, totally ignore him for two days to notify him there's been a change in the household. Don't speak to him or look at him, even while feeding or letting out. Then follow this program to the letter for at least a month before giving him any slack. If Ginger ignored a command at the park today, adopt these tips for a few days. Applying "social distance" when your dog is misbehaving and rewarding with praise and attention only when he is good is the key to good behavior. Reward the behavior you want to continue to see!

## Behavior Problems - Continued

### **SO, HERE'S HOW:**

#### **1) PETTING**

- Pet only as a reward for obedience (come, sit, down, stay, shake, etc.). Reward obeying commands with attention.
- Keep petting brief (don't indulge your dog).
- If your dog demands petting, either: look away (fold arms, turn head up and away from the dog) or ask for a sit or down and then pet when he obeys.
- If you want to pet your dog, call them to you, don't go to them.

#### **2) PRACTICE LOOK AWAYS**

Don't let your dog demand play, food or petting. If your dog gets pushy, simply cross your arms, turn your head upward and to the side away from your dog. (This is an example of the body language mentioned earlier) If your dog counters by moving to your other side, turn your head the other way.

This is good practice to do any time your dog approaches you if he is very dominant and pushy. It is especially important if your dog has been aggressive towards you.

#### **3) TEACH LIE DOWN AND STAY**

A good, solid down and stay is one of the best learning tools. It teaches your dog to be patient and to wait for your command. You can practice while watching television. Start with one-second stays for the first few days, and work up to longer and longer ones. After three weeks most dogs can handle a half hour down stay during a quiet time of day.

Correct breaks with a body block (act like a traffic cop), or a downward leash correction - not by simply repeating "down" and "stay" over and over again. If your dog gets up 25 times, then correct him or her 25 times with the same actions and tone of voice. Do NOT include anger in your correction. Be very matter of fact.

#### **4) WAIT AT THE DOOR**

Alpha (pack leader) dogs have priority access to limited resources, which means they get to push out the door first to get something they want. This is why a lot of dogfights occur at doorways over who gets to go out first.

Control the space in front of the dog and you control the dog - use body blocks again to herd him away from the door. Or head toward a door or doorway and then suddenly turn and go the other way if your dog tries to get ahead of you. This puts you back in the lead. Praise and pet your dog when he starts to turn around after you and keep moving until he reaches you. Practice this as you move around the house until your dog is content to stay behind you and follow your lead.

## Behavior Problems - Continued

### 5) FOUR ON THE FLOOR

Dogs interpret an increase in height as an increase in status. Dogs that sleep up on the bed are especially impressed with themselves. Keep dominant dogs on the floor, not up on chairs, couches or beds. If you want to cuddle, get down on the floor, ask for obedience and then pet when your dog complies.

### 6) TEACH HEEL

Leaders are in the lead. Teach your dog to stay at your side while you initiate pace and direction.

This basic 6-part obedience program should make treating any other behavioral problems easier, if there are any. A dog that looks to you for direction can be taught almost anything. He will be happy to work for what he wants, and it helps keep his mind occupied constructively. Integrate this training into your day by asking your pet to perform some action whenever it wants to go outside, get dinner, play ball, etc. Letting you be in charge will soon become second nature to your dog.

Much progress has been made in the past few years in understanding how dogs think and learn. We are able to deal with problem behaviors much more effectively when we understand how a dog's mind processes signals and information. Most problem behaviors are NORMAL dog behaviors that are simply unacceptable to the humans they live with. Redirecting and retraining can make our canine companions better and happier pets.

## **Problem behaviors which we can help you deal with through training include:**

*Barking*

*Digging*

*Aggression*

*Running Away*

*Boundary Training*

*House Soiling*

*Submissive Urination*

*Fearfulness*

*Separation Anxiety*

## **Here are a few more tips to make training more effective:**

Do your homework! There are reams of books available to assist in training. Be cautious, as some are better than others. Outdated or cruel methodologies are still widely available in print. Read more than one and pick the methods that seem to make the most sense to you.

Consult with us, a good dog trainer, or a behavioral specialist. What works for one dog may not work for another. The experience and training of those educated in the field of canine behavior and training is invaluable.

## Behavior Problems - Continued

Consider using a Promise™ halter. This is a different style of training collar, which takes advantage of the dog's natural response to pressure over the muzzle and behind the ears (points dogs use to signal each other about status and control), rather than a choke collar. Promise™ halters are more humane and more effective and can aid in solving several behavior problems.

Using food as a reward for learning new a command is fine but don't give a food reward every time, they do the behavior thereafter. Giving food intermittently means your dog will perform commands for you even when you don't have food, and also prevents weight gain.

Keep all training positive and consistent. There is no need to scold or punish your dog if you tap your dog's inborn need to follow a leader and respond eagerly.

Please call us any time you have questions or problems with your dog's behavior. We have information on most problems and can refer you to a trainer or specialist if we can't help you ourselves.

## **SOCIALIZATION AND FEAR PREVENTION IN PUPPIES**



### **What is socialization?**

Socialization is the process during which the puppy develops relationships with other living beings in its environment. While socialization takes place throughout the first year of life, the first 12-16 weeks seem to be the most important time for young puppies to learn about their environment. Two other important terms in a pup's development are "habituation" and "localization".

### **What is habituation?**

As all animals develop there are numerous stimuli (sounds, smells, sights, and events) that when unfamiliar can lead to fear and anxiety. Habituation is the process whereby dogs get used to repeated stimuli and stop reacting to them provided that there are no untoward consequences.

### **What is localization?**

Localization is the process by which the puppy develops attachment to particular places.



## Socialization and Fear Prevention - Continued

### Why are these terms important?

To reduce the possibility of fearful responses as a puppy grows and matures, it is essential to expose young puppies to many stimuli (people, places, and things) when they can most effectively socialize, localize, and habituate to these stimuli. Early handling and events that occur during the first 2 to 4 months of life, are critical factors in the social development of the dog. Dogs that receive insufficient exposure to people, other animals and new environments during this time may develop irreversible fears, leading to timidity and/or aggression.

### What can I do to improve my chances of having a social, non-fearful dog?

#### ■ Puppy Selection

The genetics of the breed and of the parents in particular play an important role in how sociable, playful, fearful, excitable, or domineering a puppy becomes. Choose a breed and parents (both male and female) that have the type of behavior that you would like the puppy to have. Of course, there is a great deal of variability between individuals, so that breed and parental behavior will not always be indicative of what the puppy will be like. If the parents have been previously bred, the behavior and health of these siblings from previous litters may provide additional insight into how your dog might grow and develop.

#### ■ Puppy assessment

Avoid selecting puppies that are shy, withdrawn, or fearful. But selecting a friendly and non-fearful puppy does not ensure that this behavior will persist into adulthood. In fact, little or no predictive value has been found in assessing puppies under 3 months of age, since these puppies are still developing their social skills and many problem behaviors do not begin to emerge until sexual or social maturity. However, as puppies age these criteria do begin to become more reliable.

#### ■ Early handling

Puppies that are stimulated and handled from birth to five weeks of age are more confident, social, exploratory, faster maturing and better able to handle stress as they develop. Puppies obtained from a breeder or home where they have had frequent contact and interaction with people are likely to be more social and less fearful as they develop. Puppies that have spent large amount of time in pet stores or confined in cages may not have had the environmental stimulation needed to easily transition to a new home.

#### ■ Primary socialization

There is a sensitive period in the development of most species when they develop social attachments with their own and other species, independent of punishment and rewards. In fact, both positive and negative events seem to accelerate socialization. The events that occur during this socialization period determine the puppy's future social partners, as well as the species with which it feels comfortable. By recognizing the critical time frame in which canine socialization develops, you can help to ensure a healthy social attachment to people and other animals, including other dogs.

## Socialization and Fear Prevention - Continued

The primary socialization period for dogs begins at 3 weeks of age and is diminishing by 12 weeks. Peak sensitivity is at 6 - 8 weeks. Fears begin to emerge around at 8 weeks of age, so that beyond 12 weeks of age fearfulness may surpass sociability. Although there is a great deal of variability between breeds and individuals, dogs should be socialized to as many people, animals and situations as possible before the sensitive socialization period begins to wane. However, regular social interactions should continue through adulthood so that puppies do not regress and become more fearful as they grow and develop. The 6-8-month period appears to be another important time where social contact should be maintained, or social skills may diminish and fear may escalate.

To help a healthy social relationship with other dogs throughout life, dogs should maintain their social contacts with their mother and littermates until 6 - 8 weeks of age.

### **What is the best age to obtain my new puppy?**

Since it is critical for the puppy's development to interact, observe, play, and learn with members of its own species, the puppy should remain with its mother and littermates until about 7 weeks of age. Then when placed in the new home, social contacts can be expanded to new people and species while still in their primary socialization period. Also by this time puppies will begin to develop preferences for elimination sites, so that this is a good age at which to begin house-training. See our handout on housetraining puppies.

### **What can I do to assist my puppy in its social development?**

Generally, there should be little problem with a puppy that is less than 12 weeks of age developing healthy and lasting attachments to the people, sights and sounds in its new home. Your puppy is most likely to become fearful of stimuli that are not found in its day-to-day routine. Make a conscious effort to identify those people and situations to which the puppy is not regularly exposed. For example, if there are no children in the home, you might arrange regular play sessions with children. If you live in the country, make a few trips into the city, so that the puppy can be taken for walks on city streets, or through neighborhood plazas. Conversely, a puppy that grows up in the city might become fearful or aggressive toward farm animals that it was not exposed to during its early development.

Introduce your puppy to as many new people and situations as possible, beginning in its first three months of development. People in uniforms, babies, toddlers, the elderly, and the physically challenged are just a few examples that might lead to fear and anxiety, unless there is sufficient early exposure. Similarly, car rides, elevators, stairs, or the noises of cars, trains, airplanes, or hot air balloons are some examples of events and experiences to which the puppy might be usefully exposed.

