

Front Range Animal Hospital
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Puppy's First Year

Congratulations on your new puppy! With the proper health care, your puppy can be a friend for many years. Here are some important tips to get your puppy started right.

Vaccinations

Puppies need a series of vaccinations to be protected against serious illness. The first vaccination should be given at 6-8 weeks of age, with each additional vaccine given every 3 weeks until the pup is 16-18 weeks old. This equates to about 4 visits in the puppy series.

- 1st set: distemper, hepatitis, parainfluenza, parvovirus
- 2nd set: distemper, hepatitis, parainfluenza, parvovirus
- 3rd set: distemper, hepatitis, parainfluenza, parvovirus
- 4th set: parvovirus, rabies

In addition, a Leptospirosis vaccine series should be given to puppies who interact with wildlife, or will be hiking, camping, or hunting in Colorado, or traveling around the US. A Bordetella and Canine Influenza vaccine series should be considered if the puppy will be exposed to other dogs at obedience classes, dog shows, grooming or boarding facilities. Lyme vaccine is available for dogs that travel around the US. All vaccinations are boosted one year later.

Parasites

Many puppies arrive with parasites. The feces may look normal, so it is important to look under the microscope. Please bring a fresh fecal (stool) specimen so that we may check your puppy. The specimen is good for 4 hours at room temperature, and 24 hours refrigerated (not frozen).

Feeding

Puppies should be fed a high-quality brand of puppy food, such as Eukanuba, Science Diet, Nutro or ProPlan, until they are one year old (18 months for "giant" breeds). These are available at pet shops and feed stores. Avoid the "new" premium diets and bargain brands, as their nutrition is questionable, even if the labels appear similar. This is because of differences in digestibility. Also, there is little "policing" of pet food manufacturers claims.

Puppies should be fed "meals" where they eat for 10-15 minutes, then the food is taken up. Young pups should get 4 meals a day. At 3 months, you can go to 3 meals per day, and at 4 months, 2 meals per day. Leaving the food down at all times is discouraged as it can cause bone growth problems. Each dog should have their own bowl.

Obesity Prevention

Obesity is becoming epidemic. Prevention begins in the first year. Too much food is one component. First, all dogs should have their own bowl, so amount consumed can be monitored and regulated. Growing puppies require 2-3 times as much food (per pound of body weight) than adult dogs. Here are general feeding guidelines:

Growing puppies—1 cup of dry food or 1-14oz canned food per 7-10# of puppy weight per day. Divide this into several meals per day.

Grown dogs—1 cup of dry food or 1-14 oz. can of wet food per 20# body weight/day

****Note:** Neutering/Spaying decreases metabolism by 25% so start reducing food fed after neuter. Most dogs are done growing by 1 year of age.

Specific feeding guidelines for your puppy:_____

Not enough exercise is another component of the obesity epidemic. We would encourage you to walk your dog at least 20 minutes/day. Some sporting breeds need more exercise than this to be satisfied. Dogs left outside in a fenced yard do not usually exercise adequately on their own.

Heartworms

Heartworm is a mosquito-transmitted parasite that lives in the heart. We recommend that dogs in our area be on a heartworm preventative from June to November, yearround if the pet travels. Heartworm preventative is available as a once-a-month chewable pill, or an injection that lasts for the 6 month season.

Spaying and Neutering

We recommend that all dogs not intended for breeding be spayed (females) or neutered (males) at six month of age. This will prevent many health and behavior problems.

Exercise

Dogs that exercise regularly are healthier and happier—just as people are! Be careful, however, not to over-exercise young dogs (under 6 months of age) as this can cause bone problems (dysplasia, OCD). Exercise for young growing dogs should be at the puppy's pace and broken up into several short walks or play activities per day. Avoid high impact sports (Frisbee, agility) until bones are fully formed (usually by 1 year of age).

Microchipping

We can now permanently identify your dog by using a needle to insert a small microchip under the skin. Enrolled dogs have their chip number in a national registry. The humane societies and most veterinary practices scan all stray dogs for microchips and are able to return "chipped" dogs to their owners.