One way to facilitate the introduction of the puppy to new situations and people is to provide a reward such as a favorite toy or biscuit each time it is exposed to a new stimulus. Having a stranger offer a biscuit to the puppy will teach it to look forward to meeting people and discourage hand-shyness since the puppy will learn to associate new friends and an outstretched hand with something positive. Once the puppy has learned to 'sit' on command, have each new friend ask it to 'sit' before giving the biscuit. This teaches a proper greeting and will make the puppy less likely to jump up on people.

## Socialization and Fear Prevention - Continued

Be certain that the puppy has the opportunity to meet and receive treats from a wide variety of people of all ages, races, appearance and both sexes during the formative months and well into the first year of life. There will of course, be times when your puppy is in a new situation and you do not have treats. Be sure then to use a happy tone of voice and encourage your puppy.

If your puppy seems to panic, back off a little and try again later, rather than aggravating the fear. Be sure to identify any emerging fear and work to revisit the situation slowly and gradually using favored rewards to turn the situation into one that is positive.

### **Is it healthy to take my puppy out in public at such a young age?**

There is always a concern about the risks of taking the puppy out of its home before it is fully vaccinated because it may be exposed to infection before the vaccines have had time to become protective. However, benefits gained from these new and early public appearances can be enormous and without them the risk of the puppy developing permanent fears or anxiety is a serious concern.

One solution is to have people and healthy vaccinated animals visit the puppy in its own home, until it is sufficiently vaccinated to be taken out. A compromise is to take the puppy out to meet people and other pets in low-risk environments. As long as vaccines are up-to-date, taking the puppy for walks along the sidewalk and avoiding neighborhood parks where stools and urine might accumulate is generally safe.

Another valuable aid is to enroll the puppy in puppy socialization classes. If these classes are held indoors in a room that can be cleaned and disinfected, and all puppies are screened for vaccination and health prior to each class, then these classes provide good exposure to people and other dogs, in a low-risk environment. In addition to ensuring that vaccines are up-to-date and each puppy is parasite free, perhaps the best way to reduce disease risk in a puppy class is to ensure that the owner has owned the pet for at least 10 days before enrolling in the class (beyond the incubation period for most of the serious contagious diseases). Not only do these classes offer an opportunity for play and socialization with a variety of people and dogs, they also help guide the owners into proper training techniques from the outset.

## ---PUPPIES – GETTING STARTED OFF RIGHT

When you bring a new puppy into your home there will be a period of adjustment. Your goals are to help your puppy to quickly bond to its new family, and to minimize the stress associated with leaving its mother, littermates, and former home. If there are already dogs in the new home the transition may be a little easier as the puppy is able to identify with its own kind. Obtaining two puppies would be another option. However, most puppies, especially those obtained before 12 weeks of age, will form attachments almost immediately to the people and any other pets in the new home, provided that there are no unpleasant consequences associated with each new person and experience.

Dogs are a highly social “grouping-living” species that in the wild is often referred to as a pack. Packs have a leader that the other members follow and look to for “direction.” In fact, each individual in the pack generally develops a relationship with each other pack member. When puppies enter our homes the family becomes the new social group. It is essential that all owners take a leadership role over the puppy and gain a position of leadership in the family pack. Allowing behaviors that are pushy, disobedient or inappropriate may lead to problems that become increasingly difficult to correct. Control must be achieved by the proper use and timing of rewards and by directing the puppy to display appropriate responses rather than through physical techniques that can lead to fear and anxiety.

### **When is the best time to begin training my puppy?**

Formal dog training has traditionally been delayed until 6 months of age. Actually, this juvenile stage is a poor time to begin training. The dog is beginning to solidify adult behavioral patterns, challenge behavior is emerging, and behaviors that they have learned in puppyhood may need to be changed. Therefore, it is best to begin teaching puppies from the time they are obtained. One important task to begin early is to establish you as the leader. This can be done by rewarding desirable responses, training the dog to obey commands, avoiding the reinforcement of behaviors that are initiated by your dog and training the dog to accept some simple body handling techniques.

### **Are physical exercises necessary for gaining control?**

Although there are many physical techniques that have been advocated for gaining control, it is the owners’ attitudes, actions, and responses to the new puppy (along with the puppy’s genetics) that are most important in the puppy becoming either well-mannered and responsive, or assertive, stubborn, disobedient and “domineering”.

Dog training literature has often discussed using scruff shakes and rollover techniques to discipline puppies. However, these physical techniques do not mimic how dogs would communicate with each other and such handling by a human could lead to fear, anxiety and even retaliation. Training is intended to teach the dog what you want, rather than discipline what you don't want. This makes a positive learning environment for the puppy to grow up in. There may be a number of advantages to teaching your puppy to assume subordinate postures (on their side, on their back, hands on neck, hand stroking the top of the head, hand grasping muzzle) but this does not mean that they teach your dog to be subordinate in its relationship to you. Having an obedient, well behaved dog that enjoys handling and accepts restraint

should be a focus of puppy training but needs to be accomplished through reward-based training, avoiding punishment and confrontational based training techniques and gradually accustoming your dog to enjoy handling. (See Collars/Head Harness Options Section).

## **How can I gain control without physical exercises?**

The best way for each family member to take control is to teach your puppy that each reward must be earned. This is also the best way to ensure that undesirable puppy behaviors are not inadvertently reinforced. The puppy should learn to display subordinate, deferential postures through reward training, rather than through any type of force. Begin with some basic obedience training, teaching the puppy to 'sit', 'stay' and 'lie down' for rewards. Practice short sessions, multiple times each day. Whenever the puppy is to receive anything of value (affection, attention, food, play and walks) the puppy should first be taught to earn its reward by performing a simple obedience task such as 'sit' or 'stay'. Teach the puppy that rewards of any sort will never be given on demand. This is also known as 'nothing in life is free', a term coined by veterinary behaviorist, Victoria Voith, or "learn to earn" as described by William Campbell. The puppy must be taught that vocalization, nipping, mouthing, overly rambunctious, or demanding behaviors of any sort will never earn rewards. In fact, these behaviors should be met by inattention, by confining the puppy for a few minutes until it settles down, or with training devices and commands that get the puppy to exhibit the desired response. Another option is to immediately control and calm the puppy with a head collar (See our handout on Biting – play biting and mouthing in puppies for details). Rewards should be given as soon as the puppy is performing an appropriate response (See section on puppy training sit and down).

Set limits on the puppy so that it does not learn that it can control you. Having the puppy sleep in its own bed or own cage rather than on your bed or couch, helps to prevent the dog from gaining control or becoming possessive of your resources. When the puppy is taken for walks it should be taught to follow. This should begin at the front door where the puppy should be taught to sit, wait, and follow, and never allowed to lead or pull you through the doorway.



## How do I prevent my puppy from doing damage or getting into mischief?

The rule of thumb for dog training is “set the dog up for success”. Supervise your puppy at all times until it has learned what it is allowed to chew, and where it is supposed to eliminate. Keeping the puppy on a 10-foot remote leash is an excellent way to keep it in sight, and to train it not to wander off. This is particularly helpful with a highly investigative puppy or for a very busy household.

At any time that the puppy cannot be supervised, such as throughout the night or when you need to go out, house it in a secure area. An escape-proof crate, a dog run, or collapsible pens are simple, highly effective, and most important, safe. The puppy could also be confined to a room that has been carefully dog-proofed. When selecting your dog’s confinement area, it is useful to consider a number of factors. The dog will adapt fastest to the new area if it is associated with rewards. Have the puppy enter the area for all its treats, toys, and perhaps food and water. The area should have some warm, dry, comfortable bedding, and should never be used for punishment (although it can, and should, be used to prevent problems). Housing the puppy in isolated areas where there is minimal human contact, such as in a laundry room or basement, should be avoided. In fact, often the best area is a kitchen (so that this can also be the dog’s feeding area) or a bedroom (so that it becomes the dog’s sleeping area). Each time the puppy needs to be confined, it should first be well exercised and given an opportunity to eliminate. Another consideration in selecting the type of confinement area is how long you may need to leave the dog alone. You must provide an area for elimination anytime the puppy will be left alone for longer than it can control its elimination. A room or collapsible pen with a paper-covered area would be needed. A cage or crate could be used for owners that do not have to leave their puppies confined for longer than 3 or 4 hours (See crate training handout for instructions on crate training your puppy).

## What is the best way to punish my puppy for misbehavior?

Every effort should be made to avoid punishment for new puppies as it is generally unnecessary and can lead to avoidance of family members, at a time when bonding and attachment is critical. By preventing problems through confinement or supervision, providing for all of a puppy’s needs, and setting up the environment for success, little or no punishment should ever be required. If a reprimand is needed, a verbal “no” or a loud noise is usually sufficient to distract a puppy so that you can then redirect the puppy to the correct behavior. Puppies that are supervised with a remote leash can be immediately interrupted with a pull on the leash. (See our handout on ‘Punishment’ for further details).

## What should I do if my puppy misbehaves?

Undesirable misbehavior must be prevented or corrected in the act. Allowing the puppy, even once to perform an undesirable behavior such as entering a restricted room, jumping up, mounting, or jumping onto the couch will serve to reward and encourage the repetition of the behavior.

There will be times when your new puppy misbehaves. How you respond to the puppy will often influence later interactions. Young puppies are very impressionable. Harsh physical reprimands are contraindicated. They only serve to frighten the puppy and perhaps make them hand shy. Unfortunately, animals can learn in one trial if something is aversive enough. We want young puppies to look toward a human hand as something pleasant that brings comfort, food and affection. Most puppies can be easily interrupted with vocal intonation and loud noises. What is equally important is to redirect the puppy to the correct behavior after you interrupt what you do not like. **Remember that punishment must take place while the behavior is occurring, not after.**

## How to Avoid and Treat Behavior Problems - Continued

If you catch your puppy misbehaving, try a loud noise such as clapping your hands or a loud “uh-uh”. Remember, reprimands need to occur while the behavior is happening, preferably just as it begins, and never after. Often puppies will be startled when they hear these noises and temporarily stop the behavior. At that time, you should redirect the puppy to a more appropriate task and reinforce with an immediate and positive ‘good dog’.

Another way to interrupt your puppy is with various types of noise devices. One such device is a “shake can”. This is an empty soda can that has a few pennies inside and then is taped shut. When given a vigorous shake it makes a loud noise, which will interrupt the puppy’s behavior. Ultrasonic and sonic dog-training devices are also available (See our handout on ‘Behavior management products’).

The most important thing that you can do to avoid undesirable behavior is to supervise your puppy. Unsupervised puppies will chew and destroy objects as part of their natural curiosity and play. Rather than finding yourself with the need to reprimand your puppy, keep your puppy on a leash to avoid bad behaviors. Always provide suitable play objects designed to entertain your puppy so that it will not want to destroy your possessions (See our handout on ‘Destructiveness – chewing’ for ideas). Most importantly, if you find something that your puppy has destroyed but you did not catch him in the act, just clean it up and vow to supervise your puppy better in the future. Do not go get your puppy and bring him over to the mess and yell and physically discipline him. Remember that you need to punish the behavior you wish to change at the time it occurs. If you did not see your puppy chew up the object, all you are doing is disciplining your puppy for being present at a mess on the floor. Since that makes no sense to your puppy, your reprimands could create fear and anxiety, which could lead to aggression and owner avoidance.

### **---HOW CAN I PREVENT PROBLEMS?**

Supervise the puppy at all times that it is not confined to ensure that the puppy does not get itself into mischief, or cause damage to itself or the home. Leaving a remote leash attached is all that is usually needed to prevent or interrupt inappropriate behavior such as garbage raiding, chewing on household items, house-soiling, or wandering off into rooms or areas that are out of bounds. If the leash is attached to a head halter you can quickly correct other problems that might arise, such as nipping, play biting, and jumping up. When the puppy cannot be supervised, confinement (discussed above) will be necessary. See our handout on housetraining for guidance in training your puppy to eliminate in the proper location.

### **What can be done for the particularly stubborn, disobedient, or headstrong puppy?**

Puppies that are particularly headstrong and stubborn might need some more stringent rules. Tug-of-war games should only be allowed if the owner initiates the game, and can successfully call an end to the game, with an ‘out’, or ‘give’ command when it is time to call it quits (See our handout on ‘Controlling stealing and teaching give’). Rough play must not escalate to uncontrollable play biting that cannot be controlled by the owner.

One of the best management tools for gaining safe and effective control at all times is a head collar. The puppy can be supervised and controlled from a distance by leaving a long line or leash attached to the head halter. The principle of halter training is to gain control over the dog with as much natural communication as possible and without the use of punishment. Positive reinforcement is used to encourage proper behavior. A pull on the leash is used to disrupt misbehavior.



## How to Prevent Problems - Continued

Since the halter is attached to the dog's muzzle, common behavior problems (nipping, barking, jumping up, pulling, stealing food, etc.) can immediately be interrupted without fear or pain by pulling on the leash. The halter places pressure around the muzzle and behind the neck. This simulates the muzzle and neck restraint that a leader or mother dog might apply to a subordinate, and therefore is a highly effective and natural form of control (See our handout on 'Management devices in dog training').

## What must I do to provide for my puppy's needs?

Chewing, play, exercise, exploration, feeding, social contact and elimination are basic requirements of all puppies. By providing appropriate outlets for each of these needs, few problems are likely to emerge. Puppies should be given chew toys that interest them and occupy their time. When supervised, the owner can allow the puppy to investigate and explore its new environment and can direct the puppy to the appropriate chew toys (and away from inappropriate areas). Play, exercise, affection, training, and handling must all be part of the daily routine. New tasks, new routines, new people and new forms of handling can be associated with rewards to ensure success. And, of course, the puppy will need to be provided with an acceptable area for elimination, and will need guidance until it learns to use this area.

## ---COLLAR AND HARNESS OPTIONS FOR TRAINING YOUR DOG

### What Is a Good Way to Train my Dog?

The goal of training is to teach the pet a response that is desirable and to associate a command word with that behavior. To be successful, you must first be able to get the pet to exhibit the desired behavior reliably before adding the command. To achieve this, the owner can use a lure such as a food or toy (lure-reward training) or a target training to encourage or lead the dog to the correct response. Alternately, training devices such as a head halter and leash can be used to prompt the dog into the response. The dog should then be rewarded. Although primary reinforcers such as food or a favored toy should be used initially to immediately mark the desired response, over time secondary reinforcers (e.g., lesser treats, praise) should replace these. Over time the training can then progress to gradually more complex or more accurate responses (shaping). Two of the most effective ways of immediately marking the desired response is the release associated with head halter training (negative reinforcement) or the use of a clicker as a positive reinforcer.

### What about Punishing Incorrect Behavior?

Unfortunately, punishment is still being used inappropriately as a training method. When properly used, punishment is intended to decrease behaviors rather than training or encouraging what is desirable. Punishment can't be used in training because it does not teach the dog what you want him to do – it only tells him to stop doing something.

## Training - Continued

Punishment can also cause fear, anxiety, increased aggression and discomfort or harm to the pet. Some dogs may even retaliate or defend themselves by attacking the person who is administering the punishment. Therefore, it is not a logical, scientifically sound, or acceptable method of training and may in fact be counterproductive.

**"Punishment cannot be used in training because it does not teach or encourage the pet to exhibit what is desirable."**

What is perhaps confusing is that many dogs appear to have been successfully trained with punishment. While it's true that many of these dogs have been trained to stop doing something, they have not been trained to exhibit behaviors that are desirable. Dogs that have been trained with punishment may be fearful of misbehaving in the trainer's presence or with a particular training device (e.g., a prong collar). These behaviors may only be suppressed with a particular person (i.e., one-man dog) or with a particular training device (e.g., prong collar) but the dog has not learned an appropriate behavior, and the underlying motivation to perform the behavior hasn't changed. Some dogs that appear to have been trained with punishment have actually been trained with negative reinforcement where the discomfort is applied until the desired behavior is achieved and then immediately released when the correct response is displayed. This is a difficult concept to teach and requires the trainer to have perfect timing. In addition, these devices are uncomfortable and have the potential for abuse and undue pain. On the other hand, dogs trained with rewards and shaping should respond to the commands of any family member as long as the commands are consistent and positive.

### **What Types of Training Devices are Available?**

There are a wide variety of leash, halter, and harness systems that can be used for walking and training. In fact, a control device attached to the head, neck or body is essential when leash control is mandatory (e.g., in communities with "leash laws"), as well as for those dogs that do not yet stay with the owners or come consistently on command.

Choke, pinch, and prong collars have been designed to control and train in a manner that makes it increasingly uncomfortable if the dog does not obey. As the dog pulls forward, or the owner pulls backward on the leash, the collar tightens around the neck and may put pressure against the trachea. Therefore, the more the pet pulls, the greater the discomfort, but these devices can cause tracheal damage. In addition, recent studies have shown that these products may lead to an increase in intraocular pressure (pressure within the eyes), which would be dangerous to dogs that might be prone to glaucoma.

## Training - Continued

**"Choke, pinch, and prong collars are primarily used to correct or punish undesirable behavior."**

Choke collar training may be useful as a means of negative reinforcement. This can be accomplished by giving the appropriate command and pulling on the choke collar until the dog exhibits the desired response. The moment the dog obeys, the trainer immediately releases the tension. In other words, release from discomfort tells the dog that the desired response is now being exhibited.

Unfortunately, the use of negative reinforcement requires a lot of skill and knowledge, so choke, pinch, and prong collars are more often used to correct or punish undesirable behavior. Jerks, pops and increasing tension on these collars increase fear or anxiety which may make the dog increasingly more anxious, even if the discomfort isn't enough to stop the behavior. With repeated exposure and training, the dog's fear and anxiety may actually increase each time it is exposed to the stimulus (because previous exposures have been uncomfortable or aversive). Some dogs may become so used to the effects of the choke or pinch device that it becomes ineffective. Although many trainers still train with devices that are intended to pull, jerk, choke, punish or "correct," the most effective and humane means of training is through motivation, positive reinforcement, and shaping.

Body harnesses or head halter restraint are two alternatives to neck collars. Some body harnesses merely serve as restraint devices while others such as the Gentle Leader®, Easy Walk™, or the Halti™ Sensation or Sensible body harnesses have all been designed to stop pulling since the leash attaches at the center of the dog's chest and can be used to pull the dog in the direction you want him to go. Previously, products such as the Lupi™ and Sporn harnesses were used to stop pulling. They attached above the dog's back and encircled the front legs, but these caused discomfort or pulled the forelegs backward to stop pulling and are therefore more uncomfortable and less effective at calming and controlling the dog. Products that control the head can also be used to stop pulling and change the dog's direction as well as to close the mouth and train the dog to focus on the owners.

### **Are There Different Types of Head Halters?**

Broadly speaking there are two types of head halters. By far the most common are ones that act like a horse's head collar with the lead attached under the chin. These work on the principle that wherever the head goes the body will follow. There are also head halters where the leash attaches behind the head such as the Canny Collar™ or the New Trix Easy Way™. Although these may work well to control pulling, they may not provide sufficient mouth and muzzle control for improving undesirable behavior. The Gentle Leader® has both a neck and nose strap adjustment, so that it can be used either to control the dog when the owner is holding the leash, or with a leash or "drag" line left attached and dangling, for immediate "remote" control. Therefore, it might also be referred to as a head collar.

## Training - Continued

Similarly, the Snoot Loop™ might be fitted to remain on the dog with a leash attached, since it has side adjustments to allow for a snugger muzzle fit. The Halti™ is a head halter that is an effective leash control device but might be pulled off if the dog is not properly supervised since it does not have an adjustable nose strap.

### How Do I Use a Head Collar/Head Halter for Control?

One of the most effective means of gaining control and ensuring that your dog responds quickly to each command is to use a leash and head halter such as the Gentle Leader® for training. With the Gentle Leader®, the owner gains control through pressure exerted behind the neck and around the muzzle. The head halter acts as a tool to help achieve the desired response without punishment and to communicate the owner's intentions. With a gentle pull in the right direction the dog can be prompted to exhibit the desired response, which can then be immediately reinforced. Even animals as large as horses are commonly managed with devices that control the head and muzzle, since "where the nose goes the body follows."

**"In one study, puppies that wore head halters were less likely to be relinquished as adults for undesirable behavior."**

With a head halter, the owner can gain eye contact and reorient the dog to perform the desirable response with a minimum of physical effort (think of it as "power steering"). With the head halter properly fitted and the leash slack, the dog is not restricted from panting, eating, drinking, chewing, barking, jumping up, biting, lunging forward, or stealing from the table or the garbage. On the other hand, with a leash attached, the head halter can be used to prevent or immediately curtail problems such as food stealing, garbage raiding, jumping up, house soiling, barking, and chewing.

## Training - Continued

Outdoor problems such as digging or stool eating can be prevented or interrupted by leaving a head halter attached to a longer outdoor line. The head halter and remote leash can also be used to prompt the dog to respond to a command (e.g., “come,” “sit,” “watch” or “focus,” “quiet” for barking). A release indicates to the dog that it is performing the desired behavior. Although head halters may be used as a training aid for all dogs, they are particularly useful for dogs that are not immediately responsive to commands, and for most behavior problems including fears, phobias and aggression. They are also useful in dogs of any age, including puppies that are excitable, unruly or difficult to train, and those that exhibit undesirable oral behaviors including chewing and play biting. In one study, puppies that wore head halters were less likely to be relinquished as adults for undesirable behavior.

### How Does the Head Halter Work?

Pets tend to oppose or pull against pressure. Dogs that walk or lunge ahead of their owners are therefore more likely to pull even harder if the owner pulls back on the leash. Therefore, with a head halter, when the owner pulls upward and forward the dog is likely to move backward into a sit. In addition, the mouth will be closed, and the dog’s attention can be refocused on the owner and away from the target of its distraction or misbehavior. A continuous pull rather than a tug or jerk should be used until the desired behavior is achieved. The second hand can also be used to gently guide the head into position. Immediately releasing tension then indicates to the dog that he is now responding acceptably. Dogs can also be directed away from the stimulus toward which they might be fearful or aggressive with a pull on the head halter. This not only turns the dog’s head toward the owners but also closes the mouth if enough tension is applied.

## **THE ADVANTAGES TO KENNEL TRAINING YOUR PUPPY**

There are many advantages to kennel training your puppy. For instance, housebreaking is accomplished much faster with a minimum of hassle for you and your puppy. Generally, a puppy does not want to mess in the area in which he sleeps and eats. If you follow the general guidelines of housebreaking, your puppy should be housebroken within a week or less, with a minimum of cleanups for you. If you are a working pet owner, the job of housebreaking your puppy is more difficult, but not impossible. It will take longer to accomplish housebreaking your pup because essentially you will have to wait until the puppy gets a little older and can hold his bladder and bowels for extended periods of time. However, the advantage to the kennel in this situation is the fact that all you have to clean up upon returning home is the kennel pan instead of the entire kitchen floor. Also, your furnishings, woodwork and belongings are still in one piece! The kennel provides a safe, secure area for your puppy, away from household hazards and prohibits the puppy from destroying woodwork, wallboard, furniture, etc. You can return home relaxed, knowing your puppy is safe and so are your possessions. The advantages of the kennel trained dog are many, as you will experience as time goes by.

When training a new puppy to "kennel", you may want to line the bottom of the kennel pan with newspapers until he is housebroken. However, do provide a large towel or small blanket that you can place in one corner of the kennel for the puppy to use as a bedding area. If the puppy shreds the towel or blanket, remove it until he accepts the idea that chewing his bedding is unacceptable. To prevent boredom, provide the puppy with a chew rope or rawhide bone or another sturdy toy in his pen. This should help to prevent the chewing and shredding of his bedding.

If you are only gone for short periods of time there is no reason to leave food and water bowls in your puppy's cage. If you will be gone more than 8 hours during the day you will need to keep water in the crate. Fasten the bowl to the side of the cage or use a non-spill bowl to prevent messes. It is best to not feed your puppy in its crate, as they usually have a bowel movement after eating. Meals should be fed only when you are home and can take your pup outside afterwards.

Find a location in your home where the kennel is out of the way yet not totally secluded from household activities. Never use the kennel as punishment. Do not banish the puppy to the kennel for improper behavior. The kennel should always be associated with happy, comfortable, secure feelings for the puppy. Once you put the puppy in the kennel, do not take him out if he starts to whine and cry. If you are sure that he doesn't have to go outside, allow him to have his tantrum. Eventually, he will lie down and sleep. Once you start to take the puppy out of the kennel because of his insistence, he will insist louder and longer each time. As your puppy grows older, you will notice that the kennel becomes his private retreat, a place to sleep, relax or eat his meals in a place that he actually likes to be.



## Kennel Training - Continued

When purchasing a kennel for your puppy, determine the puppy's height and weight when full grown, and then purchase the size kennel that will provide your dog with the most comfortable amount of space, yet not oversized. Kennels are available through catalogs, most pet stores, retail stores, and can sometimes be rented from your local humane society. Renting is a good option if your pup will have free run of the house once he is grown.

### **PUPPY HOUSE TRAINING GUIDE**

#### **How long will it take to houstrain my puppy?**

All it requires are a few basic rules to house-train puppies within a short amount of time, sometimes only a few days to a few weeks. This does not mean that the puppy will be able to be trusted to wander throughout the home without eliminating. What the puppy should quickly learn is where it should eliminate, and the consequences of eliminating indoors when the owner is supervising. However, anytime your puppy is unsupervised and eliminates indoors, this can further delay successful houstraining since the puppy will have learned that there are alternate indoor elimination areas that can be used without untoward consequence. The goal of houstraining is to encourage and reinforce desirable elimination. Do not focus on trying to teach your puppy where it is not allowed to eliminate, as there are literally hundreds of locations in your home where your puppy might have to be deterred.

#### **What site should I choose?**

It is advisable to select a site that has an easy access to a direct route to the outdoors. Puppies may more easily learn where to eliminate if a single location is used. Over time, the location, the substrate and the small amounts of residual odor help to establish a more regular habit of returning to the area. If you do not have immediate access to the outdoors (e.g. high rise living) or your schedule requires that you leave your pet longer than it can control itself, you can follow the same procedures outlined below, but will instead take your pet to its litter area, rather than to the outdoors. Paper training, discussed below, is another option. However, it may be more difficult to train your pet to eliminate at one site (e.g. indoor litter) and also expect it to eliminate in other sites (e.g. outdoors).

#### **How do I houstrain my puppy?**

- Puppies have a strong urge to eliminate after sleeping, playing, feeding, and drinking. Take your puppy to its selected elimination area within 30 minutes of each of these activities. In addition, although some puppies can control themselves through the entire night, most puppies need to eliminate every 3 to 4 hours during the daytime. With each passing month, you can expect your puppy to control itself a little longer between elimination times. The puppy should be taken to its elimination area, given a word or two of verbal encouragement (e.g., 'Hurry up') and as soon as elimination is completed, lavishly praised and patted.

## Kennel Training - Continued

A few tasty food treats can also be given the first few times the puppy eliminates in the right spot, and then intermittently thereafter. This teaches the puppy the proper place to eliminate, and that elimination in that location is associated with rewards. Some puppies may learn to eliminate when they hear the cue words ('Hurry up').

- If you take your puppy to the elimination site and your puppy is only interested in playing and investigating the environment, after about 10 minutes take the puppy indoors and strictly supervise until you can try again approximately

- each half hour. Always accompany your puppy outdoors, so that you can be certain that it has eliminated. Be certain to reward elimination immediately upon completion and not when the puppy comes back indoors.

- When indoors, your puppy must be supervised so that you can see when it needs to eliminate and immediately take it outdoors to its elimination area. One of the best techniques is to leave a remote lead attached. Should pre-elimination signs (circling, squatting, sneaking-off, heading to the door) occur, immediately take the dog to its elimination site, give the cue words, and reward the puppy when it eliminates. If the puppy begins to eliminate indoors you must be supervising so that you can immediately interrupt the behavior, such as with a verbal reprimand or shaker can. Then take the puppy outdoors to complete elimination at the proper site. Rather than use punishment to deter undesirable elimination, the goal is to train the puppy where to eliminate through supervision and rewards. Watch the puppy closely for signs it needs to eliminate and soon the puppy will learn to exhibit these signs to get your attention that it needs to go outdoors.

- When you are not available to supervise, the puppy should be confined to its confinement area (see our section on Crate training). Be certain that your puppy has eliminated and has had sufficient play and exercise before any lengthy confinement. If the confinement area is small enough, such as a pen or crate, many puppies will have sufficient control to keep this area clean. This means that when you come to release the puppy from confinement, it must be taken directly to its elimination area. Puppies will generally avoid soiling their crate if they are used to their crates as a sleeping or play area. However, puppies that are anxious or distressed about being confined to the crate are likely to soil. In addition, if the area is too large the puppy may soil in a portion of the confinement area. If the puppy needs to be left for longer than it can control itself, it should be confined to a small room or pen where paper is spread over the floor for elimination except for a corner in with the puppy's bed and feeding area. Once the puppy starts to limit its elimination to some selected areas of the paper, unused areas can be taken up. For owners that intend to continue to use paper for training, the puppy should be supervised when released from confinement, and returned to the paper (and reinforced) for elimination.

### **Why does my puppy refuse to eliminate in my presence, even when outdoors?**

Puppies that are disciplined and punished for indoor elimination rather than reinforced for outdoor elimination may soon begin to fear to eliminate whenever you are present, regardless of the location. These puppies do not associate the punishment with indoor elimination; they associate the punishment with the presence of the owners. For some puppies, standing quietly off to the side may allow them time to eliminate. It is best if you can be close by, but each puppy is an individual and some may need more space than others before feeling comfortable enough to eliminate.

### **What do I do if I find some stool or urine in an inappropriate spot?**

There is no point in punishing or even pointing out the problem to the puppy. Only if the puppy is in the act of elimination will it understand the consequences (rewards or punishment). In fact, it is not the puppy that has erred; it is the owner who has erred by not properly supervising. Put the puppy elsewhere, clean up the mess and vow to supervise the puppy more closely in the future.

### **How can I teach my puppy to signal that it needs to go out to eliminate?**

By regularly taking the dog outdoors, through the same door, to the same site, and providing rewards for proper elimination, the puppy should soon learn to head for the door each time it has to eliminate. If you recognize the signs of impending elimination and praise the puppy whenever it heads for the doorway, the behavior can be further encouraged. Puppies that have been interrupted or reprimanded on one or more occasions as they begin to eliminate indoors, may begin to try to sneak away, whine or show some form of anxiety when they feel the urge to eliminate, but cannot escape from the owner's sight. If you can pick up on these cues and take the puppy directly to the outdoors for elimination and reward, the puppy may consistently begin to show these signals when he or she needs to eliminate, and may even begin to take you to the exit door. Further into the process, some puppies can be taught to ring a bell prior or bark to let you know it needs to go outside to eliminate. For either of these to be effective, you first must constantly supervise your puppy so you can see the signs of a full bladder or bowel (restlessness, agitation) and quickly take them to the exit location, ring the bell or get them to bark and go outside. Over time the puppy should learn that the signal would get the door open. However, do not rely on signaling until it reliably happens, or the puppy will end up eliminating indoors instead.

### **When will I be able to trust my puppy to wander loose throughout the home?**

Generally, you will want your dog to have been error free around the house for about a month before you can begin to decrease your confinement and supervision. The first time you leave the puppy unsupervised should be just after taking the dog outdoors for elimination. Gradually increase the length of time that your dog can roam through the home without supervision while you are home. If the dog has been able to go unsupervised for a couple of hours without an "accident", it might then be possible to begin going out for short periods of time. Of course, if the dog still investigates and chews, then confinement and supervision may still be necessary.

## **CRATE TRAINING 101 - GUIDE**

**Crate training takes advantage of your dog's natural instincts as a den animal. A wild dog's den is their home – a place to sleep, hide from danger and raise a family. The crate becomes your dog's den, where they can find comfort and solitude while you know they are safe and secure.**

The primary use for a crate is house training, because dogs don't like to soil their dens. The crate can limit access the rest of the house while they learn other rules, like not to chew shoes or the furniture. Crates are also a sage way to transport your dog in a vehicle.

## CRATING CAUTION

A crate is not a magical solution to common canine behavior. If not used properly, a dog can feel trapped and frustrated.

- Never use the crate as a punishment. Your dog will come to fear it and refuse to enter.
- Don't leave your dog in the crate too long. A dog that is crated all day and all night doesn't get enough exercise or human interaction and can become depressed and/or anxious. You may have to change your schedule, hire a pet sitter, or take your dog to a daycare facility to reduce the amount of time they spend in their crate each day.
- Puppies under six months of age shouldn't stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time. They cannot control their bladders or bowels for that long. The same goes for older adult animals being house trained. Physically, an older dog can hold it, but they don't know they are supposed to.
- Crate your dog only until you can trust them not to destroy the house. After that, it should be a place they go voluntarily.

***A crate may be your dog's den, but just as you would not spend your entire life in one room of your home, your dog should not spend most of their time in their crate.***

## CRATING SELECTION

Several types of crates are available:

- Plastic (often called "flight kennels")
- Fabric on a collapsible, rigid frame
- Collapsible metal pens.

Crates come in different sizes and can be purchased at most pet supply stores or can be ordered through pet catalogs or online sites.

Your dog's crate should be just large enough for them to stand up and turn around in. If your dog is still growing, choose a crate that will accommodate their adult size. Block off the excess crate space so your dog cannot eliminate at one end and retreat to the other.

## THE TRAINING PROCESS

Crate training can take days or weeks, depending on your dog's age, temperament, and past experiences. **It's important to keep two things in mind while crate training:** The crate should always

be associated with something pleasant and training should take place in a series of small steps. Don't go too fast!

### **STEP 1: Introduce your dog to the crate.**

Place the crate in an area of your house where the family spends a lot of time, such as a family room. Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate. Take the door off and let the dog explore the crate at their leisure. Some dogs will be naturally curious and start sleeping in the crate right. If yours isn't one of them:

- Bring them over to the crate and talk to them in a happy tone of voice. Make sure the crate door is open and secured so that it won't move and frighten them.
- Encourage your dog to enter the crate by dropping some food treats nearby, then just inside the door and finally, all the way inside the crate. If they refuse to go all the way in at first, that's OK; don't force them to enter.
- Continue tossing treats into the crate until your dog will walk calmly all the way into the crate to get the food. If they aren't interested in treats, try tossing favorite toy instead. This step may take a few minutes to as long as several days.

### **STEP 2: Feed your dog meals in the crate.**

After introducing your dog to the crate, begin feeding them their meals near the crate. This will create a pleasant association with the crate.

- If your dog is readily entering the crate when you begin Step 2, place the food dish all the way at the back of the crate.
- If they remain reluctant to enter, put the dish only as far inside as they will readily go without becoming fearful or anxious. Each time you feed them, place the dish a little farther back in the crate.
- Once your dog is standing comfortably in the crate to eat their meal, you can close the door while they're eating. The first time you do this, open the door as soon as they finish their meal. With each successive feeding, leave the door closed a few minutes longer, until they're staying in the crate for 10 minutes or so after eating.
- If they begin to whine to be let out, you may have increased the length of time too quickly. Next time, try leaving them in the crate for a shorter period of time. If they do whine or cry in the crate, don't let them out until they stop. Otherwise, they'll learn that the way to get out of the crate is to whine, so they'll keep doing it.

### **STEP 3: Practice with longer crating periods.**

After your dog is eating their regular meals in the crate with no signs of fear or anxiety, you can confine them there for short periods of time while your home.

- Call them over to the crate and give them a treat.
- Give them a command to enter, such as “kennel up”. Encourage them by pointing to the inside of the crate with a treat in your hand.
- After your dog enters the crate, praise them, give them the treat and close the door.
- Sit quietly near the crate for five to ten minutes, and then go into another room for a few minutes. Return, sit quietly again for a short time, and then let them out of the crate.
- Repeat this process several times a day, gradually increasing the length of time you leave them in the crate and the length of time you are out of sight.
- Once your dog will stay quietly in the crate for 30 minutes with you mostly out of sight, you can begin leaving them crated when you’re gone for short periods of time and/or letting them sleep there at night. This may take several days or weeks.

### **STEP 4, Part A: Crate your dog when you leave.**

After your dog can spend 30 minutes in the crate without becoming anxious or afraid, you can begin leaving them crated for short periods when you leave the house.

- Put them in the crate using your regular command and a treat. You might also want to leave them a few safe toys in the crate.
- Vary the moment during your “getting ready to leave” routine that you put your dog in the crate. Although they shouldn’t be crated for a long time before you leave, you can crate them anywhere from five to 20 minutes prior to leaving.
- Don’t make your departures emotional and prolonged – they should be matter-of-fact. Praise your dog briefly, give them a treat for entering the crate and then leave quietly.

When you return home, don’t reward your dog for excited behavior by responding to them in an enthusiastic way. Keep arrivals low-key to avoid increasing their anxiety over when you will return. Continue to crate your dog for short periods, from time to time, when your home so they don’t associate crating with being left alone.

### **STEP 4, Part B: Crate your dog at night.**

Put your dog in the crate using your regular command and a treat. Initially, it may be a good idea to put the crate in your bedroom or nearby in a hallway, especially if you have a puppy. Puppies often need to go outside to eliminate during the night, and you’ll want to be able to hear your puppy when they whine to be let outside. Older dogs, too, should initially be kept nearby so they don’t associate the crate with social isolation.



## Kennel Training - Continued

Once your dog is sleeping comfortably through the night with the crate near you, you can begin to gradually move it to the location you prefer, although time spent with your dog – even sleep time – is a chance to strengthen the bond between you and your pet.

### POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

**Whining.** If your dog whines or cries while in the crate at night, it may be difficult to decide whether they're whining to be let out of the crate, or whether they need to be let outside to eliminate. If you've followed the training program as outlined above, then your dog hasn't been rewarded for whining in the past by being released from their crate. If that is the case, try to ignore the whining. If your dog is just testing you, they'll stop whining soon. Yelling at them or pounding on the crate will only make things worse.

If the whining continues after you've ignored them for several minutes, use the phrase/command they associate with going outside to eliminate. If they respond and become excited, take them outside. This should be a trip with purpose, not play time. If you're convinced that your dog doesn't need to eliminate, the best response is to ignore them until they stop whining. Don't give in; if you do, you'll teach your dog to whine loud and long to get what they want. If you've progressed gradually through the training steps and haven't done too much too fast, you'll be less likely to encounter this problem. If the problem becomes unmanageable, you may need to start the crate training process over again.

**Separation anxiety.** Attempting to use the crate as a remedy for separation anxiety won't solve the problem. A crate may prevent your dog from being destructive, but they may get injured in an attempt to escape the crate. Separation anxiety problems are best dealt with using counterconditioning and desensitization training techniques. You may want to consult a professional animal –behavior specialist for help.



## EXERCISE AND YOUR PUPPY

All puppies need to exercise. Usually, a small amount of encouragement is all they need to be active. Playing ball or running freely with your puppy on grass or going for short walks on a leash are the recommended ways to exercise your new puppy.

Concentrated exercise programs of long walks or running are not recommended for young puppies because this may result in problems with their skeletal development that could lead to the onset of arthritis as your puppy ages.

Once your puppy has reached the age of one year, you can begin to take him for longer walks. Even then you should begin gradually. Begin with a small increase in his or her regular exercise routine and increase each week until you are walking the desired distance. Jogging is okay if the dog's bone structure has developed properly. Check with your veterinarian about your pet's hip development before you jog long distances with him.

Unfortunately, most puppies that have a keen play drive do not know enough to slow down or quit and therefore risk heat stroke during the summer season. Never over-exercise your puppy in extreme temperatures, be they hot or cold. If your puppy begins to slow down or lag behind you, it is usually an indication he is finished and needs to be taken home immediately.

## TEETH, TEETHING AND CHEWING IN PUPPIES



### **My Puppy Has Started Biting my Hands, my Legs, my Children's Legs – Pretty Much Any Object It Can Get Its Mouth On. What's Going On?**

Your puppy is teething, the same way that human babies and children grow new teeth during their development. Like a human, your pup first grows a set of baby teeth (also called primary or deciduous, meaning they fall out). These teeth are pointed and sharp, which is why they're sometimes referred to as needle teeth. Dogs have 28 deciduous teeth and end up with 42 permanent teeth. You may find baby teeth on the floor, but it's more likely that you won't. Often, puppies harmlessly swallow the teeth while they're eating. It is not unusual for some bleeding to occur when the teeth fall or are falling out, but the amount is minuscule, and owners usually notice it only if there is some mild red staining on a chew toy.

### **Why Is my Puppy Attacking Everything?**

Puppies will chew on people, furniture, and other objects (including ones you value) that are within their reach; this is part of normal puppy behavior. Dogs learn much about the world around them through how things feel, and a dog's main means of touching and grabbing things is with its mouth.

Dogs learn much about the world around them through their mouths.

This tendency is particularly pronounced in breeds known to be “mouthy,” such as retrievers. Chewing also seems to alleviate what is assumed to be discomfort associated with the teething process.

### **When Will my Dog’s Baby Teeth Fall Out?**

Puppies begin teething at around 3 weeks, and by approximately 6 weeks, all of their baby teeth will have erupted. The incisors (at the front of the mouth) and the canine teeth (the fangs) erupt first, followed by the premolars. Dogs (and cats, for that matter) do not have any baby molars. At around 12 weeks, the deciduous teeth begin to fall out, and the permanent teeth begin to erupt. By 6 months of age, normally all permanent teeth have erupted and all deciduous teeth are out.

### **Are There Any Common Dental Problems in Young Dogs?**

Problems with baby teeth are few and far between. It is rare that a pup will have a dental problem that is serious enough to require advanced intervention or referral to a veterinary dentist. Some breeds, particularly smaller breeds and brachycephalic (short-nosed) breeds, have a tendency to retain some of their deciduous teeth. The most usual site is the upper canine teeth, although it can happen anywhere. Retained baby teeth can cause malocclusion (a bad bite) and discomfort. They also predispose dogs to future dental problems. Food can get trapped between the deciduous teeth, the permanent teeth, and the gingiva (gums), which can lead to periodontal (dental) disease. Retained deciduous teeth need to be removed. Usually a simple procedure, it is commonly performed at the time of the pet’s neutering or spaying.

### **What Are Acceptable Chew Toys, and Which Ones Should Be Avoided?**

Because dogs tend to chew nearly everything, nearly everything has been found to cause problems. This goes for rawhides, pigs’ ears or other parts of animals given to dogs to chew (some owners swear by the “bully stick,” which is the dried or cooked amputated penis of a bull), bones, synthetic toys, tennis balls, etc. Some of these objects have caused gastrointestinal blockages or intestinal punctures, which often require surgery and can be life-threatening; others have blocked the throat, causing dogs to asphyxiate.

## Teething & Chewing - Continued

Notwithstanding these facts, consider that millions of dogs have been chewing millions of objects for years, most without incident. So, the risk does appear to be low, but as with most activities, it cannot be eliminated. Watch your dog when he begins chewing and talk to your veterinarian about which chew toys are the safest bets for your puppy.

Talk to your veterinarian about which chew toys are the safest bets for your puppy.

Bear in mind that some objects that are safe from the point of view of ingestion or inhalation may still not be very good for your dog's teeth. Most veterinary dentists recommend against allowing puppies and older dogs to chew anything hard. That would include objects made of nylon as well as "unbreakable" natural bones, such as marrow bones. Veterinary dentists often sum up this recommendation with the maxim, "Don't let your dog chew anything that won't bend."

### **What Should I do About my Puppy's Chewing Behaviors That I Don't Like?**

Do not reward behavior you don't want, and don't let others reward it either. If your puppy is chewing on your hands or any other body part, yelp a high-pitched shriek like a puppy makes, pull your hand away, and go play elsewhere.

Do not reward chewing behavior you don't want, and don't let others reward it either.

There is no consensus about the best way to teach puppies not to chew. Some methods may even seem contradictory because what may work for one dog may be inappropriate for another. Check with your veterinarian for a personalized recommendation.

### **My Children Like Playing Rough with the Puppy, and They Say That They Don't Mind the Occasional Scratch or Gentle Bite. Is This OK?**

No! Permitting this behavior teaches your pet that hands are acceptable toys to use as he or she pleases. Your dog is not only learning that it is OK, but the pup is even being rewarded for this behavior when your children continue playing after being bitten or scratched.

### Will my Dog Ever Stop Chewing Everything?

Excessive chewing behavior seems to subside around 1-and-a-half years of age but will continue to some degree, depending on the dog, for his or her whole life. Remember that chewing, licking and mouthing are normal behaviors for dogs as a way of exploring and learning and carrying objects from one place to the next. If chewing is excessive or aggressive, consult your veterinarian for behavior modification advice.

### Should I Brush my Dog's Teeth?

Getting your puppy used to having something in his or her mouth other than food or a chew toy is a good idea. You also want to be able to retrieve objects from your dog's mouth or look in there without risk of injury to your hand. In addition, because dental problems are among the most common (and costly) problems seen in dogs, getting your dog to tolerate brushing at an early age will get you started on a path that will help prevent many of these problems.

Getting your dog to tolerate brushing at an early age will help prevent many dental problems.

Buy a toothbrush and toothpaste suitable for dogs (human toothpaste is not appropriate for dogs and can make them sick). Start by just gently introducing the brush and paste, allowing your pup to sniff and lick the brush. However, don't force the matter. Ask your veterinarian to demonstrate brushing technique and give you advice for getting your dog used to the routine. Most dogs can be taught to tolerate or even enjoy daily brushing.

## HOW TO CHOOSE A CHEW TOY

Dogs love to chew! Giving your dog appropriate things to chew on is good for their teeth and gums, keeps them occupied, and decreases the tendency to chew on things they shouldn't. But did you know that some chews you can buy for your pet are actually harmful? Unlike toys for children, there are no rules or regulations regarding toys or treats for pets. Just because you can buy an item in a store does not mean it's good for your pet! So what should you watch for and what should you avoid?

## Selecting a Chew Toy - Continued

Toys with small parts that your dog could swallow or choke on are common. Avoid any toy for dogs or cats that has strings, googly eyes, feathers, or any other part that could come off.

Avoid items that are too hard. The most common items on which dogs break their teeth are cow hooves/chew hooves, ice cubes and bones. Biting down just right on an object that is too hard causes a flake of the tooth to shear off. If the tooth breaks such that the tooth root is exposed, the tooth will be very painful and will subsequently become infected and require surgical removal. Because this usually happens to the large back premolar that is difficult to see, your dog may be in pain for many months before you even know there is a problem. Do not give your dog chew hooves – period. It does not matter how big your dog is. If your dog likes ice cubes, switch to shaved ice instead.

Another popular item is the rawhide chew. Rawhides come in all different sizes and shapes and sometimes even in flavors. Unfortunately, many of them are preserved in formalin or formaldehyde, which are carcinogens and can also be toxic to the liver. Most of the rawhides that contain these toxic preservatives are from foreign countries. Their use is restricted in the U.S. so rawhides made here in the states are usually safe. Keep searching until you find the ones made here and don't buy any made in other countries. If your dog swallows large pieces of rawhide that could cause choking, switch to a smaller or larger form that prevents this. Do not give your dog rawhides if it gives him diarrhea or an upset stomach.

Beef bones are only safe if they are boiled and softened. Raw meat or bones are not safe for dogs or people. Not only can uncooked bones break teeth but they can also give

your dog Salmonella, Toxoplasmosis, E. coli or other food poisoning. Chicken, turkey or other small bones can splinter and cause punctures in the mouth, esophagus or intestines so these also should never be fed to pets.

Pieces of rope with a knot at each end are popular now. These are a good choice as they are soft and gentle on teeth and gums.

Throw them away when they start to unravel. Soft plush toys usually don't last long and if the stuffing is swallowed it can cause an intestinal blockage. Take these away as soon as they start to come apart, for in large dogs that may be in a matter of minutes.

Nylabones, Gumabones and other nylon bones are also good, although some of these are hard enough to fracture teeth. Pick one on the softer side. If your puppy is teething, try placing a nylon toy in the freezer for a few hours. A chilled one helps numb the gums. Squeaky toys are also good as long as the squeaker can't come loose and be swallowed and there are no parts that can be chewed off. Make sure any plastic or vinyl toys you choose are sturdy, heavyweight, and large enough that the pet can't choke on it. The same goes for balls. Balls should be larger than the dog can fit in the back of his mouth.

Kong toys are highly recommended. They are heavy-weight, come in several sizes and have a hollow center into which you can stuff a little peanut butter, cream cheese, liver sausage or other food treat. Your dog will spend hours working at getting the food out with his tongue. A dog thus occupied is much less likely to be getting into trouble chewing on other things, especially if the Kong toy is brought out only as a special treat whenever you leave the house.

## Selecting a Chew Toy - Continued

Old, well washed and rinsed plastic milk or soda bottles make good chew toys. Frisbees are always popular and another good choice, especially for large dogs. Old socks and shoes are NOT good choices - your dog can't be expected to understand the difference between old shoes and your best shoes.

Whatever toys you choose, use common sense and look for tough, long-lasting and durable choices. If your dog likes what you've chosen, he'll be sure to put it to the test!

## **BARKING – WHY AND HOW TO CONTROL**

### **Why do Dogs Bark?**

Barking is one of the most common complaints of dog owners – and their neighbors! But for dogs, barking is natural. It can serve as a territorial warning signal to other dogs and group members. Dogs may vocalize when separated from their social group or family members. Some dogs bark whenever they are exposed to novel or unusual stimuli whether they are sounds, sights or odors. Barking also occurs during times of indecision, anxiety, or frustration. Medical problems can also contribute to vocalization, especially in the older dog.

### **How Can Barking Problems be Prevented?**

The keys to preventing barking problems are socialization and habituation – get puppies used to as many new people, animals, situations and noises as possible. The more familiar the stimulus, the less likely that your dog will display anxiety-induced barking. Socialization and habituation should also minimize the intensity or reduce the amount of alarm barking. Barking should only be allowed to alert owners and then be controlled and stopped before the dog becomes agitated and out of control. Owner control, training and direction are essential.

### **How Can I Stop my Dog Barking when I Leave?**

Effective crate training techniques when you first bring your dog home should decrease the dog's anxiety when it is left alone in its crate (see Positive Confinement – Why to Crate Train and Crate Training – Guide – How to Crate Train). Your dog should gradually be taught to spend longer periods of time away from you. Providing your dog with a consistent and predictable daily routine (see Using Enrichment, Predictability, and Scheduling to Train Your Dog) can help your dog to be calmer and more settled through the day.



## Barking - Continued

Also, by providing predictable consequences, you can ensure that calm and quiet behavior is reinforced and that you never reinforce attention seeking behavior (which may escalate to barking).

Having a second dog may greatly reduce distress vocalization at times when your dog cannot be with family members but should only happen if you want more than one dog. Adaptil™, a synthetic pheromone, may also be helpful for calming and reducing vocalization. If your dog's excessive barking problem has been going on for some time, he may be suffering from separation anxiety. If this is the case, you should review our handout on separation anxiety, and consult your veterinarian for treatment options.

### My Dog Constantly Barks - What Does It Want?

Attention-getting barking can be problematic and is often reinforced by owners giving in to their dog's demands. Examples of inadvertent reinforcement on the part of the owner include allowing a barking dog indoors, or feeding, patting, praising, playing with, giving a toy, or even just going to a barking dog to try and quiet it down.

**"Never reward barking with any type of attention, even occasionally."**

Never reward barking with any type of attention, even occasionally. Instead, reward and reinforce calm and quiet behaviors.

### How Can I Train my Dog to 'Quiet Down' on Command?

Training the dog to be "quiet" on command is an invaluable aid for controlling undesirable barking. Many owners initially accept their dog's barking as normal or even desirable. However, the barking becomes problematic when it gets too loud, too frequent, or will not stop on command. In order to train the dog to quiet down on cue, you must find an effective means of silencing the dog, which should be preceded with a verbal command. Your dog will probably not understand what you want if you just loudly tell your pet to "be quiet," especially if silence does not follow the verbal command. In fact, yelling may just add to the noise, anxiety, and conflict, thereby encouraging your dog to bark even more.

**"Training the dog to be "quiet" on command is an invaluable aid for controlling undesirable barking."**

**One of the most practical techniques for teaching a dog to cease barking on command**, is to teach barking on cue. Use a stimulus that will cause the dog to bark and pair it with a "bark" command. Numerous repetitions allow the dog to associate the word "bark" or "speak" with the action. Dogs that bark on command can then be taught to turn off the barking by removing the cue or stimulus and giving a "hush" or "quiet" command just before the barking subsides. As soon as your dog is quiet, give a favored treat or reward. It can be difficult or impractical to teach a dog to be "quiet" on command if the barking cannot be predicted or "turned on," or if it is too intense.

**Another method to teach a "quiet" command is to wait until your dog is barking**, for example in response to a doorbell. While he is barking, place a very tasty food treat by his nose. Most dogs will stop barking to sniff the treat. At the same time, you must say the word you will use for quiet, such as "silent," "hush," etc. When the dog is quiet (which should happen because dogs cannot sniff and bark at the same time) you can praise your dog, say 'good quiet' and give the treat. Again, as with all new tasks, numerous repetitions are necessary for lasting learning.

## Barking - Continued

Many other training commands such as sit and watch, down and settle, or mat training are also intended to teach calm, relaxed, and QUIET outcomes. Then during times when your dog begins to bark any of these commands could be used to get a quiet outcome. Remember that immediately giving high valued rewards will increase the chances of further success.

Another reward-based product is a treat station where the treats can be released by remote control. Place a mat or bed in front of the treat device and teach you pet to go to its mat on command and release the treat remotely. Gradually increase the time your dog remains settled before delivering the treat. This can also be achieved with clicker training (see Clicker and Target Training). Finally try this exercise when your dog begins to bark and you may be successful at getting your dog to lie on its mat and quiet down if it expects great treats (see Behavior Management Products).

Alternately, distraction or remote punishment devices (see below) can be used to disrupt the barking. One of the most effective means of interrupting barking and ensuring quiet is a remote leash and head halter. A pull on the leash disrupts the dog and closes the mouth, which should also coincide with a verbal command such as “quiet” or “hush.” By first, releasing the dog, and then giving a reward such as praise or food if the dog remains quiet, you can reinforce the quiet behavior. Soon the dog should associate the closed mouth and the verbal command with the absence of noise and begin to stop barking when given the verbal prompt alone (see Training Products – Head Halter Training and Training Products – Head Halter Training – Synopsis).

### **How Can I Train my Dog to be Quiet without Having to Constantly tell it to quiet down?**

The key is to reward the behavior that we want (i.e., quiet and settled) rather than to give any attention to the behavior we don't want (barking). Each time you pay attention to the barking dog, you may be able to quiet it down. However, when you are unsuccessful, you may actually be inadvertently rewarding the barking (by giving the dog attention or treats to quiet it down) or may be aggravating the problem with yelling and punishment (which can make the dog more anxious and more likely to bark). The goal of training should be to teach the dog what you want it to do (for rewards) rather than to try and teach it what not to do. By providing a daily routine that provides sufficient play, exercise and training, followed by set times where the dog is taught to settle and nap or play with its toys in a bedding area, your dog can be reinforced for quiet times, rather than for play soliciting, attention getting and barking behaviors. During training focus on exercises that achieve calm, settled and quiet outcomes such as sit/focus, down-settle and a relaxed mat exercise.

## What are my Chances of Correcting my Dog's Barking Problem?

**Chances are good for resolving most barking problems.** However, in some cases, the household situation in which the dog resides may make it extremely difficult to correct completely or sufficiently. Even a small amount of barking could disturb a sleeping baby or upset neighbors (particularly in apartments or townhouses). When trying to resolve barking problems, the motivation for the barking behavior is an important component. Some stimuli are so strong that it will be difficult to stop the barking behavior. In addition, you need sufficient time to implement the correction training. If underlying anxiety is the cause for the barking, the source of the anxiety must be determined and appropriate therapy instituted.

## What Can I Do to Correct my Dog's Barking Problem?

The treatment program must be based on the type of problem, your household, the immediacy of the situation, and the type and level of control that you require. A good behavioral history is important to determine cause, motivation and potential reinforcing stimuli for the barking behavior. Treatment plans need to consider the following:

1. **Owner-activated products:** These products are most useful for getting the pet's attention (disruption) during quiet command training. Ultrasonic devices (e.g., Pet Agree™, Easy Trainer™), audible devices (Barker Breaker™), water sprayers, or a shake can (an empty can with a few coins or pebbles sealed inside) are often successful. Remember that without concurrent retraining techniques, many dogs will soon begin to ignore the devices. If the device is used to interrupt the barking and the quiet behavior is then reinforced, the pet may become less anxious and less likely to bark in the presence of the stimulus, or at least should quiet much faster on command.

2. **Bark-activated products:** When barking occurs in the owner's absence, bark activated products (in conjunction with environmental modification and retraining) are often the most practical means of deterring inappropriate barking but are usually ineffective if the underlying cause is anxiety.

"Bark-activated products may also be a better choice than owner-activated devices, since they ensure immediate and accurate timing."

## Barking - Continued

Bark-activated products may also be a better choice than owner-activated devices, because they ensure immediate and accurate timing. Off-collar devices are useful for training the dog to cease barking in selected areas, such as near doorways or windows, or for dogs that bark in their crate or pen. For example, the Super Barker Breaker emits an audible alarm while the Yapper Zapper™ sprays a stream of water each time the dog barks.

**Bark-activated collars** are useful when barking does not occur in a predictable location. Audible and ultrasonic training collars are occasionally effective, but they are usually neither sufficiently unpleasant nor consistent enough to be a reliable deterrent. There are also collars that emit a spray of air or citronella each time the dog barks that may be sufficiently unpleasant to interrupt the barking of some dogs. Although these collars may be effective for some dogs in the owner's absence, they may soon become ineffective without concurrent training. One problem is that barking that is highly motivated may be too intense, and the dog will bark despite the spray. In addition, if the reservoir empties out or the battery runs out, then the dog may learn to bark while wearing the collar, making it ineffective even when refilled.

**"When using a citronella spray collar, it is advisable that the owner be present so that as soon as the dog stops barking, the owner can direct the dog into an enjoyable pastime."**

Therefore, when using a citronella spray collar, it is advisable that the owner be present so that as soon as the dog stops barking, the owner can direct the dog into an enjoyable pastime (e.g., play, tummy rub, favorite treat) as long as the dog remains quiet. In this way, the quiet behavior is reinforced, and any anxiety about the stimulus (people coming to the door, people coming to the yard, other dogs) can be gradually reduced. In fact, in time some dogs may begin to associate the arrival of new people or other dogs with something positive (counter-conditioning).

Most importantly, bark collars only work when they are on the dog. Most dogs will learn to distinguish when the collar is on and when it is off. When they are not wearing the collar, most dogs will bark.

### Is Debarking Surgery Effective?

Surgical debarking is a drastic and often permanent method of eliminating barking. However, varying degrees of vocalization may return as the surgical site heals and scars. Devocalization is certainly not in the dog's best interest and should only be considered when all other behavioral options have been unsuccessful, and owners are confronted with the option of immediately resolving a barking problem or having to give up their pet. However, since devocalization poses a serious ethical dilemma, there are some jurisdictions in which the surgery is now illegal.

## ---TEACHING YOUR DOG TO STOP BARKING ON COMMAND

Barking is one of the most common complaints of dog owners or their neighbors. Although barking is a normal behavior for dogs, when it is excessive or uncontrolled it becomes unacceptable to the owners or neighbors. The consequences of the dog's barking (the response that the dog gets) may then aggravate the problem. For example, if barking is an attempt to get a person or animal to retreat and the person retreats, then the barking was successful and the behavior has been reinforced. If barking is response to new sights or sounds, or is intended as a greeting behavior, then the dog will become more anxious if it is not allowed to greet, or if it leads to anxiety, yelling or punishment by the owners. Barking may also be associated with fear and/or anxiety, or as a form of aggression

"For puppies that need more enrichment or companionship, a second dog may help reduce anxiety-induced barking."

You can reduce barking in puppies by socializing them to as many new people, dogs, places, sights, sounds and odors as possible. If there are no negative consequences and the puppy is not rewarded for barking, it should get used to these stimuli. For puppies that need more enrichment or companionship, a second dog may help reduce anxiety induced barking.

### What Do I Need to Know Before I Try to Stop my Dog from Barking?

1. The principle is **to ignore barking and reward what you do want (quiet)**. A favored reward or treat saved for quiet training can be most effective.
2. **Do not reward any barking behavior** by giving attention or by allowing the barking to be successful e.g., allowing indoor.
3. **Do not punish barking** as this can increase anxiety or may inadvertently serve as attention. Focus on teaching your dog that when it is quiet it will be rewarded.
4. To **reduce departure anxiety**, establish a predictable routine that provides sufficient enrichment but also provides times when your dog learns to spend time alone.
5. Dogs that bark to get attention should receive **no attention until they are quiet or calm** (by waiting and ignoring, raising "quiet," or by using a head halter).

**Consider changing your dog's environment** if this is the cause of barking. For example, dogs that bark in the yard or at people passing by should be left inside the house or in a place where they cannot see people through the fence.

## In Summary:

Starting on an obedience program early is the quickest way toward a lifetime of pleasure with a happy, well-behaved pet. Integrate obedience into your dog's day, such that it becomes part of life to him. Simply ask the puppy or dog to perform some action whenever it wants something (to open the door, play ball,



get dinner, etc.) Dogs will work to get something they want, which keeps you in charge and your dog interested and occupied constructively.

We want to encourage you to devote the necessary time and energy to this project while your puppy is still young, to ensure that you have many wonderful, problem free years with your pet. A good trainer and a good training program will solve, or avoid altogether, the many behaviors that fill our nation's humane societies and shelters with unwanted pets. Your dog needs your help to learn to become a good canine citizen!

## TRAVELING WITH YOUR PET

*Traveling with pets can be traumatic for all concerned, especially if preparations are not made beforehand. Here are a few suggestions for a safe and comfortable journey.*

**If you are flying with your pet . . .** contact the airline and us ahead of time. Most airlines have special rules and regulations for pets and you will need health papers filled out ahead of time. If you are traveling or moving overseas, contact us at least 6 months ahead. The paperwork often is very involved and can be a nightmare.

**If you are crossing state lines . . .** whether you are traveling by air or car, you will need a health certificate from us filled out no more than 10 days prior to your trip. Health certificates are required by law to help stop the spread of rabies and other diseases from state to state. Different states have different rules about the frequency of rabies vaccine administration, so your pet may need a booster shot before you leave. You should also carry a copy of your pet's rabies certificate with you. Without these papers, if you are stopped by police during your trip, you can be fined, and your animal quarantined for 10 to 14 days at your expense.

## Traveling - Continued

**Be sure your pet is wearing a collar with ID tags** while traveling, in case he or she gets lost. An extra tag with the name and phone number of a friend or relative is also a good idea - remember, you won't be home to take the call if your pet is found again. Consider having a microchip or tattoo applied for permanent identification.

**Always leash your pet** when he is not in the car. Do not let your dog become a pest or a hazard at gas stations or rest stops. Unless you are on private property and have permission to let your dog run loose, leash him at all times at motels and campgrounds as well.

**Take along plastic bags to clean up messes** and some towels in case your pet has an accident or illness in the car. Also bring your pet's bowls and its own supply of regular food and drinking water. Sudden changes of food and water, coupled with the stress of traveling, frequently lead to diarrhea. Pack a few favorite toys and a brush as well, and plenty of kitty litter for cats.

**A crate is the best investment you can make** for safe traveling. Ask us how to accustom your pet to the crate ahead of time if your pet hasn't used one before. (If you have recently acquired a puppy or puppy and plan to travel later on, now is the time to introduce traveling in a crate!) In a crate, your pet can relax and nap without being a nuisance, and he will be more protected in case of an accident.

You can also keep your pet crated at motels and hotels that allow pets.

Be sure your pet's crate is big enough for him to stand up, turn around and lay stretched out comfortably. Keeping your dog or cat confined to a tiny cage for hours on end is cruel. Cats need enough room for a litter pan and water bowl, as well as space to lay comfortably. Bed the cage with towels so that your pet isn't sliding around on bare plastic. Your pet will need to get out and stretch his legs occasionally - every 3-4 hours for dogs and every 6-8 for cats. Be sure the leash is on before you open the car door!

**NEVER LEAVE YOUR PET UNATTENDED** in the car for long. Heat and cold can kill an animal left alone. Don't park in direct sunlight. If you are traveling in the summer and your car is not air conditioned, think twice before taking your pet along. Health problems or fear of strangers and unfamiliar things may also be a reason to leave your pet at home. Pug nosed breeds such as Pekingese, chow chows, Boston terriers and Persian cats are especially prone to heat stroke and suffocation while traveling.

**It's best to feed your pet lightly**, or not at all, before traveling. Feed your pet once you arrive at your destination or stop for the night. It's better to eat lightly for a day or two than to spend the trip carsick!

**Your pet may need vaccines or medications** at your destination that he doesn't need at home. For instance, fleas and heartworms are year-round problems in the south, not just in the summer. If you will be hiking in the woods with your dog you may need Lyme disease vaccinations. Some pets also require sedatives or anti-nausea medications to travel comfortably. Check with us well ahead of time about these requirements.

**Any more questions about traveling with your pets - Call us!**

## WHAT'S NEXT?

***Congratulations! Your puppy has completed its vaccination series and well-puppy exams. We hope that your pet is well on its way to a long and happy life as a member of your family. To keep your puppy healthy for a lifetime will require on-going care. The following list should help you to understand what health care needs your pet will have in the years to come.***

1. The vaccines your puppy has received will provide immunity against disease for about one year. Annual boosters are needed to keep his level of immunity high enough to protect him from illness. You will receive reminders in the mail next year when his annual vaccinations are due.

2. Your pet will also receive an annual physical examination with his yearly booster vaccinations. By the time we see your pet again next year he will have grown through the equivalent of his teenage years and will be a young adult. Because a pet's lifespan is compressed into a shorter amount of time than that of a human, many changes can occur in your pet's body in the course of a year. The annual physical exam is very important to detect physical problems before they become serious. Once your pet reaches the age of seven to nine years, annual blood and urine testing are also recommended to detect the onset of age-related illnesses such as kidney and liver disease.

3. At the time of this annual visit, a blood sample will be drawn for a heartworm blood test. In addition to testing for heartworm disease, our outgoing lab will also test for several tick-borne diseases. This test will detect if your pet has been exposed to three serious tick-borne diseases that are common in our area: Lyme disease, *Ehrlichia canis* and Anaplasmosis. You will receive heartworm and flea and tick preventative medications as required for the upcoming year. Remember, heartworm is a deadly parasite, which is easily prevented with a monthly pill or yearly preventative injection.

4. We will also be asking you to bring in a sample of your dog's stool each spring, to test for intestinal parasites which may have been picked up over the course of the year. Heartworm preventative medication can mask some types of intestinal parasites, so it is best to check for these before starting on heartworm medication. We need about 1 teaspoon of feces. A fresh sample will keep about 24 hours if refrigerated.

5. Your puppy should be fed a puppy food until he or she is about 12 months old. Then switch gradually to an adult food by mixing the old and new foods together for about two weeks. This helps avoid intestinal upset from changing foods. Your pet will have a longer, healthier life on a good quality diet, such as Science Diet, Iams or Eukanuba, as well as Royal Canin. Dry food is better for the prevention of dental disease. Too many treats and snacks lead to fussy eating habits, obesity and digestive upsets. Give your pet praise and affection for rewards, not food! He'll love you just as much.

6. Spay or neuter your pet at six months of age or by 10-12 months of age for the large breeds. Altered pets live longer, are healthier in their old age, have fewer behavior problems and don't contribute to the pet overpopulation problem.

7. If you haven't yet begun an obedience program with your pet, now is a good time to start. Pets that are well trained are much nicer to have around. You can train your pet yourself if you have some training experience but we highly recommend a professional trainer. Obedience classes are a lot of fun and you'll learn a lot of helpful tips for making the most out of your relationship with your pet.

### Whats Next- Continued

8. Your puppy will soon have a full set of adult teeth. Good dental care is essential to your pet's well-being. Regular brushing will slow plaque and tartar build-up as your dog gets older. By the time he is two to five years old, however, he will probably have enough tartar build-up to begin needing annual dental cleanings here at the veterinary clinic. A dog that gets good dental care throughout its life will live an average of 15-20% longer than one that doesn't. He will also have fresher breath, less pain from periodontal disease and be healthier and more energetic.

9. Please call us with any questions or problems with your pet. Most medical problems are less costly to your pet's well-being and to your pocketbook if they are dealt with early.

10. The same is true of behavioral problems. The earlier you contact us or your trainer regarding a problem behavior, the sooner you can solve it. Behaviors such as barking, digging, running away, chewing, and over-aggression can almost always be changed but you have to ask for help.

**11. Enjoy! Your puppy's boundless joy, love and energy are a precious thing to have.**